

**TESTIMONY BY THE YOUNG MEN'S LEAGUE OF GUAM
IN SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**RELATIVE TO SUPPORTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM MOVE FORWARD
TO APPEAL THE RULING OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF GUAM TO ASSIST IN
DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF THE NATIVE INHABITANTS OF GUAM.**

RESOLUTION NO. 51-34

**RELATIVE TO SUPPORTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM NOT ENTER INTO
A CONSENT DECREE WITHOUT APPROVAL OF THE GUAM LEGISLATURE AND THE
GOVERNOR OF GUAM REGARDING THE RECENT THREATENED LAWSUIT
PROPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OVER THE
CHAMORRO LAND TRUST ACT.**

RESOLUTION NO. 52-34

SUBMITTED BY:

**BROTHER BOB PELKEY
PRESIDENT**

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2017

GI FINO'-TA, "Hafa Adai" Yan Misin Lago' Na Ogga'an, Ge'heLo' Sinadora
Therese TerLaje Yan Todos Hamyo, I Manma'Gas I Tano'!,

MANGGAIGE HAM GUINI, I INETNON LALAHEN GUAHAN, KONRESPETU YAN
TININA, PARA HAGU SAINA GE'HELO' KUMITE SINADORA THERESE TERLAJE ,
PAREHU I MAGA'LAHEN GUAHAN EDDIE BAZA CALVO, YAN TODU I
MANSINADOT YAN MANSINADORA NI' MANGGAIGE YAN MANANNOK PA'GO,
YAN PARA TODU I MANAOTAO TANO', NA PARA BA IN FANACHU PARA DIRECHO-
TA, I RISULASION SINGUENTAI UNU-TRENTAI KUATTRO (51-34) YAN PAREHU
RISULASION SINGUENTAI DOS -TRENTAI KUATTRO (52-34).

MANDANNA' HIT PA'GO, KUMU UN HINANAO, GI UN SAKMAN, GI UN CHALAN,
YAN KUMU UN TAOTAOGUES, NA MUNGNGA HIT KONFOTME, YA TA KONTRA I
DIPATTMENTON HUSTISIAN ESTADOS UNIDOS NI' PARA U MA AMOT HIT NI'
MANA'I-TA TANO', GINEN I MANAINA-TA, NI' HAGAS IYO-TA, CHAGOGOGO'
TATTE GI ANSIANU NA TIEMPO.

HAMI NI' INETNON LALAHEN GUAHAN, MANATACHU HAM NU I RISULASION
NUMIRU SINGKUENTAI UNU-TRENTAI KUATTRO (51-34) YAN SINGUENTAI DOS-
TRENTA KUATTRO (52-34) NA TA KONTRA I DISISION I KOTTEN DESTRIOTON
GUAHAN YAN PARA IN DIFENDE I DIRECHO-TA, I TANO'-TA GINEN I ASAINA
YU'OS TATA, PARA TODU I MANAOTAO TANO' NI' MANMALOFFAN ANTES, PA'GO
YAN I MANMAMAILA' ! MANHITA MANACHU MO'NA, TA FANACHU TODU! TA
FANOHGE CHAMORU!

Gi fino Englatera -

Madame Chair and Members of Guam's Legislature.

My name is Bob Pelkey. I am the President of the Young Men's League of Guam today's marks the exact day and month 100 years ago when the Young Men's League of Guam was legally incorporated on Guam. I am here on behalf the League and all those who've come before me in the past 100 years of our rich history as the region's oldest and only Chamorro fraternity in order to register not just our support for the Guam Legislature's efforts to appeal the decision of the United States District Court on Guam as well as to thwart any threats against our Chamorro Nation, foreign or domestic but also to enter into the record the League's affirmation of the rights of the Chamorro People and all other Indigenous Peoples throughout the world.

My Brothers and I are here to remind anyone and everyone listening that the indigenous Chamorro People have suffered from historical injustices spanning centuries and that the ruling by the US District Court on Guam is yet another straw upon the back of our colonized people.

Further, the threat by the United States Department of Justice is but another splinter in the eyes of our people who toil day in and day out to sustain a living, to live in peace, to marry, love and raise a family free of political interference and imperial oppression.

To the former, the issue of Our Chamorro Right to Self-Determination...

1. the United States, through its military, suppressed our language and our culture in its early occupation of the island,... worst, the regime at the time dictated how we should speak *and* dress... the naval leadership at the time went so far as to suppress one's desire to whistle, walk at night, celebrate the feast of a patron saintⁱ or – as the League may attest first-hand during its inception - to *FREELY CONGREGATE!*
2. And, yet, here we are... 117 years later and the same United States – only this time through another separate branch of its government -- chooses to further suppress our right to self-determination, an inherent right as we see it 'granted to us not by man or any one government but by Our Creator, by God himself.' The right to self-determination is in conformance with international law and is acknowledged and affirmed by the United Nations whose charter and resolutions advocates for the fundamental importance of indigenous peoples to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
3. Madame Chair and members of Guam's Legislature, from the onset of ocean travel that enabled other peoples to visit the Marianas we, as a Chamorro People, have always welcomed our guests. As history is our witness, the annals are rich with evidence and historical account that we were a strong and loving and generous people.

The fine qualities of our People, achievements and practices of our Great Chamorro Nation were known by some for hundreds of years since foreigners were first able to record such observations in their books using their languages... but it's important to note

that what was recently observed is what has been deeply held and widely practiced within our Great Chamorro Nation for thousands of years.

My point: our People's love and hospitality was freely given and we never took from our guests. This was true then and it is true today.

Unfortunately, what was true then remains true today in terms of how the United States has historically treated its overseas occupied territory of Guam. What was true in the Spanish-American War was true in World War I and World II. It's as true as the recent US District Court Decision last week, some 70 years following the war. As the world becomes smaller and international affairs become more tightly interwoven and well curated in the media, educational materials, monetary exchanges and court systems, has our more perfectly forming union learned nothing since?

My point: the only lesson we've derived from the United States District Court's decision is that Our People's love, hospitality *and* patriotism is freely given yet the United States continues to take and take, and take.

They took our lands,
stripped us of our culture,
diluted our identity and now
they are attempting to take away that one God given right to freely decide for ourselves what we as a Chamorro People would like to do for ourselves and our families devoid of imperial political interference.

We may decide to become a part of the Union with all of the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

We may decide to become independent yet freely associate.

Whatever path it is... let us choose.

Let a People who have never had the right to determine their path for the past 400 years, a period of time spanning the Spanish Conquest on through a century of American Imperialism, have that *one* opportunity to exercise the right to choose how they would like to live out their lives.

Madame Chair and members of Guam's Legislature, now to the latter, the threat by the U.S. Department of Justice against our People for using our lands...

1. The League finds it ironic that the U.S. Department of Justice has issued a written statement expressing its concern for certain alleged injustices about how the People of Guam, through its governing structures, have decided to use government lands when, in fact, it should be chiefly concerned with how the United States itself has ill acquired native lands thereby dispossessing an indigenous People for well over half a century.

The League finds it ironic that the U.S. Department of Justice has issued a written statement expressing its concern for certain alleged injustices carried out by the People of Guam when, in fact, there is a litany of historical injustices by the United States upon our natural resources, environment and our People. It is our opinion that Such Crimes Against Humanity and Crimes Against the Environment may, perhaps, make for a more effective use of limited federal resources on issues that have greater implications throughout America most especially upon our Brothers and Sisters in other United States possessions.

Madame Chair and members of Guam's Legislature the League stands with you in pushing back against the United States on these debased inconsequential charges against the Chamorro People and our use of Chamorro Lands.

2. To anyone and everyone listening, the League sees it fit to remind the world that the Chamorro People were dispossessed of their lands and resources which prevented our People from further developing ourselves. Prior to the imperial conquest of our island we were self-governing. There was trade, health care, education, recreation and defense, for ourselves. Consistent with colonial conquest, with the occupation of our island by the United States came the possession of our lands without our consent for the purposes of war. Following the war, when the United States military no longer saw a need to use our entire island to barracks their soldiers, store their tanks or launch as many of their squadrons from Guam they returned what was deemed 'excess' properties to the local government.

For the record, what may have been deemed excess by the occupying nation has always been deemed as sufficient and necessary for our use and by our standards; for it was upon those lands and in those streams and springs and from those ocean waters that we raised livestock, harvested crop, caught our shrimp and fish, drank our water, washed our bodies and recreated with our families.

3. Madame Chair and members of Guam's Legislature the League finds it ironic that a representative from the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division finds suit that the Chamorro Land Trust Act discriminates on the basis of race or national origin, in violation of the Fair Housing Act, by limiting certain housing-related benefits to persons who are native Chamorros.

What of the Navy and Air Force lands and military housing? Are we, the original landowners, and native Chamorros not being discriminated against based on our race and prohibited access to such lands, housing, and natural resources?

It is the League's opinion that this is not an issue of housing and it was never their land.

In closing, the Young Men's League of Guam is in support of Guam's Legislature consideration to pass Resolutions 51 and 52.

Further, the Young Men's League of Guam further imparts this message to this body in your quest to preserve, protect and advance the interest of the Chamorro People:

Maila' ya ta fan hita mo'na, ya ta akudi este na takhelo' asunto, gi klâru yan dinanche na manera.

Mungnga hit manmumu para I direcho-ta.

Gi mistet, ta ilão I mânu nina'siñã-ta ya fan unu hit na hinasso yan hinanão, kosaki todú hit manmiresi para I minãolek todú I mantaotão-ta yan parehu para i minãolek I tano'!

Ta mumuyi kumu unu pat sanghe, lao ta fanhita mo'na kumu unu, sa' unu ha' na enemigu.

Fanohge Chamorro!

Let us fight, together or apart but let us fight for the same noble reasons and against our common enemy: oppression. And in all its forms.

Let us not fight each other because the paths that we choose are different.

If we must, let us take a different path, but may it be towards the same end goal.

Biba Chamorro!

¹ Governor Leary. General Order No. 4. Aug. 25, 2899