

# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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**Media Statement - 30 August 2010**

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## **Kakadu traditional owners join worldwide Indigenous move against nuclear industry**

The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, representing the Mirarr traditional Aboriginal owners of uranium mining areas in Kakadu National Park, yesterday joined with Indigenous people from across the world to condemn the disproportionate impact of the nuclear industry on their lives and land. In a statement to the 19th congress of the Nobel Peace prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) held in Basel, Switzerland, Indigenous groups from Australia, Canada, India, Mali, Namibia, Niger and the United States called for an end to all uranium mining and processing, irresponsible radioactive waste management, nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

In a pre-recorded video message to the conference, Senior Mirarr traditional owner, Yvonne Margarula, said her land had suffered from mining and that plans for the expansion of the Ranger uranium mine worry the Mirarr. "We [have] lost billabongs and rivers. Often we are worried because of the mine. We use the water for fishing, swimming and drinking."

In her address Ms Margarula referred to the proposed expansion of the Ranger mine, which currently produces some 10% of the world's mined uranium, into the so-called R3 Deeps area and the imminent proposal to introduce the untested technology of heap acid leaching. "We stopped mining of our sacred land at Jabiluka, for now. But the mining company wants to make Ranger bigger and to dig under the river. I am afraid the government will support them," Ms Margarula said.

The executive officer of the Gundjeihmi Corporation, Justin O'Brien, told the conference that the destructive reality of uranium mining felt by the Mirarr for over three decades is testimony to the unsustainable nature of the nuclear industry.

"The Mirarr have endured a little understood but heavy burden over three decades. Their experience gives the lie to industry claims that the nuclear industry is sustainable. The front end realities of this industry must be acknowledged and acted on", Mr O'Brien said.

The Australian delegation included Indigenous activist Rebecca Bear Wingfield, a co-chair of the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance and Dave Sweeney, nuclear free campaigner with the Australian Conservation Foundation.

A delegation of Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation representatives is meeting with European Parliamentarians and officials this week over these concerns.

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The statement of Indigenous delegates to the IPPNW Congress is attached.  
For further information and comment contact Justin O'Brien via email [justin@mirarr.net](mailto:justin@mirarr.net) or via the GAC office on 08 8979 2200

## **Statement of the ‘Sacred Land, Poisoned Peoples’ symposium to the 19<sup>th</sup> IPPNW World Congress**

Indigenous Peoples and their representatives attending the Pre-Congress “Sacred Lands, Poisoned People” at this critical time of intensifying destruction to Mother Earth and human health by nuclear resource development have gathered and shared stories of resistance to uranium mining across the globe. From Canada and USA to Niger, Mali, Namibia, Tanzania and Malawi, from Russia, Germany, Australia, Brazil and India, communities facing dramatic impacts from this toxic industry have come together in unity.

Past, present and future generations of Indigenous Peoples are **disproportionately impacted** by uranium mining, nuclear weapons and the nuclear power industry. The nuclear fuel chain radioactively contaminates our people’s health, land, air, and waters and threatens our very existence and our future generations. Uranium mining, nuclear energy development and international agreements that foster the nuclear fuel chain violate our basic human rights and fundamental natural laws of Mother Earth, endangering our survival and spiritual wellbeing. The dangerous health impacts of radioactive exposure begin with uranium mining. We reaffirm the Declaration of the World Uranium Hearing in Salzburg, Austria in 1992 that uranium and its radioactive decay products must remain in the ground. We stand in solidarity with those working for an end to uranium mining and processing, irresponsible radioactive waste management, nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

**We dedicate ourselves to a nuclear free future for all peoples.**