

LAW OFFICES OF  
MICRONESIAN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

ATTORNEYS AND MICRONESIAN COUNSELORS

CABLE ADDRESS: MICROLEX

THEODORE R. MITCHELL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EDWARD C. KING  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LORENZO L.G. CABRERA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
FOR ADMINISTRATION

GIDEON DOONE  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

ROMAN T. TUDELA  
COMPTROLLER

DANIEL AQUINO  
HAMLET J. BARRY, III  
ALAN B. BURDICK

DELSON EHME  
ANDREW FIGIRMAD  
FELIX FITIAL  
HEMOS A JACK  
IOANES KANICHY  
JAMES LICKE  
ALAN S. LIEBERMAN  
DANIEL MACMEEKIN  
SIONAG MACMEEKIN  
DENNIS F. OLSEN  
OLIVER G. RICKETSON  
BELHAIM SAKUMA  
NAHOY G. SELIFIS  
ALBERT R. SNYDER  
MICHAEL UNGER  
TONY VILLANUEVA  
HANS WILLANDER  
SAMUEL WITHERS, III

407884

CAPT GAY

CDR WOLFE

MAIL 6

CENTRAL OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 826  
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950  
TELEPHONE 6228

PALAU OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 57  
KOROR, PALAU  
WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS 96940

MARSHALLS OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 376  
MAJURO  
MARSHALL ISLANDS 96960

TRUK OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX D  
MOEN, TRUK  
EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS 96942

PONAPE OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 129  
KOLONIA, PONAPE  
EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS 96941

MARIANAS OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 626  
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950  
TELEPHONE 6243

YAP OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 206  
COLONIA, YAP  
WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS 96943

REPLY VIA AIR MAIL TO **Marshalls Office**

May 4, 1973

Action Office TIA  
For info only S

Honorable Richard M. Nixon  
President  
United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Nixon:

This letter is written on behalf of the displaced people of Bikini Atoll, now residing on Kili Island, United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It is a detailed discussion of the past trials, fears, and sufferings of the Bikini people, written with intention of placing the grievances of the Bikini people before the United States. This letter is most emphatically a petition for redress of the sufferings and exploitation of the Bikini people by the United States during the last 27 years.

The suffering of the Bikini people began, as far as the United States is concerned and responsible -- on January 24, 1946. On that date the Pentagon announced that the United States had selected Bikini Atoll in the Northern Marshall Islands as the site of a series of atomic tests. Part of the requirements of the test program were that the test site be quite distant from all heavily populated areas, 500 miles from all air and sea routes, and uninhabited or containing only a few people who could be relocated. The "few people" in this case were the people of Bikini. They may have been "few" from the United States point of view, but from the Bikinians own point of view, they were all the people, not just a few. The decision of the Joint Chief of Staff made no provision for the feelings, aspirations, or wishes of the "few", it was simply unthinkable that so few could or would defy the wishes of so many.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DOE ARCHIVES

uninhabited atoll also in the Northern Marshall Islands. Time proved the choice to be extremely unfortunate.

Rongerik Atoll lies about 100 miles to the East of Bikini Atoll. In all measurements, it is a great deal smaller than Bikini. Bikini has 23 islands on the atoll; Rongerik, 10; the total land area of Bikini is 2.32 sq. miles; Rongerik consists of only .63 sq. miles. Bikini's lagoon consists of 243 sq. miles while Rongerik's lagoon is only 55 sq. miles. Events soon made evident that fact that the Pentagon never considered whether an atoll with one-fourth the lagoon size of Bikini and one-third the land area of Bikini could support 200 Bikini people.

On March 7 and 8, 1946 -- less than a month after being told that they were to be moved, -- the Navy moved all 199 Bikini people to Rongerik atoll. The trouble began. The Bikinians had long considered Rongerik to be associated with Libokra, an evil female spirit who dealt in poisons. Many of the fish on Rongerik were in fact poison, and many people became sick from eating them. Furthermore, the food resources of Rongerik were not sufficient to support the Bikinians. A report by a medical officer in July, 1947 reported that the people were suffering from malnutrition. A disastrous fire had destroyed 30% of the food trees a month earlier. The United States investigated the situation, and discussions were had about moving the people elsewhere. Nevertheless, nothing was done. Finally, in November, 1947, the United States and the Bikini people decided that the atoll of Ujelang would be a better place for them. With the help of ten Bikini men, construction was begun on a village at Ujelang. On December 2, the United States decreed that the Enewetak atoll was also to be used for atomic testing, and that the inhabitants of that atoll would also have to relocate. The Enewetak people would be moved to Ujelang. Not for the first time, and certainly not for the last, the Bikini people had the rug pulled from under them. They remained on Rongerik.

**DOF ARCHIVES**

small, comprising just less than 200 acres in size or .31 sq. miles,  
or about one-seventh of the area of Bikini. Kili is an island, not

**DOE ARCHIVES**

~~of the same type, and none of the hardwood trees found on Bikini~~  
for use in house and canoe construction. Kili has agricultural potential, but for a marine-orientated people, accustomed to fishing and unaccustomed to tilling soil and cutting brush on Kili, agriculture has never been either rewarding or successful.

Life on Kili island has never been pleasant for the Bikini people. In the early years, and continuing to the present, the difficulties are too numerous to explain in detail. The heavy surf and sea conditions, plus frequent local ship shortages, usually prevented more than four visits a year by a field trip vessels. Failure of the field trips meant that the copra that the Bikini people had produced was left to spoil or be eaten by rats. Failure to pick up copra was strong disincentive to make it. Food shortages were again common and the people became convinced that Kili was another Rongerik. In 1949 and 1950 and again in 1952 food shortages occurred, severe enough so that in 1952 a ton of food was air dropped to the people. Even then, parachutes were not used, and the food was broken and ruined. The efforts at agriculture did not work and produced little food. The Bikinians were given one large ship, a converted forty-foot whaleboat, which was wrecked on the Kili reef soon after it was procured. The community was in debt and copra production was minimal. Then and now the Bikini people have an expression for Kili: Kili enana, meaning Kili is no good.

In 1953 a Kili development project was begun, based upon the United States government information that at Bikini atoll would not be habitable at any time in the near future. The development

DOE ARCHIVES

a concept firmly in mind, were too intimidated to state it. In 1956, after some adverse world publicity, the United States attempted to "settle" the Bikini problem. After several discussions, the

**DOE ARCHIVES**

\$500,000 in 1965. But a statement of yield is a far cry from what the "Agreement in Principle" promises. The people of Bikini want to know what has happened to the balance of the money allegedly invested for them. If the money was invested, what sort of trustee have they who would allow a \$104,000 loss over the years? If the money was not invested, then the \$100,000 or more that was omitted should be added to the Trust Fund now, with interest.

The income that has been derived from the Trust Fund is minimal. Until an amendment to the original agreement was made in 1971, the Trust Fund earned only 3 1/3% interest. Even now the income is only 9,035.28 per year, and amounts to no more than a pittance when divided among the Bikini people twice a year -- in fact, it comes to about \$12.00 for each person. The joys of having such a Trust Fund are obviously quite small.

In August, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson announced that some of the islands on Bikini atoll would be cleaned up and returned to the people of Bikini for resettlement. Certainly this was a day of rejoicing for the Bikinians, but subsequent events concerning the rehabilitation of their atoll have left them cynical and demoralized. The rehabilitation project has been bungled from the beginning.

In 1970 the Bikini people met with Trust Territory representatives to tell them that the contractor the Trust Territory had selected for the rehabilitation project was unacceptable. The

**DOE ARCHIVES**

their benefit cannot always be trusted, and it is of vital importance that full disclosure be made to the Bikini people of all monies appropriated, allocated, or spent on the Bikini rehabilitation project.

Several funding problems stand out among the overall confusion. First, it is assumed that money for the Bikini rehabilitation project was separately appropriated, or at least taken from military or AEC - but not Trust Territory - sources. The total funding for

**DCE ARCHIVES**

residence there will be safe. There is still a question of radioactive danger, as evidenced by the fact that the AEC required a four-inch concrete floor in the Bikini houses.

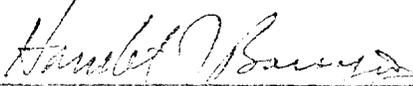
**DOE ARCHIVES**

The purpose of this letter is to show the treatment of the Bikini people by the United States government, and to detail the sufferings and grievances of the displaced people of Bikini. They have endured endless broken promises; three forced relocations of their homes; malnutrition and near-starvation; atomic destruction of their homeland and irradiation of their soil; deterioration of their social structure and loss of a sense of community; loss of many skills required for fishing on an atoll; isolation and rejection by the government, and the certain risk of living with the dangers of radioactivity. For all of this they have received a trust fund that loses money, some surplus U.S.D.A. food and an isolated and miserable island far from their home. Surely the United States will not ignore their rights and complaints. Surely they are entitled to at least the same treatment that was awarded to the people of Enewetak.

In 1970, the United States government made an "ex-gratia" payment to the people of Enewetak, now residing on Ujelang, of \$1,020,000, in payment for the sufferings they had endured. The Enewetakese clearly deserve such a payment. But the people of Bikini have perhaps suffered much more at the hands of the United States atomic-test program than the people of Enewetak. Yet they have received a great deal less. All they now ask is similar treatment and a similar trust fund that will enable them to reach a state of self-sufficiency. Now is the time to open discussions on such a subject, and act according to the resolution passed by the Congress of Micronesia on January 30, 1973, and attached herewith. The people of Bikini look forward to a prompt answer from the United States government.

Sincerely yours,

MICRONESIAN LEGAL SERVICES CORP.  
Counsel for Bikini People  
HAMLET J. BARRY, III and  
JAMES LICKE

By: 

Hamlet J. Barry, III  
Directing Attorney, Marshalls

cc: Mr. Rogers C. Morton  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D. C.

Honorable Edward E. Johnston  
High Commissioner, TTPI  
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

DOE ARCHIVES

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TO: *Secretary Marden*

FROM: Richard M. Fairbanks

*For your direct  
response.*

**DOE ARCHIVES**