



NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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NNHRC Meets New Proponent for Indigenous Human Rights

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz.—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission received a last minute visit from a former United Nations official this week.

Julian Burger, the former UN Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples and Minorities of the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights met with the staff of NNHRC on Tuesday, October 12, 2010 in St. Michaels, Navajo Nation, Arizona.

“Now I’m free,” said Burger, “What points would you like me to raise?”

“Self-determination,” stated NNHRC Executive Director Leonard Gorman. He said, “It’s always in the perspective of the nation-state” and later continued, “If nation-states recognized Indigenous peoples as having rights of self-determination, then Indigenous nation-states should be treated as nation-states.”

Burger had concerns that genuine representatives of Indigenous nations go to the international forums but they have no base as non-governmental organizations.

“The forum is very weak and we need to make it stronger,” said Burger.

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Julian Burger visited staff members of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission on Tuesday, October 12, 2010. Burger was the former UN Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples and Minorities of the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. “Now I’m free,” he said meaning that he’s free to speak about activities in the UN System.

Further discussion continued to give the Navajo Nation a better perspective and advocacy in the international forum.

Burger made the initial contact with NNHRC and said, "Count on me for any help in the future."

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