

Tenth Anniversary of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: *measures taken to implement the Declaration*

Article 8: the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of our culture

Tēnā tātou katoa

This statement is made on behalf of Te Hika o Pāpāuma Mandated Iwi Authority and our 850 registered members, who are indigenous Māori of New Zealand. Our population indications are around 5,000. Te Hika o Pāpāuma once had 485,000 acres of traditional land. Pāpāuma our ancestress was born circa 1500 and she is a direct descendant of Kupe who discovered New Zealand.

Since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 we have lost over 90% of our traditional land; suffered a demise of our Māori language and traditional culture. Despite our Government's support for the Declaration in 2010, we are being discriminated against by their process for settlement of Treaty of Waitangi claims through the Large Natural Grouping policy which has a focus on larger groups. This policy of the settlement process inhibits the rights in article 8 of the United Nations Declaration. Through participation we are being subjected to forced assimilation into two larger tribal groups even though Pāpāuma herself does not descend from either of the larger tribal groups' eponymous ancestors. Our Government has not provided effective mechanisms for prevention and redress for Te Hika o Pāpāuma for historical wrongs committed by our Government causing great land loss to our people.

Under the settlement process our Government has allowed larger tribal groups to:

- take actions which **deprive us of our integrity** as descendants of Te Hika o Pāpāuma by forcing us to assimilate into two larger tribal groups. A Bill of one tribe is being progressed through Parliament to become legislation which will give effect to their deed of settlement that fundamentally obstructs the ability to use our own identity for our own purposes. The legislation will therefore **subject us to forced assimilation, destruct our culture and deprive us of our ethnic identity**; we are listed under another tribe without representation and no longer recognised in our own right as Te Hika o Pāpāuma.

Our Government has also allowed larger tribal groups to:

- take actions with the **aim of dispossessing us from our traditional lands and resources**. Through the commercial redress of the settlement process State forests and reserves within our traditional lands will be transferred to a larger tribe. Larger tribal groups have access to Government resources to process their claims, ratify their information and seek mandate from their members. Our Government has asked us to participate throughout the settlement process but no resources have been provided.