

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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Australian Indigenous leader concerned by uranium mining and impacts on Japan

A senior Australian Indigenous leader has expressed grave concerns about uranium mining on traditional Aboriginal land. Following the nuclear crisis at Fukushima Yvonne Margarula, Senior Traditional Owner of the Mirarr people, wrote to the UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon expressing her people's deep sympathies with the people of Japan.

In her letter Ms Margarula states her hope that, "individuals, families, communities and the nation may rebuild their lives. We also hope for a speedy resolution to the ongoing Fukushima nuclear emergency."

She also comments on Kakadu uranium as the source of at least some of the radiation problems being experienced at Fukushima.

"Given the long history between Japanese nuclear companies and Australian uranium miners, it is likely that the radiation problems at Fukushima are, at least in part, fuelled by uranium derived from our traditional lands. This makes us feel very sad," Ms Margarula's letter reads.

The presence of Australian uranium in the nuclear reactors at Fukushima has been confirmed in the Australian parliament. Dr Robert Floyd, Director General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office acknowledged in October 2011:

"We can confirm that Australian obligated nuclear material was at the Fukushima Daiichi site and in each of the reactors – maybe five out of six, or it could have been all of them".

In her correspondence Ms Margarula recounts Ranger's history, underscoring the unconscionable conduct of Australian authorities in overriding Aboriginal opposition to the mine and thereby undermining the legitimacy of Aboriginal land rights. She also restates Mirarr opposition to Jabiluka, writing that, "We Mirarr remain opposed to Jabiluka's development; the Fukushima incident only strengthens our resolve."

Ms Margarula ends her letter with a statement of solidarity and support, "with all those people across the world who see in the events at Fukushima a dire warning of the risks posed by the nuclear industry. This is an industry that we have never supported in the past and that we want no part of into the future."

For further background, vision or photographs please contact:

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