

TMT International Observatory Board of Governors
100 West Walnut Street, Suite 300, Pasadena, CA 91124

Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation Board of Trustees
1661 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, CA 94304

The Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawai'i
Office of the Governor, State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Josh Green, Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i
Office of the Lieutenant Governor, State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Harry Kim, Mayor, County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor, East Hawai'i: 25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

August 8, 2019

Re: Respect the rights of Kanaka Maoli, halt the Thirty Meter Telescope project from desecrating Mauna Kea, and prohibit the use of force against peaceful protectors

Dear TMT International Observatory Board of Governors; Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation Board of Trustees; Honorable David Y. Ige; Honorable Josh Green; and Honorable Harry Kim,

We, the undersigned national and international civil society organizations and human rights defenders, urge you to respect Kanaka Maoli, Indigenous Hawaiians, by ensuring the respect of their human rights to exercise cultural practices and to peaceably assemble to protect their sacred Mauna Kea from further desecration and destruction. Ultimately, we demand an immediate end to the pursuance of the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Mauna Kea which is the most culturally and spiritually significant site to Kanaka Maoli.

Indigenous Peoples have always been connected to and have held reverence for their mountains. Kanaka Maoli hold great reverence for their holy mountain, Mauna Kea, also known as Mauna a Wākea (Mountain of Sky Father). Mauna Kea is said to have arisen from Wākea and Papahānaumoku -- Earth Mother and Sky Father. It is revered as the origin of Hawaiian cosmology and the place where Kanaka Maoli trace their lineage to. Mauna Kea is a place of spiritual connection with one's ancestors -- a sacred temple.

The proposed TMT would be taller than any existing building on Hawai'i Island at 18 stories high causing further devastation to the cultural landscape and open space in a conservation district that includes hundreds of Hawaiian cultural sites and shrines. This project is led by corporate and foreign interests of the Thirty Meter Telescope International Observatory LLC including the University of California, California Institute of Technology, and the nations of Canada, China,

India, and Japan, who intend to systematically ignore and violate the human rights of Kanaka Maoli.

The construction of TMT would negatively impact and interfere with the cultural and religious practices of Kanaka Maoli. This is a violation of the standards set by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including articles 12 (1) and 25 regarding spiritual practices, and article 32 (2) on free, prior, and informed consent. As articulated in the UNDRIP articles 11 and 12, the United States, including the State of Hawai'i, is obligated to respect the cultural and religious customs of indigenous Hawaiians.

In addition, the efforts undertaken by the State of Hawai'i and all parties involved in advancing the TMT project violate General Recommendation 23 of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which calls upon State parties to ensure that "indigenous communities can exercise their rights to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs." The construction of TMT on Mauna Kea is in direct violation of these international legal norms. Pursuing the construction of TMT would be an injustice against Kanaka Maoli and all Indigenous Peoples the United Nations seeks to protect.

We, the undersigned national and international civil society organizations and human rights defenders, write in support of the peaceful resistance of Kanaka Maoli at Mauna Kea. We recognize that Kanaka Maoli have experienced discrimination and institutional racism at the hands of the federal and local governments since the illegal occupation of the Kingdom of Hawai'i 126 years ago. We stand in solidarity with Kanaka Maoli as they express their right to self-determination, knowing that their struggle to protect Mauna Kea is felt by Indigenous Peoples around the world. We demand that their peaceful protests are met with respect, and we ask for a prohibition on any and all use of force against nonviolent demonstrators. Finally, we demand an immediate halt to the pursuance of the TMT project on the sacred temple of Mauna Kea.

Please contact the US Human Rights Network Deputy Director Salimah Hankins with any questions or concerns regarding this letter: shankins@ushrnetwork.org.

Sincerely,

Africa Solidarity Center Ireland
African American Cultural Preservation Council
Aging People in Prison Human Rights Campaign
Alianza Indigena Sins Fronteras
American Institute for Human Rights
Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation
Art and Resistance Through Education
Best Practices Policy Project
Black Alliance for Peace

Bridge that Gap Initiative
Coalición de Derechos Humanos
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Peace and Justice Studies, Tehran
Center for Women's Global Leadership
Chicago Anti Eviction Campaign
CHIRAPAQ Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru
Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas
Cultural Survival
El Pueblo Indígena Bubi de la Isla de Bioko
European Network of People of African Descent
Eyes Right Veteran's Foundation
Freedom Archives
Grassroots Global Justice
Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
Indiana Alliance for Democracy
International Center for Advocates Against Discrimination
Kent State Truth Tribunal
M.O.M.S.
New Energy Economy
O'odham Elders Council of Arizona
Parable of the Sower Intentional Community Cooperative
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Priority Africa Network
Puente Human Rights Movement
San Jose State University Human Rights Institute
Save Our Youth and Family Annual March
Schaghticoke First Nations
Sex Workers Outreach Project of San Antonio
Sisters for Christian Community
South Texas Human Rights Center
Southerners On New Ground
Trans Queer Pueblo
United Nations Association of the USA
University of Massachusetts Boston
US Human Rights Network
Voices of Indigenous Voters
Winnemem Wintu Tribe
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Women's All Points Bulletin