



**Sovereign Union of First Nations and Peoples in Australia**  
*Asserting Australia's First Nations Sovereignty into Governance*  
[www.sovereignunion.mobi](http://www.sovereignunion.mobi)

OPEN LETTER:

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon

Secretary-General of UN General Assembly  
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3 March 2015

Your Excellency,

***Re: Refugee Camp in Perth and developing Humanitarian Crisis***

As the appointed Ambassador of the original Aboriginal Embassy, the Convenor of the Sovereign Union and Head of State, Euahlayi Peoples Republic, I herewith bring to your attention the humanitarian crisis that has now developed in the state of Western Australia. This crisis is a consequence of the Western Australian government's policy of shutting down up to 150 Aboriginal homelands and communities, which they have wrongly stated to be financially 'unsustainable' and economically unviable. We regard these actions as an act of war and aggression against the various tribal Nations in Western Australia.

Already we have seen the Lockridge Aboriginal community in Perth bulldozed with impunity after the Commonwealth government of Australia had just completed building new dwellings. The people are homeless and have now crowded into other family homes creating massive overcrowding, which leads to family confrontation and lateral violence that affects not only children but adults alike.

In the northern part of Western Australia the Aboriginal community of Oombulgurri was progressively closed down:

First, the government closed the services. It closed the shop, so people could not buy food and essentials. It closed the clinic, so the sick and the elderly had to move, and the school, so families with children had to leave, or face having their children taken away from them. The police station was the last service to close, then eventually the electricity and water were turned off.

Finally, the 10 residents who resolutely stayed to the end were forcibly evicted, given just two days notice of eviction and allowed

to bring only one box of belongings each. They had to leave behind cars, whitegoods, tools and personal possessions.

[<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/27/the-trauma-of-oombulgurris-demolition-will-be-repeated-across-western-australia>]

Most recently we have been contacted by Aboriginal representatives in the Kimberley of armed police raiding Aboriginal communities where they have shot on site the pet dogs in front of the horrified community. Furthermore, we have other incidences where armed police smashed into an old woman's home, whilst she was showering and without reason opened the door and pulled back the shower curtain and exposed her nakedness. Only yesterday we have been advised that armed police stormed the home without any just cause, of two elderly women who were asleep in their beds.

In a recent media statement [3 March 2015] WA Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Peter Collier, commented that the establishment of the refugee camp by the Djurin Republic (Nyoongar Nation) on Matargarup also known as Heirisson Island in the middle of the Swan River adjacent to the city of Perth itself, was a preemptive act without cause, while at the same time stating that nothing will happen to these communities within the next two years. I do not think that the Minister gave any thought to what he was saying when he made this comment, for it certainly gives no comfort to those who have now been targeted. The news reports of this evening Perth time, carry stories that the Premier of Western Australia, Colin Barnett, said that he will soon make arrangements to send in the police riot squad to remove and shut down this refugee camp.

These actions by the Western Australian government are direct violations of all known humanitarian laws and are counter to the international ambition of world peace and harmonious relations.

The majority of the people of these homelands have never been displaced and have at all material time maintained their cultural norms and beliefs to their Country and natural Law for millennia.

For the Western Australian government to now dispossess and displace the Peoples of these homelands is designed to facilitate an expeditious expansion of mining interests and other developments.

We are now witnessing a full cycle of the historical wheel, that is to say when the Australian colonies and their British masters relied on the textile industries for their wealth, the colonial states of Australia, including Western Australia, cleared the land of Aboriginal Peoples in order to prevent Aboriginal resistance and opposition to the usurpation of their Country, without any form of redress or compensation.

These recent most despicable acts of the Western Australian government are a repeat of clearing the land so as to ensure no opposition to mining and other commercial developments.

This action on the part of the Western Australian government, aided and abetted by

the Commonwealth government of Australia, has now created community and personal despair, which has resulted in hundreds of Aboriginal people becoming refugees in their own country, and thereby engendering great fear in the hearts of Aboriginal people and their communities.

The resulting dispossession and displacement of people from Country to the streets in large regional towns and cities have, and will, result in increased homelessness resulting in higher arrest rates, which leads to disproportional incarceration rates, child removal, family breakdown, community distress, social ills, and the tragic increase in suicide. These actions are a clear testament of genocidal acts done with intent.

I call upon Your Excellency to make this humanitarian crisis known throughout the world. Furthermore, we ask that Your Excellency assist in the immediate provision of safeguards and protection of the refugee camp and to provide appropriate aid for the health and well-being of the refugees.

In conclusion, given the most recent statement by the Premier of Western Australia on today's evening news, we ask on behalf of the Aboriginal people of Western Australia, that this aggression against Aboriginal people be raised with the Prime Minister of Australia as a matter of urgency, in order to avoid people being physically hurt and totally demoralised.

Your immediate attention is essential for the well-being and safety of these people.

Sincerely,

Ghillar Michael Anderson  
Convenor and Joint Spokesperson of Sovereign Union of First Nations and Peoples in Australia and Head of State of the Euahlayi Peoples Republic  
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### **Background:**

**[Amnesty International Australia: Oombulgurri demolitions: your questions answered](http://www.amnesty.org.au/indigenous-rights/comments/35560/)**

<http://www.amnesty.org.au/indigenous-rights/comments/35560/>

17 Sep 14: "The Government of Western Australia plans to flatten the Aboriginal homelands community of Oombulgurri within days. Amnesty International Australia is calling on the WA Government to stop the demolitions and here we explain why."

## **Amnesty International Australia: WA Government must stop Oombulgurri demolitions after forcibly evicting community members**

<http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/comments/35607/>

23 Sep 14: "The WA Government must stop the demolition of an estimated \$30 million worth of homes, public buildings and infrastructure in the Oombulgurri community in WA's Kimberley region, said Amnesty International. The organisation's public action calling for a stop to the demolitions has attracted over 16,000 supporters since it was launched last Wednesday."

## **Greens Senator Rachel Siewert: Senate motion condemns Oombulgurri demolition**

<http://rachel-siewert.greensmps.org.au/content/media-releases/senate-motion-condemns-oombulgurri-demolition>

2 Oct 14: "The Senate has backed an Australian Greens motion condemning the demolition of the remote community of Oombulgurri in Western Australia.

"The Senate has supported my motion, which calls for an immediate suspension to the demolition of Oombulgurri and for a dialogue to begin with residents and Traditional Owners," Senator Rachel Siewert, Australian Greens spokesperson on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues said today.

"The action being taken in Oombulgurri has caused deep concern.

"Communities cannot be strengthened if the underlying causes of disadvantage are not addressed. Governments at the State and Federal levels need to be investing in services and support for remote communities, to improve health services, ensure children and families safe and provide quality education and employment opportunities. That did not happen in Oombulgurri and this support has not been provided for the residents since they left.

"The demolition of Oombulgurri should be halted and the WA Government should immediately start working with residents and Traditional Owners," Senator Siewert concluded."

## **ABC News: Demolition starts on abandoned Oombulgurri community**

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-01/demolition-starts-on-abandoned-oombulgurri/5782228>

1 Oct 14: "Demolition work has begun to dismantle the remote East Kimberley community of Oombulgurri, which closed three years ago. The WA Government says it closed the community after a coronial inquiry found it to be in a state of crisis, with high rates of suicide, sexual abuse, child neglect and domestic violence. Most of the residents were moved to the nearby town of Wyndham. Contractors have begun removing 42 houses, the school, a powerhouse, sheds and water tanks."

## **The Stringer: Western Australia's Government to bury Oombulgurri**

<http://thestringer.com.au/western-australias-government-to-bury-oombulgurri-8653#.VPWXiSx1csl>

30 Sep 14: "The remote eastern Kimberley town of Oombulgurri was slated for demolition by the Western Australian Government in November. But the demolition job may have started today. It has been reported by The Australian journalist Andrew Burrell that the demolition could be underway today, "heading off a belated effort by Amnesty International and some Indigenous people to halt the works." Contractor McMahon Services has been hired by the Government "to demolish and bury more than 40 houses, sheds and other buildings at the abandoned Oombulgurri community, near Wyndham". But the truth is that Oombulgurri was never abandoned. The State Government evicted the residents after closing down Government services." By Gerry Georgatos

## **NIRS: Questions over mining influence on Oombulgurri demolition decision**

<http://www.nirs.org.au/NEWS/Questions-over-mining-influence-on-Oombulgurri-demolition->

## [decision](#)

30 Sep 14: "A body representing Native Title holders over land including the shut-down east Kimberley community of Oombulgurri has criticised the decision to demolish its buildings. Chair of the Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation, Cissy Gore-Birch (pictured), has suggested mining exploration may be the real reason behind the Western Australian Government closing it down. 62 homes lay vacant in Oombulgurri, with the Government stating it will demolish them in November. Ms Gore-Birch says mining exploration licences have been handed out in recent years, but former residents, many now homeless, want to return to the community." Gerry Georgatos, Correspondent

### **The Australian: Oombulgurri to be demolished**

The Australian  
September 30, 2014 12:00AM

*Andrew Burrell*  
*Senior Business Reporter*  
*Perth*

A house in the Aboriginal community of Oombulgurri, in the Kimberley region of the Northern Territory. Source: News Limited

<http://tinyurl.com/nqrgvzd>

<http://tinyurl.com/qcdteq2>

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AN Aboriginal community in the Kimberley that was blighted by -alcohol abuse and suicide will be demolished as early as today, heading off a belated effort by Amnesty International and some indigenous people to halt the works.

The West Australian government has hired contractor -McMahon Services Australia to demolish and bury more than 40 houses, sheds and other buildings at the abandoned Oombulgurri community, near Wyndham.

The government ordered the demolition of the once-thriving community after closing it down in 2011, citing the high rates of domestic violence, child neglect, and sexual and alcohol abuse.

McMahon's WA manager, Phil Bubner, said a four-man crew would take about six weeks to complete the job.

He said all of the houses and infrastructure would be pulled down and buried on site. "Unfortunately, the cost of moving it and selling it outweighs the value of the equipment," he said.

Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation chairwoman Cissy Birch-Gore Gault, who has led the fight to have the community reopened, said she was working with Amnesty to seek a court -injunction to stop the demolition.

She said traditional owners were not consulted on the demolition and many former residents wanted to "return to country".

One former resident, Tom Birch, said demolition would be "devastating" for those community members who now lived on the outskirts of Wyndham.

"They are putting these people back to the 30s and 40s when they were living up in the hills," he said. "I think the government is disregarding full-blooded Aboriginal people."

Amnesty claims the demolition is illegal under international law because the former community members did not give their free and informed consent.

WA Aboriginal Affairs Minister Peter Collier said Amnesty's campaign was ill-informed.

"A coronial inquiry after five deaths, including four suicides, found it was in a state of crisis," he said. "At the time of closure, most residents had already left the community voluntarily, and there was an average population of fewer than 30 people."

<http://tinyurl.com/odofb5u>