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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HUMAN RIGHT COUNCIL**
35th session
Item 3 : **Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**
Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Oral statement

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Repression of dissent at Standing Rock: the Future of the Indigenous and the world at stake

Mr. President,

My name is Nataanii Means, I am part of the Oglala Lakota Nation, located in South Dakota.

We thank the Special Rapporteur on Rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association for her report, which addresses the values, and I quote, *"the values of preserving human freedom, dignity and rights, the necessity of active participation in decisions that affect one's life and livelihood"*.

In this regard, I wish to bring to your attention the violations of these rights in my country. April 1, 2016 marked an important beginning for the indigenous people of the land called "America". The Camp of Sacred Stones was founded and the resistance at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) awakened the non-indigenous world to the existence and the continued oppression of indigenous people here and all over the world *and to their determined defense of our common planet.*

For months, Water Protectors put their bodies on the frontline, fought a police state, froze in subzero degree temperatures, shot with rubber bullets, blasted with water cannons, maced, and attacked by dogs. As stated in the report, *"repression today may help a government silence a critic tomorrow, or boost a business's profits the next day"*, but at what cost?

Close to 800 Water Protectors are facing inflated and bogus charges in a racist country. In response to the NoDapl protests by indigenous people, the states of North Dakota and South Dakota have passed laws to repress dissent : One allows drivers to run over protestors on the highway. Another prescribes mandatory incarceration for 10 days for individuals arrested during a protest. Other states are considering similar laws. As we are here to discuss the freedom of assembly and peaceful protest, we understand that these laws clearly violate these rights.

We call upon the U.S Government to rescind such laws, as they are violations of the Constitution, the International Human Rights Law and our rights as citizens. We call upon the Special Rapporteur on freedom of assembly and peaceful protest to visit the United States in order to investigate these human rights violations.

Thank you for your attention.

Geneva, 7th June 2017