

Prominent Pacific Leaders Discuss Why Deep Sea Mining is Racist

Experts from around the Pacific discuss Deep Sea Mining (DSM) authorizations and their connection to ecological racism at an upcoming webinar.

SUVA, FIJI, February 15, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fiji, Feb 16, 2022—The [Anti-Racism Initiative](#) of the [G20 Interfaith Forum](#), the world's leading organization focused on the intersection of faith and policy, is gathering experts from around the Pacific to discuss [Deep Sea Mining](#) (DSM) authorizations and their connection to ecological racism at an upcoming webinar.



Pacific islanders and many other vulnerable indigenous communities have long suffered from systemic racism imposed by hierarchical economic structures and policies created in other contexts by other races—usually with the purpose of extracting and removing resources from the targeted people in order to benefit themselves. Panel organizers argue that DSM is a form of ecological racism that threatens regional stability and goes against the Pacific's holistic and spiritual approach to life and the environment.

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Maureen Penjueli of the Pacific Network on Globalisation said the issue is a critical one for Pacific peoples and the world:

“The Pacific Ocean has long been viewed as an empty blue void in which global experiments have been done under the narratives of world peace and for the good of all mankind,” Penjueli said. “Under such narratives the Pacific ocean became a proving ground for nuclear weapons and tests with over 300 tested. Deep Sea Mining is the newest threat, promoted heavily as

necessary to address the climate crises and to ensure the world transitions to a greener world. Pacific people are once again drawing a blue line against those that seek to exploit the ocean floor and its resources and those that promote the protection of the ocean.”

Kristina M. Gjerde of IUCN’s Global Marine and Polar Programme echoed the sentiment, emphasizing that current legal frameworks are flawed and will not protect the environment:

“The legal regime for deep seabed mining in the international seabed area is a rare example of the international community joining forces to regulate a potential new industry in the interests of humankind as a whole,” Gjerde said. “Despite this legal framework and its vision of equity, common interest, environmental health and prosperity for all, evolving scientific evidence has revealed the contradictions between deep sea mining and protection of ocean life. What is becoming clear is that as currently managed by the International Seabed Authority, any benefits from deep sea mining will accrue to only a very few companies while leaving lasting impacts borne by humankind and oceankind for generations. A moratorium on deep sea mining is urgently needed if we are to avert wide scale destruction and loss of ocean life that will be irreversible for many generations to come.”

Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch pointed out Canada’s ties to the push for DSM:

“Canadian mining companies are on the forefront of efforts to extend mining and its harmful impacts into the world’s oceans,” Coumans said. The Canadian government has been missing in action in international negotiations about the rules for mining of the seabed in parts of the ocean known as the Common Heritage of Humankind. All of humanity will suffer the impacts of further degradation of the ocean’s ability to sustain life on Earth, but the most immediate impacts on food security will be felt by many of the world’s most vulnerable island and coastal communities. MiningWatch joins scientists, governments, and Pacific and global citizens in calling for a moratorium, or ban, on deep seabed mining.”

Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu’s Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, said the island nation does not support the practice:

"The people of Vanuatu have clearly articulated that they do not agree to deep sea mining now or ever. As a Member of Parliament, I have a duty to push for a permanent ban."

Cardinal John Ribat, Metropolitan Bishop of Port Moresby, said the issue is closely connected to religion (specifically the Catholic Church) as well:

“The prophetic role of the Church since its very beginning is to articulate the Christian faith in the public sphere by assisting grassroots communities to question and call out any development strategy that destroys life,” Ribat said. “Deep Sea Mining is one such strategy that will cause ecological devastation in a mass scale and could drive the Pacific people who depend solely on the ocean into the edge of extinction. Land mining has destroyed Pacific lands. Now we are

moving to the deep ocean which is something that we're not yet familiar with. This is a deliberate discarding of our rights to exist as a people and race."

The virtual meeting will take place on Feb 16, 2022 at 5 pm EST, and will aim to identify links between DSM and ecological racism, clarify economic benefits and risks of the practice and stipulate how the Pacific and International community can address this issue through policy moving forward. Register for the free webinar at

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DU2yUhxATTcQ2NJBLKjaQA

Speakers will include experts from Pacific governments, civil society, and religion:

- Rev. Dr. Upolu Luma Vaai – Principal of the Pacific Theological College in Fiji
- Dr. Athena Peralta – Programme Executive at the World Council of Churches
- His Eminence Sir John Cardinal Ribat – Metropolitan Archbishop of Port Moresby
- Hon. Ralph Regenvanu – Vanuatu's Minister of Land and Natural Resources
- Catherine Coumans, PhD. – Research Coordinator and Pacific Program Coordinator (Asia) at Mining Watch
- Kristina M. Gjerde, J.D. – Senior High Seas Advisor to IUCN's Global Marine and Polar Programme
- Maureen Penjueli – Coordinator for the Pacific Network on Globalisation

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The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives to help shape the overall G20 agenda. It draws on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting a rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. Through its extensive network of networks, it helps prioritize key global policy goals and point toward practical means of implementation at every level of society.

Marianna Richardson

G20 Interfaith Forum

+1 801-692-1442

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