

Artlang Yapu speech

Metal, dog skin, textile, red thread and video 14min 23seg

Video-documentation duration

According to different cultures and mythologies, the confusion or division of language was a divine punishment, the Monogenesis language suffered a divine deconstruction and that deconstruction create all the different languages and dialects, making this impossible to communicate with each other, creating Unintentional human separation and born the diversity. The lost of knowledge, respect and the fear of the unknown are some of the main reasons that lead us to build social prejudices and the manifestation of stereotypes.

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Transcription from the video.

At five pm on February 22, 2010, while a sizable Wixárika contingent from Tuapurie - Santa Catarina Cuexcomatlán, was in a location named Tanque Valentín, in the ejido (rural land concession) of Las Margaritas, municipality of Catorce in the state of San Luis Potosí, carrying out ceremonies that are part of their millenarian tradition in the sacred region of Wirikuta, four squad cars of state police arrived with an arrogant attitude and began to insult and treat the wixaritari as delinquents, interrupting their ceremony. The sacred circle was broken and Our Grandfather Fire was disrespected by breaking up the large Wixárika gathering with rifles.

The harassment continued until 8 pm and took place in a location where the three ceremonial centers of the community of Tuapurie, Las Latas, Pochotita and Tuapurie had gathered in a rare fashion (the latter had left for another sacred point in the desert of Wirikuta just a few hours prior). Each ceremonial center had brought a bus full of Wixárika pilgrims bringing together a large concentration of jicareros (votive bowl carriers).

The police manhandled the sacred offerings, the deer antlers, and crossed the ceremonial line that they should not have. They accused one mara'kame (shaman) of ingesting cocaine.

They proceeded to count the number of peyote buttons that the pilgrims had gathered, citing an accord signed by governmental agencies that regulates the pilgrimage to Wirikuta, in violation of the communities' traditions and forms of ceremonial operation, in that the pilgrims are representatives of the entire

community and not just of one person or family.

At that moment, the police threatened to return and did so on Tuesday the 23rd at 2 am, arriving with video and photo cameras once again interrupting the ceremony, the chant of the mara'akame and the words of the sacred Ancestors.

On Tuesday, while the emissaries of the ceremonial centers left to place offerings at the sacred site of Leunar (in the Cerro Quemado), the police returned at 9 am and threatened that the PROFEPA (Federal Agency for the Protection of the Environment) would sanction and detain the pilgrims, arguing that the peyote had been cut with the root; a practice that has occurred for the past 3 thousand years.

This aggression in itself is an attack against the Wixárika people, and particularly for those from Tuapurie since the assault was against all three ceremonial centers of this community, that are in charge of the wellbeing not just of their territory but of the entire universe.

The harassment occurred just a few hours after personnel from the Commission for the Development of Indigenous People (CDI for its Spanish acronym) of the state of San Luis Potosí left the site of the ceremony.

It makes no sense that the PROFEPA, as a branch of the SEMARNAT (Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources), harasses Tuapurie under environmental pretexts and norms which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the state police. This, while the extraction of peyote at the hands of drug traffickers is heightened and important regions of biodiversity are destroyed by multinational agro-industrial operations.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that, since February of 2008, the community of Tuapurie has been resisting the imposition of the Bolaños -Huejuquilla paved road which has been stalled by strong mobilizations that have led the community to have diverse jurisdictional proceedings pertaining to environmental, penal and agrarian rights.

Among these is the injunction that stalled this mega project at a crucial moment after the Secretary of Urban Development (SEDEUR for its Spanish acronym) argued that it had 400 signatures from the community members in favor of the road construction. In the court injunction, the SEDEUR presented simple copies of said signatures on February 8, 2008 pointing out that the PROFEPA held the originals. The community proceeded to ask said agency to physically present the originals, the request was denied.

In reality these signatures did not exist since the assembly and supposed act of assembly were falsified. In the case that these signatures are presented, the signatures should be ruled false and if genuine it should be ruled that they were gathered by a government agency in an illegitimate manner. This situation unmasks the delinquent actions of both the federal and state level governments; furthermore this serious fraud was directly mediated by the CDI, the federal entity that proclaims to serve indigenous people.

The tension of the situation has only increased at the announcement by the state of Jalisco that the road would be completed before 2012 and by the decision by the general communal assembly of Tuapurie that the road will not be allowed to cross communal land, thus manifesting the same stance that they held when the tensions began in February 2008.