

**Joint Statement from representatives of the San Carlos Inneh-Apache Community, the Tohono O'odham Voice against the Wall, the Lipan Inneh-Apache Women's Defense, the Chihene Indeh Nation, and the Save the Peaks Movement on the Doctrine of Discovery at the United Nations 11<sup>th</sup> Special Forum on Indigenous Peoples, New York City, May 11-18, 2012**

We want to thank the Indigenous people of the land where we meet here, the Lenape people, who continue to resist genocide and occupation of these lands, in defense of Mother Earth. We want to congratulate the chair, Chief Ed John, on his appointment as chair of the 2012 11<sup>th</sup> Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples and recognize all of the representatives of the Indigenous peoples from all over the world and organizations at this forum. We come in full and complete support of our Indigenous youth worldwide and the ones whose voices are violently suppressed by banning and restriction through colonial punitive instruments here at the UN. It is not in accordance with Indigenous cultural ways for us as elders and teachers to stifle our youth and their aspirations especially demanding a sense of obedience as was foisted on all Indigenous peoples by colonial powers; instead, we must invite our youth, who represent our extension and projection into the future, to participate at every level so that they can participate in a future world that is meaningful and decolonized, unlike the colonized one in which we live today. I would like to also recognize our Indigenous women around the world who are the backbone of The People for they have suffered tremendous violence, marginalization and a continuation of criminal acts of terror by actions of colonizers, even so, here at the UN. We thank our ancestors, especially freedom fighters such as Goyathle, aka, Geronimo, Lola Cutter, Victorio, Lozen, and even so, my grandfather, who died for real love and freedom of our youth, women, families, earth and way of life. To them I say, Ahi'yii'i.

It is indeed appalling that the Roman Catholic church hierarchy in particular and the Christian churches in general which have benefitted materially and economically from dispossessing Indigenous peoples have not seen fit to abrogate the Doctrine of Discovery, acknowledge its effects of genocide and cultural annihilation on Indigenous peoples, to apologize to Indigenous peoples for the historical role that the Catholic church and its

representatives played in this genocide and denial of Indigenous peoples to exist as peoples of the Mother Earth in accordance with their cultures and languages (in the Christian boarding school system in North America and even Australia), and to award reparations to Indigenous peoples for this historical and contemporary genocide whose lands are still being occupied and whose sacred sites are still violated, especially here in Turtle Island (North America) be they the Dine' and Hopi in Northern Arizona whose water resources are currently being threatened by Peabody Coal and other commercial entities; *Dook'o'oosliid* (The San Francisco Peaks), sacred for all Indigenous Southwestern nations now being deforested and obscenely vitiated by water pipelines, including possibilities of sewage water by the Arizona Snowbowl and other commercial entities; the Tohono O'odham people at the so-called U.S.-Mexico border, who are subject to the consistent and repeated violation of their religious and cultural rights by non-Indigenous entities such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Border Patrol that deny unrestrained access to their sacred sites, ceremonies, and practices, and who experience the violent harassment, abuse, and detention of Indigenous elders and people whose history, heritage, and existence pre-date that of the United States by millennia and the killing of migrants by denying water to thirsty people; and the Inneh (Apache) people of San Carlos, Arizona, whose sacred sites in the Superstitious Mountains at Ch'chil'bil'dagoteel are still violated by mining companies like Rio Tinto Zinc and BHP Billiton and the U.S. Congress greedy for minerals and profits and whose health continues to be adversely effected by the after-effect contamination by Agent Orange used in the 1960s.

Discovery (and explorers as we are brainwashed in our history textbooks) meant colonial invasion and occupation for Indigenous peoples. What was described as the Enlightenment for European aristocratic societies meant genocide for Indigenous peoples. One people's enlightenment and discovery is another peoples annihilation—this is the essential meaning of “discovery” with all of its racist and violent cultural practices. It is imperative that the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples call upon the Roman Catholic church and other Christian churches, and all Member states, to immediately abrogate the Doctrine of Discovery and to redress its genocidal effects by restoration of dispossessed Indigenous lands through enforcement of treaties made

between the colonial U.S. government and all Indigenous nations in Turtle Island (North America); to ensure protection of sacred rites and human rights of all Indigenous peoples in Turtle Island (North America); and to award material and financial reparations for acts of genocide perpetrated as a result of the Doctrine of Discovery against Indigenous peoples especially here in the Western hemisphere, and in other parts of the world where the Doctrine of Discovery has had lethal and genocidal land and cultural effects.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN.