



March 20, 2020

Dear United Nations Secretary General and Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,

I am Karyence Ronald Delorme, 74 years old and the Acting Head Chief, or “Little Shell”, of the Little Shell Pembina Nation also known as the last fire keeper (Authority) of the Great Chippewa Nation. Little Shell is a title of authority in similitude to President or Secretary General, of which I am the 7th since Little Shell I who was named Ase-ance and who died in 1811.

It is with respect and humility for the mission you undertake for international equity and justice that I endorse the attached Declaration of Indigenous Identity and Rights, prepared by our Grand Council, for submission to the United Nations and in particular to the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, so that we, the Little Shell Pembina Nation also known as the Great Chippewa Nation, can self-identify to the International community as a distinct indigenous peoples of North America.

We exist. We have never left our ancestral lands, nor have we ceded any rights to our ancestral title, territory or resources. Our occupancy rights have never been extinguished and instead we are enduring a 115-year forced occupation by the United States Government in violation of the 1863 Old Crossing Treaty and Article VI of the United States Constitution.

My grandfathers tried to reason with the United States Government, regarding their actions and activities against our and other indigenous peoples; however, it fell upon deaf ears. It was in an age where rewards for our death were issued by their State and Federal Governments, and crimes committed against the humanity of the Indian were not prosecutable due to United States Federal Laws stating that in no case shall a white man be convicted of any offense upon the testimony of an Indian or Indians.

As the United States progressed socially in the 20th century their actions to our people were far slower as we were deemed only worthy of assimilation. It was not until 1978 that our traditions and customs were protected, that our children were protected from being taken to assimilation boarding schools, after over 300,000 children had endured this crime, and along the way from 1960 to 1980 over 1/4th of all native women were forcibly sterilized by the state and federal policy.

The fact that my children and grandchildren are the very first to be born into an era post-ethnic and cultural genocide gives me great pride in the actions of my grandfathers.

But we are not done with our mission for justice, redress and amends.

Today, the United States Government offers my people only one option to exist as an indigenous people, we must submit to their Department of Interior and Bureau of Indian Affairs, we must petition them to exist and allow them to decide if our identity will be recognized.

The United States get to choose if our destiny is assimilation by ignoring our petition, or if accepted they would place us into a reservation system upon lands not of our choosing and our management would be in the hands of their Federal Bureau, we would be their property and this indignance is unacceptable.

I look around Indian Country at those who entered into such agreements and I see only poverty and depredation, I see the great cup of life turned into a cup of grief and will never allow such a fate to befall my people.

To request the occupying Government's approval to exist is unacceptable. To do such would be paramount to accepting their theft of our land, territories and resources, which we possessed in full authority until the 1904 ratification of the fraudulent 1892 McCumber Agreement. This agreement was not signed by our authorized tribal government, but instead by a second council created by their Indian Agent John Waugh of persons not members of our nation, all the while doing so when the 1863 Treaty Signatories were alive and had first refused such an agreement.

How did we get here?

In 1863 we signed an International agreement called the Old Crossing Treaty in order to stop their westward advance which had disintegrated our Council of Three Fires that had existed since 796 AD. The United States forced the destruction of the Potawatomi and Odawa Nations, in what is now Michigan, Northern Illinois, Ohio and Indiana, and the placement of these people into small reservations, split their people into many locations, impoverishing them and forcing them into starvation and despotism. All the while the United States Government took the Odawa and Potawatomi's vast land, territories and resources and became wealthy.

The United States then began the very same mission with the Great Chippewa Nation as they forced one community after another into forced submission across what is now called Wisconsin and Minnesota until finally only we, the Little Shell Pembina Nation were left with unceded, unconquered ancestral lands west of the North Red River. We never relinquished title or ceded our ancestral lands, a point that even their Commissioners of Indian Affairs and Secretary of the Interior noted continually from 1863 to 1892 in their official correspondence one to another, facts and truth found in our attached filing.

My Grandfathers tried to have hope that the wrong would be made right, all the while the world was silent, and we suffered first an age of ethnic genocide and then economic and cultural genocide. We watched as they took our land, resources and became wealthy while doing so impoverished our former great and noble people, my people.

I ask you, what makes us any less deserving of justice than the Israelite Tribe? What makes the injustice committed against my tribe any less worthy of justice? What exempts the United States of America from account of their crimes while others in the International community are held to account for less?

I never forgot who I was, and I endured their camps of suffering they placed me within as a child.

It was 1954, and I was 9 years old when the U.S. Indian Agents came for me and my brother Glenn who was only 6 years old. They took us to the Wahpeton Boarding School just south of Fargo, North Dakota. Once there they banned our ability to speak our language, customs and indigenous identity and punished us if we violated this rule. One such punishment was called the Hot Line, where instructors would create a single file column where they would stand on either side holding leather straps. We would be forced to make it from one end to the other which would result in severe wounds from the lashings. We were underfed, treated as subhuman and made to feel that how we were was inherently wrong to the Creator.

At grade 8 we were then transported to the Flandreau Boarding School in South Dakota just north of Sioux Falls.

Once able to return home I never left my father, Louis Delorme's side again. At this time, my father was the acting Head Chief, Little Shell VI, of the Little Shell Pembina tribe.

In 1974 I became the 7th Little Shell or Head Chief of our people, who are dispersed across our ancestral lands in what is now the northern half of North Dakota.

We exist and stand upon the very ancestral lands the Americans found us upon. We do not need their permission to exist or to claim our identity and we call out to the International community for support, encouragement and protections as we seek a new path forward, as the path the United States government has continually provided for my people is the slow death of poverty.

The apathetic disregard by the United States government to just what made them strong, even a global Superpower, is unacceptable. Their foundation is based on the false and fraudulent assumption of authority over our things, that they took without permission.

I declare to the International Community my unyielding demand to the United States of America to let my people go, let our unceded land and resources go, and I demand they live up to their principles of justice, that they claim to represent so strongly, and in doing so to right the wrongs of their grandfathers against my people.

Kind Regards,



Karyence Ronald Delorme
Little Shell VII, Head Chief of the Pembina Nation



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