Cultural Survival

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

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Campaign and Advocacy

En espaol abajo

By International Indian Treaty Council

June 6, 2022, Stockholm, Sweden: A signing ceremony was held in the afternoon of June 3rd, 2022 at the residence of Mexican Ambassador to Sweden, Francisco del Rio Lopez, formally authorizing the transfer of the sacred Maaso Kova back to the Yaqui Nation and its cultural leaders, the culmination of a 19-year struggle by the Yaqui and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) to achieve its repatriation. The document was signed by representatives of the Swedish and Mexican Governments, the Yaqui Traditional Authorities, the Maaso Kova Cultural leaders committee, and the International Indian Treaty Council, as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Francisco Cali Tzay as an international witness. The Maaso Kova will be accompanied by a collection of other cultural items, which were acquired in Mexico in the 1930s by the Swedish Museums of World Culture.

The Maaso Kova (ceremonial deers head) was found on August 11, 2003 on display in the Museum by IITC Executive Director Andrea Carmen, a member of the Yaqui Nation, following an event hosted by the Sami Council of Sweden commemorating the International Day of Indigenous Peoples. The Yaqui cultural leaders and the IITC, with the support of the Sami Council and Parliament of Sweden immediately begin a campaign to bring the Maaso Kova home. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as Indigenous Peoples from around the world supported this repatriation effort and the Rights of the Yaqui to repatriation of this item of highest spiritual and cultural significance, based on Articles 11 and 12 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Government of Sweden announced its decision to support the repatriation, after the museum gave its consent in March 2020, as a result of a country engagement carried out by the EMRIP, as requested by the IITC and the Yaquis in 2019.

Juan Gregorio Jaime Leon, representative of the Traditional Authorities of Huirivis Pueblo, Rio Yaqui, member of the Kolensia (the Yaqui spiritual society related to the deer dance) and a Board member of IITC was one of the Yaqui delegates who participated in the signing of the document of agreement on behalf of the Yaqui Traditional Authorities. He stated the Maaso Kova which has been used in the deer dance is for us a living being of the highest spiritual value. The Yaqui Traditional Authorities have stated that it must be returned to the Yaqui Traditional Authorities and cultural leaders directly, not through any intermediaries including the Mexican Institute of Anthropology. They have also stated that it should not be displayed again in any museum or university. We are very pleased that the Mexican Secretary of International Relations has agreed to support these positions.

Also attending in representation of the 8 Yaqui Pueblos of Sonora Mexico were Dolores Gonzalez Buitimea, the second governor of the head of the Yaqui Pueblos, Vicam, and Felipe Alvarez Garcia, Vasario (Elder Advisor) of Potam Pueblo. Juan Luis Humo of Pascua Yaqui Pueblo in Arizona, Co-chair of the Maaso Kova Committee, and Andrea Carmen, focal point for communications with the States and United Nations for the Yaqui Authorities and the Maaso Kova Committee, were also designated to attend. Saul Vicente Vazquez, Director of International Affairs for the Mexican National Institute of Indigenous Peoples, accompanied the delegation in a support capacity. Representatives of the Sami Parliament and Sami Council of Sweden, who have offered unwavering support to the call for repatriation of the Maaso Kova from the beginning, also attended the signing ceremony.

The Yaqui delegation accepted the offer by the Mexican Secretary of External Relations to send the items, which were packed by the museum in two large metal cases, directly to Rio Yaqui in Northern Mexico by diplomatic envoy to ensure that they will arrive safety without being opened by anyone or inspected by customs. This process will be underway in the coming days. Representatives of the Yaqui Authorities will meet the Maaso Kova and other items when they arrive in Mexico City in the coming days and will accompany them home to Rio Yaqui.

For more information: Andrea Carmen,IITC Executive Director: andrea@treatycouncil.org

Photo: Yaqui and IITC delegates with Mexican Ambassador and Sami Parliament representative at the Ambassadors residence after the signing ceremony in Stockholm, June 3rd

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PARA SU PUBLICACIN INMEDIATA

6 de junio de 2022, Estocolmo, Suecia: Se realiz un acto de firma el 3 de junio de 2022 por la tarde en la residencia del embajador mexicano en Suecia, Francisco del Ro Lpez, en el cual se formaliz la devolucin del sagrado Maaso Kova a la Nacin Yaqui y a sus dirigentes culturales, lo cual representa la culminacin de una lucha de 19 aos de parte del Pueblo Yaqui y del Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios (CITI) por lograr su repatriacin. El documento fue firmado por representantes de los gobiernos mexicano y sueco, las autoridades tradicionales del Pueblo Yaqui, el comit de dirigentes culturales Maaso Kova y el Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios; particip tambin el relator especial de la Organizacin de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indgenas, Francisco Cali Tzay, como testigo internacional. Adems del Maaso Kova, se entregar una coleccin de otros bienes culturales que los Museos Suecos de la Cultura del Mundo adquirieron en Mxico durante la dcada de los 1930.

El 11 de agosto de 2003, Andrea Carmen, directora ejecutiva de CITI y miembro de la Nacin Yaqui, vio que el Maaso Kova (cabeza de venado ceremonial) se exhiba en el museo, tras asistir a un evento que organiz el Consejo Sami de Suecia para conmemorar el Da Internacional de los Pueblos Indgenas. De inmediato los dirigentes culturales yaquis y CITI iniciaron una campaa para repatriar el Maaso Kova, con el apoyo del Consejo y Parlamento Sami de Suecia. El Foro Permanente de Cuestiones Indgenas de la ONU, el Mecanismo de Expertos de los Derechos de los Pueblos Indgenas (Medpi) y el relator especial de la ONU sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indgenas, as como los pueblos indgenas de todo el mundo, respaldaron la lucha por su repatriacin y el derecho del Pueblo Yaqui a la repatriacin de este bien de gran valor espiritual y cultural, en virtud de los Artculos 11 y 12 de la Declaracin de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos de los pueblos indgenas. El 5 de mayo de 2022, el Gobierno de Suecia anunci su decisin de respaldar la repatriacin, despus de que el museo diera su consentimiento en marzo de 2020, como resultado de un compromiso de pas que logr el Medpi ante la solicitud que presentaron CITI y el Pueblo Yaqui en 2019.

Juan Gregorio Jaime Leon, representante de las autoridades tradicionales del pueblo de Huirivis en Ro Yaqui, miembro del kolensia (sociedad espiritual yaqui relacionada con la danza del venado) y miembro de la Mesa Directiva de CITI, fue uno de los delegados yaquis que participaron en la firma del acuerdo de parte de las autoridades tradicionales del Pueblo Yaqui. Afirm que el Maaso Kova, el cual se ha usado en la danza del venado, para nosotros es un ser vivo de gran valor espiritual. Las autoridades tradicionales yaquis han afirmado que se tiene que restituir a las autoridades tradicionales yaquis y a los dirigentes culturales directamente, no por intermediarios como el Instituto Mexicano de Antropologa. Asimismo, han afirmado que no se puede volver a exhibir en un museo o universidad. Nos complace mucho el hecho de que la Secretara Mexicana de Relaciones Exteriores respalde dicha postura.

En representacin de los ocho pueblos que conforman la Nacin Yaqui de Sonora, Mxico, tambin asistieron Dolores Gonzlez Buitimea, el segundo gobernador del pueblo de Vcam, cabecera de los pueblos yaquis, y Felipe lvarez Garca, vasario del pueblo de Ptam. Otros asistentes designados fueron Juan Luis Humo del pueblo yaqui de Pascua en Arizona, co-presidente del Comit Maaso Kova, y Andrea Carmen, punto de contacto para las comunicaciones con los Estados y las Naciones Unidas para las autoridades yaquis y del comit Maaso Kova. Sal Vicente Vzquez, el director de Asuntos Internacionales del Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indgenas de Mxico, acompa a la delegacin en funcin de apoyo. En el acto de firma tambin participaron los representantes del Parlamento y Consejo Sami de Suecia, los cuales han respaldado firmemente la solicitud de repatriacin del Maaso Kova desde su inicio.

La delegacin yaqui acept la oferta de la Secretara Mexicana de Relaciones Exteriores de enviar los bienes, los cuales el museo haba empacado en dos grandes valijas metlicas, directamente a Ro Yaqui en el norte de Mxico por envo diplomtico, con el fin de garantizar que lleguen seguramente sin que nadie los abra y sin pasar por inspeccin aduanera. El proceso iniciar dentro de unos das. Los representantes de las autoridades yaquis recibirn el Maaso Kova y otros bienes cuando stos lleguen a la Ciudad de Mxico dentro de unos das, y los acompaarn hasta su paradero en Ro Yaqui.

Para mayor informacin, contactar a Andrea Carmen, directora ejecutiva de CITI: andrea@treatycouncil.org

Foto:Delegados del Pueblo Yaqui y del Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios (CITI) con el embajador mexicano y el Parlamento Sami en la residencia del embajador despus del acto de firma el 3 de junio en Estocolmo

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