

SEMILLA WARUNKWA

In consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council

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- Agenda Item 5 (d).

Human rights dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Intervention made by: Leta Killer [Oglala Lakota / Arikara]

Hau Mitakuyapi! Leta Killer Emaciyapi! Greetings Madame Chair, distinguished delegates and Indigenous relatives! The organization Semilla Warunkwa shares this space with me today to have our Peoples' voices heard. My name is Leta Killer. I am an Oglala Lakota & Arikara Mother, Grandmother, & Water Protector. I come from Oglala Lakota grassroots Grandmothers who spoke up to protect Paha Sapa, our sacred Black Hills & our Oyate, our people, from things like the Uranium mines that poisoned our water. I felt pulled to come to Standing Rock to protect the Mni Sose, the Missouri River, to which my people are connected through our Arikara past, and even now, our Oglala drinking water comes from the Missouri River.

I met my love Steve Martinez at Standing Rock and we stood by one another for Unci Maka, Grandmother Earth, and Mni, Water, for future generations. Steve Martinez is of Spanish, Mescalero Apache, and Pueblo ancestry and came to Standing Rock to deliver supplies, but, was inspired by what he saw there, and decided to stay, instead of going back to work in the North Dakota oil fields. Now he is in jail, for refusing to participate in the state's effort to blame Water Protectors for the violence of the police.

At Standing Rock, when our people tried to protect our sacred burial grounds, they attacked us with dogs. When our people gathered in prayer, they shot us with concussion grenades & rubber bullets. When our people stood up for the water, they sprayed us with chemical weapons, and soaked us with fire hoses in the middle of winter. While the gathering at Standing Rock was still going on, in November 2016, Steve was subpoenaed to a secret Grand Jury, but after he invoked his right to remain silent and refused to answer questions, his subpoena was dropped several months later.

Now four years later, the Federal Government is grasping at straws, trying not to be held accountable for terrible things law enforcement did to peaceful, prayerful water protectors. Steve was subpoenaed again in November 2020, and again in February, 2021. He has been imprisoned almost continuously since February 3, 2021, despite never being accused or charged with any crime. But Steve is holding his ground and standing by his principles.

Steve Martinez is speaking up with his SILENCE. Feds can twist words into what they want as my family learned at the 2nd Wounded Knee in 1873. The court has imprisoned him, trying to force him to talk, stripping him of his rights in order to do so.

This is a quiet happening. There is no court case number so there is no public record. Grand Juries are an unjust and secretive legal process without proper oversight and are easily manipulated to target political movements. We can see the injustice and manipulation happening right now as the court has even fined him \$50 for every day he stands his ground.

Still today and throughout history our Indigenous people all over Grandmother Earth are killed, persecuted, criminalized, attacked, and imprisoned all for protecting what is sacred. But our people

have been and continue to be resilient, walking with the strength and memory of our ancestors footprints.

Steve has been subpoenaed and resisted the Grand Jury 3 times now. He walks with the strength of his ancestors and predecessors who have also resisted Grand Juries.

Steve has a strong love for the people, the Earth, the Water, especially the Mni Sose-the Missouri River- where the Dakota Access Pipeline still needs to be shut down. Please keep Steve in your thoughts & prayers & also Water Protectors & Attorneys still fighting for Justice. Please stand with us to protect the Water, as all water on our Earth is connected & sacred.

You can learn more at www.SupportSteveMartinez.com . Pilamiya Ye! Thank you! Mni Wiconi! Water is Life! Mitakuye Oyasin! We are all related!