

Ma'dān Ratification of the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations

WHEREAS we, the Ma'dān (Arabic: معدان) also known as 'Marsh Arabs' (Arabic: عرب الأهوار '*Arab al-Ahwār* 'Arabs of the Marshlands'), comprising many different tribes and tribal confederations, including the Āl Bū Muḥammad, Ferayghāt, Shaghanbah and Banī Lām, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our nations, hereby join together to consider and ratify the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations that supports our right to autonomous self-government, in order that this resolution may serve as our Ma'dān Declaration of Sovereignty, and in order to claim all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations, to preserve our culture, religion, way of life and natural resources, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Ma'dān culture has existed in the marshlands of southern Iraq since Sumerian times, with Ma'dān culture and way of life tied to the marshlands and its water resources; and

WHEREAS, our local tribal councils are sovereign self-governing bodies responsible for the stewardship of our land, water and other natural resources; and

WHEREAS, Ma'dān tribes have for centuries been creators, users, and stewards to the marshlands, acquiring data embedded in indigenous practices and cultural principles including community roles and the responsibilities of local councils and courts; and

WHEREAS, in the era of self-determination and self-governance, tribal nations like the Ma'dān have begun implementing oversight protections and increasingly exercising indigenous land sovereignty—the right of each Ma'dān tribe to govern the collective ownership of land, artifacts, and knowledge about our indigenous people and homeland; and

WHEREAS, Ma'dān sovereignty derives from the inherent right of the Ma'dān indigenous people to to govern themselves together with their lands and resources, which is acknowledged in the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations and other legal mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, Ma'dān tribes have exercised autonomy over their lands and knowledge since time immemorial, including traditional ecological knowledge and native science, therefore Ma'dān indigenous data sovereignty is a deliberate repositioning of control of data back to Ma'dān; and

WHEREAS, Ma'dān tribes exercise indigenous sovereignty through the interrelated processes of decolonizing marshlands and encouraging self-governance of Ma'dān communities; and

WHEREAS, the Ma'dān tribes, including the Āl Bū Muḥammad, Ferayghāt, Shaghanbah and Banī Lām, shall ratify the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations as a founding government document declaring the sovereignty of the ancient, yet modern, Ma'dān nation; and

WHEREAS, this initiative is a joint effort to revitalize Ma'dān government administration and tribal courts under the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations; and

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WHEREAS, indigenous Ma'dān sovereignty accords with international declarations and covenants including the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations signatory; and

WHEREAS, the Ma'dān resolution of October 17th 2020 establishes principles for the review and protection of tribal ownership of lands; and

WHEREAS, the Ma'dān government's primary function is to protect our indigenous knowledge databases and land rights and to advocate policies that safeguard the rights and promote the interests of the Ma'dān nation and citizens from undue human rights abuses by domestic and foreign powers; so

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ma'dān do hereby support the efforts of indigenous tribes to exercise their legal rights to sovereignty and autonomous self-governance, efforts to advocate for human rights and efforts to support the inclusion of Ma'dān tribes in the development of any broad principles of tribal data sovereignty and/or governance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Ma'dān Nation hereby formally endorses and ratifies the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the Ma'dān until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly on October 17th 2020.

[signed]

Sam AlZuhair

Sheikh Sam Al-Zuhairi