

Statement of Kee Watchman, President, Cactus Valley-Red  
Willow Springs Sovereign Community  
To the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Working  
Group on Indigenous Peoples.

Madame Chair, My name is Kee Watchman and I am here from the Cactus Valley-Red Willow Springs Sovereign Community. I am here to speak in favor of creating a Permanent Forum that would assist with the affairs of Indigenous Peoples. In our many years of resistance against the forced relocation efforts of the United States government, we have sought the intervention of the United Nations many times. And although we are grateful for your visit and that of Mr. Martinez to our homeland, we have found little help from the United Nations. There are many issues and there are many problems in our Indian communities. But none of them will be taken care of, if this great body of nations can do no more than have hearings and write massive pages of reports.

A Permanent Forum is a step in the right direction. To emphasize how important such a step would be, I would like to read a final passage in a statement attached to this page.

READ PAGE 7 in

Statement of the Cactus Valley-Red Willow Springs Sovereign Community to the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Geneva , July 29, 1996. Submitted by Tonantzin Land Institute, P.O. Box 40490, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87196. USA.

Pursuant to the Subcommission resolution, the invitations were sent to the mediator, Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations, Hopi Tribe, and the Navajo Tribe.

In 1995, the U.N. Secretary-General reported to the forty-seventh session of the Subcommission. He stated that "to date, no replies have been received and therefore no further information is available regarding the case of the relocation of the Navajo and Hopi families."<sup>13</sup>

The failure of the United States government to provide information on its Navajo and Hopi relocation program to the United Nations is a further denial of our right to exist as an indigenous group under international law.

The implementation of the relocation program is unjust and violates our basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Our human rights and freedoms as an indigenous group are secured by international law.

The Indian relocation program is racially discriminatory and denies our right to freedom of religion.

Our right to be free from racial discrimination is secured by international law.

Our right to religious freedom is secured by treaty and international law.

Forced relocation under the Navajo Hopi Settlement Act and the Accommodation Agreement is an act of genocide.

Our right to be protected from genocide is secured by international law.

The relocation of Navajos from the Hopi Partitioned Lands is a form of ethnic cleansing.

Ethnic cleansing is a problem of discrimination against indigenous peoples. Such problems are a proper concern of the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

Mindful of the role that the United Nations can play in facilitating the resolution of situations involving indigenous peoples, we respectfully submit this report for your review.

This report is also submitted in the belief that the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples must be respected by nation-states; no less than by the United States of America.

With this submission, we charge the American government with genocide and request that the Working Group continue developing standards for the effective protection of our right to exist as an indigenous community of the Western Hemisphere.