

**International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 9 August 2018**  
**United Nations Headquarters, New York**  
**Panel Presentation on "Indigenous Peoples' Migration and Movement"**  
**Presenter: Amy Juan, Tohono O'odham, International Indian Treaty Council**

S-ke:g Tas,

A:ni hab ce:gig Amy R. Juan, c hab Kom Wahia amjed, Schuk Toak Ceksan, Tohono O'odham Nation. N-we:magma 'o Nu:wi. N-je'e kc N-o;g 'o hab cee:gig Romalda Miguel c Sylvester Juan c n-we:pnag'od Elijah, Kristyn, c Ross. N-ka:k c N-wo:sk o'hab cecec:gig Mary Melissa Milesbad c Daniel Juanbad. N-hu'ul c n-ba:b 'o hab cecec:gig Mary Elizabeth Miguelbad c Lawrence Miguelbad. Sa'l si s-ap en-tatk am daha hemuc!

Good Day,

My name is Amy R. Juan, and I come from the village of Comobabi in the Schuk Toak District of the Tohono O'odham Nation. My parents are Romalda Miguel and Sylvester Juan and my siblings are Elijah, Kristyn and Ross. My Paternal Grandparents are the late Mary Melissa Miles and Daniel Juan, and my Maternal Grandparents are the late Mary Elizabeth Miguel and Lawrence Miguel. It is very good to be here today!

I come before you all from the Tohono O'odham Nation of Southern Arizona. I bring good blessings from the desert where we are in the midst of our monsoon season, a time where we pray for life giving rain, plant and harvest our traditional foods, and celebrate the beginning of a new year. We are a humble but strong People, who call the desert our home, who's name embodies it, and who are blessed to still exist in the places that our songs, dances and stories came from when our world was created.

Our traditional homelands span South to Hermosillo, Mexico, North to the City of Phoenix, West to the Sea of Cortez and East to the San Pedro River. Today, the Tohono O'odham Nation consists of 2.5 million acres which is comparable to the State of Connecticut, and shares 75 miles of international border that divide our lands and people in half.

Many of our O'odham relatives still occupy communities in what is now Mexico. Communities like Ce:dagi Wahia, Wo'osan, Cu:wi Gersh and Quitovac that are sanctuaries for some of our most sacred sites and ceremonies.

Militarization and Occupation has been enforced on the Tohono O'odham Nation and other Native Nations for a very long time, but we are now feeling a second wave of these tactics in tribal nations that have been compromised by the border, such as the Pascua Yaqui, Cocopah and Lipan Apache.

Since 2002, with the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and the Southwest Border Strategy, we have come to look around us and live with checkpoints to every entrance and exit to the Tohono O’odham Nation, that consists of armed Border Patrol agents, canines, and infrared, radiation and surveillance technology. We have about 300 – 400 armed agents and vehicles patrolling in and around the Tohono O’odham Nation daily, and have two fully equipped forward operating bases. We not only face the threat of a border wall but also anticipate the erection of 12 permanent surveillance towers that our traditional leaders are concerned will affect our precious desert pollinators, which in turn affects the foods and medicines that we as people and our wildlife utilize for our wellbeing, ceremonies and overall way of life that we O’odham call Himdag.

I am 32 years old, and I am the last generation to know what it feels like to have total freedom of movement on our own lands. I am the last to know what it is like to travel to neighboring cities to do simple tasks like grocery shopping, and not be asked, “Are you a U.S. Citizen?”.

We are located in a part of the desert landscape where many migrants cross the border. This is a consequence of “securing the border” from the outside in, starting with big cities like Tijuana/San Diego and Juarez/El Paso that people traditionally migrated to, creating a funnel effect through our homelands. Since 1991 at least 2,871 bodies have been found in the Southern Arizona Desert, more than 40% on the Tohono O’odham Nation. As of January of this year, nine bodies have been found on our lands. Under US law we are discouraged to provide them with water, food or shelter from the heat as they travel through our lands. Our humanity and traditional values are violated as we are criminalized for offering humanitarian aid by these inhumane policies and laws. In the desert, everyone has the right to water.

Recently another form of extreme human rights violation has come to international attention along the border: the forcible separation of children from their parents and families. As we speak here today, more than a thousand of these children have reportedly not yet been reunited with their parents. Our hearts and prayers go out to them as we, as Native Nations still are healing from the forced assimilation tactics of the U.S. Boarding School Era and mentality of “Kill the Indian, Save the Man”.

Very recently, on June 14, 2018, Paulo Remes, a young O’odham man was intentionally hit and run over in his own yard by a United States Border Patrol agent who fled the scene after the incident. He is not the first to have experienced this kind of intentional violence, but he is one who lived. In 2002, Bennett Patricio Jr. was only 18 years old when he was hit and run over several times by a United States Border Patrol Agents, while walking home on a secluded road.

In response the International Indian Treaty Conference adopted a resolution which stated, ***“ IITC will continue to support Indigenous Nations divided by colonial borders that are suffering militarization, occupation, Human Rights abuses and environmental destruction by US government agencies including the US Border Patrol, Department of Homeland Security***

***and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We further call for the US and all other States to uphold their commitments under Article 36 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous regarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples divided by colonial borders;***

It is important to recognize that while I shared much today, there is still much to understand about the changes we are seeing in the world. Many Indigenous Peoples and Nations are affected by forced migration because of climate change and extreme weather events, war, repression, hunger and violence.

However, what continues to feed our fires of survival and resilience is our Culture. In my language we say, “Himdag ‘o wud T-Gewkdag”, Our Culture is our strength! The ways that we have been taught to care for and understand this place we call our Mother Earth, will continue to help us survive and strive to maintain the relationships between our families, subsistence and cultural practices as Peoples and Nations, and to uphold our shared obligations as defenders of the rights of all members of the Human Family. We **must** continue to support and fight for our collective, inherent rights, together.

S-ap’e!