

**11<sup>th</sup> Session Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - Geneva, 13 July 2018**

**Item 11: Proposals to be submitted to the Human Rights Council for its consideration and approval**

**Manuel Lujan Cruz III, Independent Guáhan & Barbara Pluma Moreno,**

**Joint Statement on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Non-self-governing Territories**

Håfa Adai and thank you Madame/Mr. Chair,

My name is Manuel Lujan Cruz, and together with my colleague, Barbara Pluma Moreno, speak on behalf of the indigenous peoples of Guam and Puerto Rico, both of which are territories under the administration of the United States, and therefore lacking one of the most fundamental human rights established by articles one and 55 of the UN Charter—and again in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—the right to self-determination.

In two years the third international decade for decolonization will come to a close, and yet there remain 17 non-self-governing territories; to include Guam—and among those territories are indigenous peoples without sovereignty and under alien subjugation.

As stated in UN General Assembly Resolution 1514, these circumstances constitute a denial of fundamental human rights, which should be a chief concern of this body, and the United Nations in general.

However, in the last two country-specific Universal Period Reviews concerning the US, neither Puerto Rico or Guam were mentioned once—and thus the issues faced by indigenous peoples in both communities went unnoticed. What's more, madame Special Rapporteur's 2017 Country Report on the US is also silent on the issues of both territories.

As participants in this year's OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship, we've had the opportunity to connect with indigenous peoples from 28 other countries; and gain an understanding of the issues imposed on their sovereignty over land, politics, society, and cultures.

The indigenous peoples of both Guam and Puerto Rico face many of these same issues nuanced by the large presence of US military forces, yet our political relations to the US as colonies means our protests against the impacts of colonization on our lands, waters, and our indigenous peoples are silenced on the international stage.

Currently, indigenous peoples are often the most vulnerable members of their societies; and in Guam and Puerto Rico this is especially true. Unless this body acts with any sense of urgency, the futures of indigenous peoples living under current colonial structures is uncertain.

To that end, we introduce the following recommendations:

Conduct a thematic study on the rights of indigenous peoples in NSGTs and other territories under the administration of the United States; condemn the ongoing militarization of indigenous lands by the United States in NSGTs and other territories; and conduct a thematic study on the displacement of indigenous peoples in NSGTs and other territories due to imposed economic hardships relative to political status and militarization.

Sen hamyo' ma'åse, jan jan katum, and thank you once again for allowing us to address you.