

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 17th Session, April 16-27, 2018**  
**Agenda Item 8: Discussion on the theme “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources”**

**Intervention by Nation of Hawai‘i, presented by Brandon Maka‘awa‘awa**

*Mahalo* Madame Chair and *aloha* to all delegations. Nation of Hawai‘i stands before you today because of U.S. Public Law 103-150, the Apology Law, in which the U.S. admitted to the theft of **1.8 million** acres of our national lands and recognized our unrelinquished National Sovereignty. The Apology Law also recognized that our health and well-being is intrinsically tied to our lands and that our forced alienation from them has been devastating to our people. We must work to reconcile these historical and continuing injustices while also improving the dire socioeconomic conditions of the Hawaiian people.

Hawaiians have long been denied a fair, collaborative process. It has been **125** years since the illegal overthrow of our internationally recognized Nation and nearly **25** years since the U.S. apologized and promised a reconciliation process but the Hawaiian people have never been given any redress.

In the absence of State assistance, Nation of Hawai‘i has assumed the *kuleana* (responsibility) for caring for our people and lands and has created a *pu‘uhonua* (place of refuge) to return our people to the land and provide a space for them to thrive as Hawaiian Nationals.

While we wait for the U.S. to fulfill its duty of reconciliation, our *pu‘uhonua* allows us to reclaim and restore our national lands in a peaceful manner. The *pu‘uhonua* model is a practical solution to the failure of the state and federal governments to provide homes for our people. This includes over **37,000** Hawaiians on the Hawaiian Homestead list due to alleged administrative and financial excuses despite establishing the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act in 1920 and having authority over **200,000** acres of Hawaiian national lands and millions of dollars in federal and state funding.

The creation of more *pu‘uhonua* is essential to Hawaiians practicing self-determination, self-governance and nationhood in a real, practical way. The success of *Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo* shows that we must take back our lands, culture and identity as Hawaiian nationals while we work towards rebuilding our government.

We coexist with the State of Hawai‘i and the U.S. while exercising sovereign control and authority over our national lands and all related decision-making. We maintain peace and *aloha* as we assert our right to self-governance as a small developing country and restore and maintain Hawaiian as a *National* identity.

Nation of Hawai‘i will never rest until justice prevails. We invite you to join us in our fight for truth, justice and reconciliation and ask that the U.N. and our international allies take a leadership role in helping us gain meaningful and effective redress for our outstanding claims. An apology is a good first step, but we seek justice.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum conduct a study on the *pu‘uhonua* model for national land restoration to assist all Peoples in strengthening their National Sovereignty in the absence of State recognition and assistance. *Aloha*.