

# INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAII



## EXECUTIVE

Office of the Foreign Minister  
41-1300 Waikupanaha Street Waimānalo, HI 96795

### **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 25th Session, April 20-May 1, 2026**

**Agenda Item 3: Discussion on the theme “Ensuring Indigenous Peoples’ health, including in the context of conflict”**

**Intervention by Nation of Hawai‘i, presented by Paele Kiakona**

**Aloha Madame Chair, distinguished delegates, and relatives,**

I stand before you as a native representative of an occupied sovereign nation whose overthrow in 1893 remains unremedied under international law. Many know our homeland as the 50th state of the United States. We know it as the Nation of Hawai‘i.

I am here today representing my hometown of Lahaina, which in August 2023 was devastated by wildfire. Lahaina was once the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom but now has the reputation as the place where the deadliest wildfire in recent U.S. history took place.

More than 13,000 people were displaced and scattered overnight including Native Hawaiian families, immigrants, and multigenerational households. Over 100 people lost their lives that day and many are still not home.

Now we are not here to represent just a single town, but Lahaina's tragedy is an opportunity for the world to see what happens when the fate of our home is out of our hands.

Despite our efforts the pattern continues.

Recently Hawai‘i has been experiencing extreme flooding that have taken out entire neighborhoods leaving our people displaced and in recovery once again.

We have turned Hawai‘i’s once resilient, and productive landscape into one that is highly fragile to anything that disrupts the status quo.

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In both cases of flood and fire, we were left to fend for ourselves by the occupant/ that has created the conditions we are forced to live in.

Despite the hardship our people stood strong together. We took care of one another, brought supplies from the ground up, and forced our way to the table to bring solutions.

We have proven that we the people of Hawai'i must be the ones to lead the way because we see what happens when we are not.

We have invoked our right to maintain and strengthen our spiritual relationship with our aina under Article 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

But decisions have still been made without us, disregarding Articles 19 and 32, leaving us where we are today.

Lahaina was reopened only two months after the fire despite 18k people signing a petition to dispute that decision and this points to a broader pattern that has been going on for generations.

To some, this may look like oversight but to us, it is part of the same system that has already forced more than half of Native Hawaiians to live away from our homeland and we believe the prolonged displacement of our people demands international scrutiny at the highest level.

We respectfully recommend that the United Nations investigate the human rights and health impacts of the Lahaina fires and their aftermath, to ensure rebuilding is Indigenous-led and compliant with free, prior, and informed consent, and to recognize the ongoing displacement of Native Hawaiians as a violation of international human rights law.

We also want to extend a formal invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Dr. Albert K. Barume to conduct an official visit to Hawai'i.

To us, Lahaina a me ka pae 'aina o hawaii is a test of whether Indigenous peoples will be protected or erased under the guise of recovery.

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Our people are still there.  
Still standing.  
Still fighting.  
Still surviving.

And

We will not accept a rebuild that excludes us.  
We will no longer accept decisions made without us.  
And our aloha will never disappear.