



**UNITED NATIONS**  
**NINTH PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**  
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our organization, the Ecospirituality Foundation, has as main objective the defense of traditional knowledge and sacred lands of the Indigenous Peoples.

The Ecospirituality Foundation represents various Indigenous communities of every continent. This appeal is on behalf of each Community that we represent, which are subject to violations of spiritual rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It is our belief that such violations impede free cultural and social development of these Communities. We are referring to the defense of Indigenous Peoples traditional identity, as stated in article 3 and 32 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Communities that we represent embody emblematic cases of violations regarding the spiritual rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the attempt to undermine their right to self-determination.

We wish to bring to the attention of this forum the case of the Apache San Carlos in Arizona, who continue to witness the desecration of their sacred land, fulcrum of their culture and social activities.

A highly contested international astronomical observatory was built atop Mount Graham, under the participation of the University of Arizona, the Vatican and the Observatory of Arcetri, financed by the Italian government.

Despite a 20-year protest by the Apache Survival Coalition, supported by the South Western Apache tribes, numerous appeals and the support of both indigenous and non-indigenous organizations from around the world, Mount Graham still continues to be desecrated and the Apache are still denied their most revered sacred land.

We also wish to bring the case of the Wamba Wamba Nation, which groups every clan of North-Western Australia, to the attention of this assembly. For years, the Wamba Wamba Nation has been promoting the recovery of its ancestors' remains, disseminated in museums throughout the world. Their culture and sociality is directly linked to their Ancestors. Many of these remains are still at large, and the Wamba Wamba Nation reclaims their dead.

Another emblematic case that we would like to bring to the attention of this Forum concerns the Bassa People of Cameroon. On behalf of its spokesperson, Samuel Brice Tjomb, we hereby denounce the desecration of the sacred mountain NGOG-LITUBA, perpetrated by the Roman Catholic Church in placing a large cross on the peak of the mountain. Ngog Lituba represents an essential cultural, social and spiritual reference for the Bassa People.

Moreover, we wish to draw the attention of this assembly to the case regarding the desecration inflicted upon the Indigenous Peoples of Europe. The European continent is also home to Indigenous Peoples whose moral and cultural identity are at risk, and they are not allowed to freely express their spirituality.

The Breton community in France, seeks assistance in defending its most revered sacred land, the megalithic site of Carnac. The government has fenced this place in for 20 years and intends to transform it into a museum, denying the Breton community their free access to its spiritual site. The Indigenous communities of Brittany have always used the megalithic site of Carnac as element of social gathering as well as cultural and spiritual reference. On behalf of Céline Mary, president of the organization Mehirs Libres, we appeal so that this indigenous community may liberally frequent its sacred site as it has done since times of memory past, up until 1990.

Many Indigenous cultures in Europe risk extinction. In Piedmont, Northern Italy, there are communities with ancient traditional references, dating back to pre-Christian eras that have survived invasion by the Roman Empire and religious repression.

These cultures share deep ties with the Indigenous Peoples throughout Europe and, still today, maintain ancient traditional knowledge. However, their identity is not protected. Likewise is true for the megalithic sites that mark the presence of sacred places for the Native Europeans.

The traditions of Native Europeans have deep roots in history. Today, testimonial of these roots come to light through findings of imposing megalithic sites, which have a sacred value for all Indigenous Peoples of Europe; but these sites lack valorization and protection. Instead, there are systematically destroyed or access is denied, by the authorities, to the continuers of the cultures that erected them.

There is the case of the great pyramids that mark the history of the entire European continent, such as the double pyramid of Barnenez, in Brittany, occasionally saved from destruction for use as a quarry.

Then there is the less fortunate case of the pyramid of Saint-André, in France, a great pyramid that dates back to 4,000 BC that was totally destroyed during the 70s to make way room for a motorway.

Let us mention the pyramids of Brianza in Northern Italy or those of Benevento in Central Italy, acknowledged and considered as sacred sites by local Indigenous communities. Last but not least, the most important in regards to size, are the pyramids discovered in Bosnia, at Visoko, which date back to at least 12,000 years ago. Great megalithic complexes that reveal the presence of an ancient European culture still present with its traditional knowledge.

Yet, these cultures, as their sacred sites, are not protected and their survival is at risk due to the incursion of governments and systematic instruction by anonymous parties.

On the basis of Articles 3 and 32 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the indigenous Communities of Northern Italy seek recognition in their traditional identity to ensure that their culture does not go completely lost; and to be able to defend their sacred sites, object of degradation.

In this view, the Ecospirituality Foundation has built a large cromlech (a stone circle) in Piedmont, Northern Italy, in order to give visibility to the defense of the Indigenous cultures of the Native Europeans, as well as launch a message of hope and continuity of traditional knowledge.

We wish to make the following recommendations to this Forum:

- a) Strongly urge UNESCO to inscribe Mount Graham, the megalithic site of Carnac and the sacred mountain of Ngog-Lituba in list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites;
- b) Strongly urge the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to safeguard the above-mentioned sacred sites as cultural heritage of humanity;
- c) Urge the European States to return the remains of the Ancestors, spiritual property and cultural objects of the Wamba Wamba Nation;
- d) Urge the European States to establish a Commission for the preservation of all megalithic sites of Europe, as these are considered sacred by the Native Europeans and are currently unprotected and at risk,
- e) Urge the European States to support the initiatives of the indigenous communities of Europe aimed at giving visibility and continuity to their historical and moral; both in regards to specific works, as in the case of the above-mentioned Cromlech, and other expressions of indigenous culture, able to give visibility to the moral roots of the Native Europeans.

In conclusion, we believe that the identity of native Peoples is based on their traditional knowledge. These roots constitute their reference for social and cultural development. Without these roots, the identity of all IP is doomed to vanish, taking with it all hope of peace and brotherhood for humanity.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rosalba Nattero and Giancarlo Barbadoro

*Representatives of:*

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