

LisaLinda Nativida

Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice

Buenas yan hafa dai, to all joining in this session of the World Conference Against A and H Bombs; the first gathering of this annual conference after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) earlier this year!

Empowered by the TPNW, we celebrate the victory of this work to make the world a safer place and embrace our global humanity. We on Guahan stand in solidarity with you as we vision and create a peaceful world with *genuine* security, where people not only have the basic necessities to survive, but everything we need to thrive on this planet. We strive for the protection of our environment, the use of diplomacy for global tensions, and the value of human life so that nuclear weapons will no longer be part of the vocabulary of our children. We stand in solidarity with the hibakusha, who have suffered from the destruction of nuclear weapons and support their call for a safe and peaceful world. We will continue in our work holding states accountable to the TPNW.

In 2006, the governments of the United States and Japan entered into an accord revealing realignment initiatives connecting the peoples of my homeland, Guahan (Guam), a U.S. territory or colony and Okinawa. The Realignment Initiatives indicated the U.S.'s intentions to increase its military presence on Guahan by transferring about 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to our island. Upon thoughtful review, CHamoru (indigenous population) women became aware of the Okinawan resistance movement to U.S. military presence, particularly as a result of voluminous sexual and heinous crimes committed by U.S. military members towards women and female children. It was this awareness that prompted local women (consistent with their traditionally matrilineal social order) to organize and give voice to these concerns. We learned about the crimes committed against Okinawan women and children and convened friends and family to organize around the issues of peace and justice affecting CHamorus. Both our communities- Guahan and Okinawa- struggle with environmental contamination and health problems, as well as the loss of our ancestral lands for the development of military bases. We also live with the loss of self-determination to make decisions about our communities because the political structures do not take into account our concerns and input about the dangers of living near military bases. We have little access to our traditional fishing grounds and medicines that are behind military fences.

Convenings such as this conference reminds us that peace and justice is central in light of the ongoing issue of militarization in the Asia Pacific region. Particular emphasis is made on keeping our island homes of Guahan and Okinawa safe and sustainable for our children and

generations to come. We are all deeply committed to ensuring the survival of our people in the midst of militarization and colonization. In light of the proposed relocation of Marines from Okinawa to Guahan, we are very concerned about the safety of our women and children in our community when considering the historical acting out of Marines stationed in Okinawa. It is for this reason that we must stand in continuous solidarity as the stewards of Okinawa and Guahan to work tirelessly for peace, justice, and a sustainable world!

We on Guahan stand in solidarity with Okinawa in the removal of U.S. military bases. The island has shouldered nearly 2/3 of U.S. troops in Japan and have suffered many problems because of it. We look forward to the realization of global peace free of nuclear weapons and all things nuclear in Okinawa, Guahan, and the whole world!

Arigato! Pas yan guinaiya (love and peace)!