

Resolution on Native Americans

The European Parliament has passed a resolution “*on native Americans in the US – Dineh.*”

The Dineh people, who reside in the Hopi Partition Lands (HPL), are facing eviction through the implementation of the Relocation Act (Public Law 93-531), obliging them to sign its Accommodation Agreement.

The Parliament is concerned that the recent Public Law 104-301 and the Accommodation Agreement will mean the Dineh (Navajo) families in the Black Mesa region being forced to abandon their land. Given the denial of sufficient livestock, thereby threatening the Dineh’s cultural and socio-economic survival, the confiscation of firewood causing families severe hardship, especially in winter, and the withdrawal of rights regarding water, hunting and medicinal gatherings, there is no way to remain on the land.

The Dineh families residing in HPL live near the Peabody Coal Company coal mining lease areas on Black Mesa. The Bureau of Indian Affairs granted to the company water rights to the Navajo aquifer, the sole water source of the Dineh and Hopi, whose wells are rapidly drying up, thereby threatening their spiritual and religious existence. On Black Mesa there are 10,000 sites of special significance for the cultural heritage of the Dineh people.

On 16 July 1979, 94 million gallons of water contaminated with uranium mining waste broke through a United Nuclear Corporation storage dam. It poured into the Puerto River in New Mexico and the Little Colorado River where Dineh families from HPL had been evicted to contaminated radioactive areas along the Little Colorado River’s so-called New Lands.

The resolution passed by the European Parliament recalls, *inter alia*, the provision on the rights of indigenous

peoples in the Vienna Declaration adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, stressing the need to protect the economic, social and cultural well-being of indigenous peoples including their distinct identities and cultures. It further recalls the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the principles of Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In its resolution, the Parliament

“Concerned about the health of the Dineh families living in the vicinity of existing mining facilities on Black Mesa and those who relocated to the New Lands,

Calls on the US Government’s law enforcement officers to halt all harassment of Dineh families resisting relocation;

Calls on the US Government to respect the land rights of the Dineh people as well as the provisions for indigenous peoples of the Vienna Declaration;

Calls on the US Government not to proceed with the Accommodation Agreement until the US Congress mandates formal congressional hearings to re-assess the impact of mining in the region;

Calls on the US authorities to organise integration programmes for the Dineh people who have been relocated;

Calls on its delegation for relations with the United States to discuss, at its next meeting, the Dineh (Navajo) and Hopi people’s human rights, development, cultural and religious rights and their treatment by the United States;

Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the US Government, the US Congress, the Navajo and Hopi Tribal Councils and the Governor of the State of Arizona.”

