

South Western Peninsula of Warao Descendants First Nation of Trinidad and Tobago

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Written contribution/Report prepared by the organization “South Western Peninsula of Warao Descendants First Nation of Trinidad and Tobago” for the summary that elaborates the Office of the High Commission on Human Rights for the Universal Periodic Evaluation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

1. We are the elders of the South Western Peninsula of Warao Descendants, First Nation of Trinidad and Tobago, and are Warao Descendants in South Trinidad.

Historically, we are in the Northern boundry of Warao Territory. The Southern boundry is in Karoshimo Mountain in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Seven thousand years now we have inhabited this territory and South America.

Our first parents Habori and Wanta are believed to be the progenitors of all aboriginal tribes.

Our governance policy is based upon the respect for our Shamans, Elders and Chiefs who rule with the knowledge of our ancestors. Freedom from fear in

the performance of our duty to maintain harmony with nature is our world order. We are a Nation and not an organization, culture group or NGO.

Our allegiance is to our people, our territorial habitat of Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela and countries within South America. As Elders, we assume the role as protectors of Aboriginal people's freedom as trustees within the territory.

Our Earth Gods Wara Waro and Nabarima dwell in the Naparima San Fernando Hills where our progenitors found refuge in a Cave therein: and their spirit dwells. Our family in the Orinoco Delta used to do holy pilgrimages upon this hill until the 1950's. We are the canoe people. Our travels throughout our world of South and Central America have exposed us to various cultures. Invasion of our territories by Spain, led to the enslavement of our people. This dispersed our people as some returned to the Orinoco and others remained in Trinidad and Tobago.

Years of colonization have divorced us from the wisdom of our ancestors. We have been subjected to the growth of a new society of culture clashes as people from different parts of the world arrived on our shores. This led us the above mentioned Elders Council, to undertake objectives to educate and sensitize our people in order to identify themselves. We have, since then, stepped forward to unite the Nation.

2. Some objectives which could help our people to identify themselves with our brother and sisters worldwide are:
 - To research knowledge of our Ancestors with a view to find ourselves, educate our people and sensitize them towards their rights.

- To register and organize our people with the Principle of “Freedom of Association” into an infrastructure of National operational Capability in order to address their needs.
- Recognition as the first Nation of Trinidad and Tobago within the Constitution with a Ministry to address our affairs in Parliamentary Representation.
- Trade and Cultural exchanges among our territory’s family in South American States.

3. South Western Peninsula of Warao Descendants First Nation of Trinidad and Tobago uses this occasion with the Universal Periodic Review of Member States of the United Nations to present this written contribution to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations on Venezuela. In particular, we hope that our experience will aide in exposing the condition of basic human rights in Venezuela.

Our interest lie in the history of the Warao people whose habitat comprised both countries in respect to our territory. In the Republics recognition of first nation natives within their constitution; we are indeed pleased to recognize such veracity.

In the eight articles inserted in the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela, the articles 120 and 125 appear to me as challenges.

Article 120 seems to me, to be suggesting that the criteria of informing and consulting with our first nation people is enough to implement state’s exploitation of “our” natural resources. Our rights to consent or not appears to be indefinable.

The word “Shall be carried out” implies the right of the state over the right of the native.

Seven Thousand years of religious traditional and cultural habitation have preserved the natural resources that are our Gods, mother of the Forrest, mother of food, sacred grounds, sacred animals, sacred spirits, cosmology, and way of life. The Earth knows us; we know the Earth, we are one. To cut a tree requires a sacrifice. Actions that violate the natural order of harmony in nature are crimes of humanity. Justice lies within our hearts, not in Laws or their endorsements.

Article 125 speaks of representation in the territories where native population control, in accordance with the law.

4. I recommend that Shamans and Elders of the Venezuelan Warao Community be part of the state’s executive rules and advisors in the administration of State development, planning and implementation.

The advantages of your State lie within its Constitution and how its ideas are implemented and how positively the government has created a Ministry of Popular Power for Indigenous Peoples, to facilitate and promote the strengthening of the communal ancestral indigenous and respecting their values, principles and ancestral customs.

6. We also would like to recommend the Venezuelan Government, to invite us to visit native people of Venezuela, firstly with the purpose of family reunion. Secondly, in order to be appraised of their situation with a view to realistically address our opinion and recommendations because if we will be expose to the root of your culture and you will be expose to the root of ours, then we can learn from

each other in order to help each other and examine our traditions, culture, religions, etc., with the intention to compare similarities or polar views to get a better analysis of ourselves.