

15th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

United Nations – EMRIP 4-8 July 2021

Congress Mondial Amazigh (CMA) EMRIP Intervention

Madam Chair,

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen - Azul Fellawen/ent Sitma d Aythma

During the last hundreds of years, the Pan-Arabism ideology and its supporters have advocated the superiority of their own race over that of the Amazigh the indigenous people of North Africa. Due to the lack of justice, many Amazigh communities have lost their identity, culture, natural resources, and land. This has led to numerous acts of aggression and violations of Amazigh rights.

The Amazigh land and its natural resources have been confiscated by the North African States. Oil, gas, water, uranium, and phosphate development projects are undertaken without consultation with the Amazigh communities that affected our peoples' lives, and their right to self-governance and self-determination.

North African states continue to intervene in the Amazigh's right to political participation, showing a violation of the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, the universal declaration of human rights, and the international covenant on civil and political rights. Therefore, we have to implement the necessary measures to support this unique culture and its historical and ecological knowledge which are essential for the survival of Amazigh communities. However, this requires a collective effort from EMRIP and other UN entities to avoid the loss of our amazing culture and put an end to violence by the states.

It is becoming an urgent matter that we have agreements between the States and the Amazigh communities and use of all available means at every level to protect ourselves. We believe that when such agreements exist, it is necessary to ensure that the principle of free and informed consent of the Amazigh peoples is respected, and if this is the case, it is necessary to accompany all the stakeholders and ensure that the agreements are reached are properly implemented. EMRIP and other UN entities have an important role to play. For example, in Mali, the agreement concluded in 2015 between the government and the Azawad communities has never been respected, and the civilian populations are suffering enormously as a result.

On the other hand, what happens when there is no agreement with the States? In this case, the State alone decides on issues that concern IPs. For example, in my country, Libya, where the State has set up an administrative and electoral division without any respect for indigenous territories and without consulting our communities, which led to a catastrophic outcome. The lack of a constitution and unfair decisions by the State have impacted the Amazigh communities at all levels.

As far as we Amazighs are concerned, we wish to open discussions with governments in order to set up agreements and other constructive arrangements that would allow us, among other things to:

- Manage our own territories to protect our lands and have our own territorial protection systems,
- Develop our parliamentary structures, take control of our educational system and cultural structures, and use the natural resources of our territories to support our projects,
- Exercise our right to self-determination and legislative autonomy, and retain jurisdiction over our territories.

To achieve that, we request EMRIP's support for dialogue facilitation, capacity building, and cooperation. Thank you, Tanemmirt.