

Statement on Recent Developments
Concerning the Human Rights of the
Indigenous Hawaiian People

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organization. Submitted under the
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Aloha kākou. I bring you traditional greetings of friendship
on behalf of the Hawaiian people.

As most of you know, our people and our ancestral lands have
been controlled by the U.S. of America since her military overthrow
of our constitutional government in 1893 and territorial annexation
in 1898. Nearly a hundred years later, in 1983, a Commission appointed
by America's President Ronald Reagan found that the indigenous people
of Hawai'i do not have aboriginal rights to their lands.

This denial continues the historical relationship of overseas
colonization of the Hawaiian people and their lands by the U.S. Because
Hawaiians were never allowed to choose or reject annexation to the U.S.
our continued ownership by America constitutes the following:

- 1) an arbitrary deprivation of our nationality;
- 2) an arbitrary deprivation of our lands;
- 3) a denial of our rights to self-determination as a people,
including aboriginal rights to our lands and natural resources as
well as rights of cultural and religious freedom.

These deprivations, taken together, constitute violations of
Articles 15, 17, 18, and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human
Rights. In addition, they are also violations of Article 1 of the
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and
Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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In the case of native Hawaiians, we continue to have our lands held in trust by the State of Hawai'i and the Federal government of the United States. We have neither control over nor access to these lands and their resources. And our people are evicted from lands originally ours but presently controlled by the American military and multinational corporations from Japan, Canada and the United States. We are, in a phrase, strangers in our birthlands.

Since the 1960's, tourism has brought hordes of visitors to our fragile islands every year. Our culture, like our land, is used to entertain some 5 million tourists from the rich countries of the world while our own indigenous people are progressively impoverished.

This destruction of our lands, waters, and people is a direct result of America's economic, political and territorial colonization of Hawai'i.

While decolonization has proceeded in other parts of the world, indigenous peoples, like aboriginal Hawaiians, have been suffering forced integration and have been reduced to the status of wards of the various States.

If human rights are to mean anything other than rhetoric, and if they are to be applied to anyone other than those already enjoying them they must first be experienced by indigenous people who are the prior inhabitants of the continents and islands of the world. Most basic among these rights are those of self-determination: that is, rights to live on and control our lands, and to pass on our culture to future generations. As peoples, rather than populations, we also have international rights as nations to take our place among the society of nations.

In light of these rights, we would like to suggest that the following be included in the report of the Working Group to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities:

1) Indigenous Peoples are Peoples and not Populations, and therefore have rights of self-determination.

2) As Peoples, we constitute the original nations and confederacies of the world and therefore have the right to be treated as self-governing entities.

3) As self-governing entities, we have the right to control our own lands and natural resources.

4) As Peoples, we have the right to resist any form of forced integration and assimilation such as trusteeship, wardship, and minority status.

I urge the Working Group to consider these suggestions.

Thank you.