



Yukayeke Yamaye Guani
56 Fairfax Drive, Kgn 19
St. Andrew. Jamaica W.I
Tel: (876) 880-6995 / 463-5166
E-mail: Yukayekeguanija@gmail.com
Twitter / Instagram @Yamayeguani

Date

03/11/22

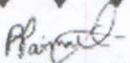
Usa Kasi (Good Day)

We, the Yukayeke Yamaye Guani council of The Jamaican Humming Bird Taino People, are a strong, established, vibrant community and the voice of the Taino people living on our ancestral Island of Jamaica (Yamaye) and in the Taino diaspora. Over the years we have engaged in many activities and events which have demonstrated that we have a vibrant, living presence on the Island. In a historic moment on May 26, 2019, the day of his investiture after 500 plus years after being declared extinct, our Yukayeke (community) chose "Kalaan" Nibonrix Kaiman to be the Kasike (chief) for our community. We work to preserve our Yamaye Taino traditional knowledge systems and culture, and to bring awareness of Jamaica's contemporary Taino presence to the public.

We are writing to express our disappointment with Jamaica's State Party Report (2022) to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) which states, in the *general overview of Jamaica* section, that "Jamaica has no population that is considered as indigenous given that pre-Columbian indigenous tribes were exterminated during the period of colonization." This harmful statement supports and reproduces the false colonial narrative of Taino extinction and is a form of Taino erasure. We are aware that Jamaica does not disaggregate, or have a category, to indicate Indigenous people on census forms, and we recently consulted with the *Statistical Institute of Jamaica* (STATIN). A meeting was held on August 26, 2022, with our council at STATIN's regular communications meeting. Our council made a request for them to add an Indigenous category for future censuses, and we received a commitment from them to work with our Indigenous community on this current census and future censuses. The absence of data is noted, and we have consciously made an effort to ensure that they will be able to collect that data during the next census. Without the data, government officials or representatives cannot state that there are no Indigenous people in Jamaica. Our community has recently made efforts to collect data on the Indigenous population and the conclusion of our meeting with STATIN was positive

The State Party Report also implies there is no racism or discrimination in the country. The report states that "The absence of overt racism and racial discrimination in formal systems and structures in Jamaica explains the fact that there are no formal structures or mechanisms specifically established for their elimination." However, they do not have all of the data on racial discrimination in Jamaica to be able to draw such a conclusion. With there being a lack of complete and formal studies done throughout the country, this is highly problematic and ignores the situation of the Taino people and others whose existence is denied.

YAMAYE GUANI COUNCIL


Robert "Kalaan" Pairman
KASIKE NIBONRIX KAIMAN
CHIEF - YUKAYEKE YAMAYE GUANI
Member - Y.C.O.I.L


Ronalda S. Pairman
KASIKEIANI KAIKOTEKINA
CHIEFTAINESS
Member - Y.C.O.I.L


GAAMANG Gloria Simms
PARAMOUNT CHIEF of Jamaica & Suriname Maroons
TEKINA NUNA - COUNCIL MEMBER
Member - Y.C.O.I.L


Dianne T. Golding Frankson
TEKINA KATIOTOA
COUNCIL MEMBER


Erica Neeganagwedgin
TEKINA EREI-HINARU
COUNCIL MEMBER

JAMAICAN . HUMMINGBIRD . TAINO . PEOPLE



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Many Indigenous peoples around the world have been erased through government laws and policies. We are the first peoples of Jamaica, and we are asserting our rights as the original people.

We are committed to the continuity of Taino culture, history, and contemporary presence throughout the Island and, as Taino people, we are part of the broader global Indigenous resurgence movement.

Our community works together locally, regionally, and globally to honour our sacred ancestral Taino sites on the Island, and we engage in ongoing activities for the repatriation of our sacred items. We also work collaboratively with schools to educate children about Taino history and retention in Jamaica. This year our community participated in the Jamaican Defence Force (JDF) 60-year anniversary celebration, and the JDF acknowledged our Yukayeke Yamaye Guani and Taino people as Jamaica's first defender. Community members also built a Bohio (Taino house) for public viewing and education at the national arena as part of the Institute of Jamaica's exhibit for Jamaica's 60th-anniversary celebration. These are only a few of the resurgent practices of self-determination that our community has led and engaged in to exercise our rights as Taino people.

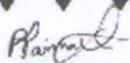
It is critical that we, as Taino people, are not erased and that the myth of our extinction is not further perpetuated. After 500 years we are now publicly honouring our ancestors, culture, and people, and we request that the Jamaica State Party recognize the existence of the Taino people and issue a revision to its 2022 report to the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination. We also request that further revisions are made throughout the report to clarify statements made which implies there is no racism or racial discrimination in Jamaica. As Jamaica's first peoples our right to exist as Taino people must be recognized, as affirmed by the United Nations' own Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We look forward to the revisions as we continue our work of bringing Taino culture and awareness into the public consciousness.



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