

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED PEOPLES  
BY BASSAM IMAM

SECTION ONE

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007; 144 nations in favour, 4 states against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States; shame on them!), with 11 abstentions (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa, and Ukraine). Later, the 4 nations that voted against this declaration reversed their stance and now support the declaration. Keep in mind that 'reversing' an 'against' stance into an in 'favour' of stance does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented. Reversing an 'against' stance is good public relations. It must be supported by action.

"We will be changing our position here at the UN and remove our status as permanent objector to become a full supporter," Dr. Bennett told reporters on May 9, {2016}. The declaration, she said, tells governments, corporations and all Canadians that "one must begin by meaningful engagement with indigenous people, and be able to understand the rights that they hold, as they begin any thoughts of a project or policies that affect indigenous people." (By Gloria Galloway, May 9, 2016; theglobeandmail.com: Canada Drops Opposition to UN Indigenous Rights Declaration).

UNDRIP is the most all-inclusive, complete, international tool on the rights of indigenous peoples. It sets up and helps initiate a comprehensive framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the indigenous peoples of

the world and it elaborates on current human rights standards and basic-essential freedoms as they apply to the particular situation of indigenous peoples. As you read this book, keep in mind the long road ahead regarding the establishment of human rights for all, irrespective of gender, race, mother tongue, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, nationality, and socio-economic status.

The Akuntsu (Akunt'su or Akunsu) are a very tiny Amazonian tribe of only 4 persons, living in Rondonia State, Brazil. Ururu, the eldest tribal member, died in October 2009; the youngest member's death, which occurred recently, was caused by a fallen tree during a storm. Their land is within the Rio Omere' Indigenous Territory, an area also inhabited by the Kanoe. Barring a miraculous event, the Akuntsu will likely cease to exist in the not so distant future. In that case, humanity will have lost another important people.

Akuntsu live in the rainforest, land that is legally recognized and demarcated by the Brazilian Government. However, they are surrounded by extensive cattle ranches and soya plantations. In the past, there were tribal peoples and vast rainforests in the area.

The surviving Akuntsu live in 2 malocas (communal houses) made from straw. They are avid hunters; the main prey are agoutis (a long-legged burrowing rodent related to the guinea pig), wild boar, and tapir (a large, nocturnal hoofed animal similar in shape to a pig). They supplement their diet with manioc, corn, fish, and forest fruits. They practice shaman rituals. Flutes made from wood are used in dances and ritual activities. Arm-bands, anklet bracelets, and necklaces are worn; body paint is used in ceremonies.

The Akuntsu have suffered from atrocities perpetrated by outsiders. Konibu, an elder male, remembers a massacre that occurred in 1985. An entire maloca was bulldozed and every single person who tried to flee was gunned down. In the same year, FUNAI (Indian Affairs Department, Brazil) found evidence of the massacre. The victims were burned and covered with dirt by ranchers to conceal the crime. This is not surprising.

Worse yet, the construction of a prominent highway (BR364) brought in droves of cattle ranchers, loggers, land speculators, and settlers. Akuntsu are extraordinarily susceptible to the diseases brought in by these groups; the introduction of alcohol has also had a devastating effect. Linguists in the area are desperately trying to preserve the Akuntsu language.

"With Ururu's [one of the tribespeople's] death we are seeing the final stages of 21st century genocide. Although their numbers are small, the result is just as final. Only when this persecution is seen as akin to slavery or apartheid will tribal peoples begin to be safe," said Stephen Corry, Director of Survival International. (By Contributing Wri-

ter, May 18, 2018; scribol.com: Akuntsu: The Tribe With Only 5 Individuals Left on Earth). {NOTE: The Most Recent Count is Four Individuals}.

The Andamanese consist of the various tribes of the Andaman Islands, within India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands union territory in southeastern Bay of Bengal. These tribes are part of the Negrito tribal family; they are dark-skinned and are commonly small-framed. Previously, it was believed that these tribes were part of the earliest Great Coastal Migration out of Africa, via the Arabian Peninsula, through the coastal regions of the Indian mainland and in the direction of Southeast Asia, China, Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Micronesia, Fiji, (excluding New Zealand).

“... the Andaman archipelago was likely settled by modern humans from north-east India via the land-bridge which connected the Andaman archipelago and Myanmar around the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM), a scenario in well agreement with the evidence from linguistic and palaeoclimate studies.” (Wang, Hua-Wei; Mitra, Bikash; Chaudhuri, Tapas Kumar; Palanichamy, Malliya gounder; Kong, Qing-Peng; Zhang, Ya-Ping (20 March 2011). "Mitochondrial DNA evidence supports north-east Indian origin of the aboriginal Andamanese in the Late Paleolithic". *Journal of Genetics and Genomics*. **38** (3): 117–122).

Andamanese were very talented hunter gatherers for thousands of years, having arrived in the Andaman Islands about 25,000 years ago. The tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands include the Jangil, Jarawas, Nicobarese, Onges, Sentinelese, and Shompen, collectively known as the Great Andamanese.

Men of the Andamanese tribes wear tapered belts or girdles made of fibre. Weapons are worn during hunting ventures. Women wear tribal dresses containing leaves supported by a belt. Body painting of women is a common feature.

Hunting is the primary source of food and occupation of these tribes. Vegetables are also eaten, and poultry farming occurs. Foods eaten include fish, pork, crabs, monitor lizard, turtle eggs, roots, seeds, rice, tubers (a very thick underground part of a stem or root), octopus, molluscs, shells, and other sea food.

When the British arrived in the late 1850s, there were more than 5,000 Great Andamanese on the islands. Hundreds of tribal members were killed trying to defend themselves and their lands. Thousands were eradicated by epidemics of measles, and influenza, STDs (sexually transmitted diseases); none of these horrors existed prior to the British arrival. The British attitude towards the Great Andamanese was typical of other colonizers:

“We are in reality laying the foundation stone for civilising a people {the Great Andamanese} hitherto living in a perfectly barbarous state, replete with treachery, murder and every other savageness; besides which it is very desirable, even in a political point of view, keeping these people in our custody as hostages, for it undoubtedly secures the better behaviour of these inhospitable people towards our Settlement,” said

Tyler, a British Colonial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. (The Great Andamanese: Survival International).

Contemporary Assyrians are descendants of one of the world's earliest civilizations, which traditionally included areas of Northern Mesopotamia (from the Greek meaning 'between 2 rivers'), spanning across modern northern Iraq, Northwestern Iran, areas in Northeastern Syria, and Southeastern Turkey. The Assyrian Empire flourished between 900 and 600 BCE (before the Common Era). The city of Nineveh was one of the richest and most prominent capitals of the empire.

Contemporary Assyrians speak a modern form of Mesopotamian Aramaic and Akkadian; official languages of the Assyrian Empire. Today, due to migration, many people of Assyrian descent live in North America, Western Europe, Australia, and elsewhere.

Historians, and many people in general, have heard of the mighty Assyrian Empire. In addition to historical documentation, art and architecture of the Assyrians indicates a powerful empire. Iron tools allowed the Assyrians to construct incredible palaces from mud bricks. Each new king manifested his power by the construction of palaces, competing with his predecessor. The use of orthostatic (stone slabs placed at the base of a wall), was a distinct attribute of Assyrian architecture. Impressive colourings and decorations were used to increase the character of these structures. Sargon II, who ruled Assyria from 721 to 705 BCE, built a palace at Khorsabad between 707 to 706 BCE, is an exemplary example of Assyrian architecture.

Assyrians have a rich cuisine, which is fundamentally based on rice, meat, tomato, and potato. Boushala is a common staple; it is a soup that contains rice and yogurt, sometimes herbs and vegetables are added. Rezza Smooqah is a plate made with chicken or meat, and is commonly eaten with Shirweh, a tomato-based stew. Masta, is home-made yogurt that can be eaten plain with bread, or mixed with vegetables, olive oil and/or herbs and spices. Kofta is a meatball stew. Tea is a common drink, with sugar and evaporated milk added. Note that during Lent, observant Christian Assyrians abstain from meat, dairy products, and eggs.

The word "fast" means not eating all or certain kinds of foods. As faithful members of the Church of the East, we can fast at certain seasons of great importance, and especially each time before receiving the mystery of the body and blood of the Lord. Usually, fasting means limiting the number of meals and/or the type of food eaten. God revealed fasting to mankind as something significant and important. Fasting is not merely an obligation, a tradition, a habit; it is connected with the very mystery of life and death, of salvation and condemnation. Fasting is a spiritual exercise. It is not imposed or forced upon us. In the same way that true repentance cannot be forced upon anyone, each of us makes the choice to turn away from our sinful ways and go toward our loving, Father in Heaven. (By Very Reverend Father Core Bishop Dr. George Toma, Saint Andrews Church, Parish Priest, March 17, 2017; [news.assyrianchurch.org](http://news.assyrianchurch.org): FAST-

## ING AND GREAT LENT).

There are 2-4 million Assyrians worldwide. The official language of the 3 main Assyrian Churches is Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language that the Prophet Jesus (PBUH) spoke. Many Assyrians also speak the language/s of the region they live in. Assyrians want an autonomous region in Northern Iraq, a traditional Syrian stronghold.

The decline and eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire story cannot be told without mentioning the Armenian genocide. Although the modern nation of Turkey is in complete-continuous denial of this historical fact. Sadly, another genocide occurred during the same period, but this atrocity is not known about or understood. Though it was smaller in scope than the Armenian genocide, it was still very grand, in particular in relation to the proportion of the population. I am referring to the Assyrian genocide. Within the Ottoman Empire, the Assyrian population was one million, with a common language, culture, and religion.

Most lived in territories of modern day Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, with significant communities near Lake Urmia in Iran, Lake Van, Mosul in Iraq, North-western Syria, and the Eastern Ottoman provinces of Diyarbekir, Erzerum, and Bitlis. The Assyrians, and other minorities, in particular Christians, were treated as second-class citizens. Turkish authorities incorporated the Assyrians into other nations to prevent them from forming a united front.

The military, political, and religious power was held firmly by the Turks, serving their own interests. As the empire continued to decline and neared collapse, a calculated, systemic, policy of extreme brutality and cruelty was used to hold onto power. This was primarily done against perceived internal enemies; it was easier to point their finger at the Christian minorities.

Between August 1914 and September 1925, many horrible massacres were carried out by the Ottomans. Regions previously populated by Assyrians were emptied-out. At the Annual Congress of the Young Turks' Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) in Thessalonian in 1910, the Congress' President said:

**"No reliance could be placed" upon Christians, and ... as Europe always regarded the affairs of Turkey through Christian spectacles every effort must be made to crush the propaganda of the Empire's Christian nationalities, which might attract the attention of European politicians... {Muslims} generally should retain their arms, and where they are in a minority arms should be distributed to them by the authorities... Emigration [of Muslims] from the Caucasus and Turkestan must be encouraged, land provided for the immigrants, and the Christians prevented from purchasing property... Sooner or later the complete Ottomanization of all Turkish subjects must be effected, but it was becoming clear that this could never be achieved by persuasion, and recourse must be had to force of arms." (By Nicholas El-Jeloo, Posted April 23, 2015; [www.aina.org](http://www.aina.org): The Assyrian Genocide: Turkey's Wholesale Slaughter and Extermination).**

"The nations that remain from the old times in our empire are akin to foreign and harmful weeds that must be uprooted. To clear our land ... {of} foreign and harmful weeds that must be uprooted," said Dr. Bahaettin Saker, to the 1911 Congress. (ibid).

The Young Turks attained power through a coup d'etat on July 24, 1908, deposing Sultan Abdul Hamid II. They were ultra-nationalistic, with a Turkish identity. Their goal was to shed away the Ottoman identity and replace it with a Turkish identity. Turks were to be highly favoured; a super-Turkish state was to be created.

The awaited time to execute large-scale massacres, expulsions, and other acts of brutality began with the start of the First World War (July 28, 1914 - November 11, 1918). The Ottoman Empire officially sided with Germany, which declared war against Russia. During the Ottoman genocide campaign Henry Morgenthau (1856 - 1946), the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, gave public speeches stating that the Greeks and Assyrians were being forced to endure the 'same methods' of deportation and 'wholesale massacre' as the Armenians, and that 2 million had already died.

Morgenthau had face-to-face meetings with high-level Ottoman officials to reduce the ongoing atrocities therein. Not surprisingly, his protests and requests were brushed off. In addition, during this period, the U.S. Government had a neutrality stand, it did not want to enter a bloody war. From the very beginning of the genocidal campaign, Morgenthau was receiving reports almost hourly from American consuls living in different regions of the Ottoman Empire, detailing the slaughters and forced marches that were occurring. Morgenthau resigned from his post in 1916. In his *The Murder of a Nation* he wrote that he had come to see Turkey as 'a place of horror'.

The genocide against the Assyrians occurred within the Ottoman Empire and in modern day Northern Iran. Even before the genocide, the Ottoman Empire was not a just place for some of its minorities, especially non-Muslims. They paid special taxes which was supposed to grant them full protection and exemption from military service. In reality, they only received the latter and in addition were not allowed to carry weapons, in some areas they were required to carry visible indicators of identity and were not allowed to speak their native language.

Irrespective of their 'protected status' as Dhimmi (People of the Book), the Assyrians were routinely persecuted by local leaders and Kurdish tribesmen, and massacred. The attacks and brutality against the Assyrians took many forms including large-scale massacres, shootings, bludgeoning of children, stabbing, individual and large-scale rapes of women, women who refused to be raped (resisted) could be tortured, some resisters were dismembered and dumped like trash, beheading of men who were defiant

; priests, nuns, and deacons burned and skinned alive, other victims were drowned. There are also accounts of Ottoman officers owning souvenirs including ears, noses, and female body-parts. Below is an excerpt from a testimonial by Reverend John Eshoo, a survivor of the Khoi (located in modern day Iran) massacre of Assyrians that occurred in early 1918. Please note that this particular massacre was carried out by Kurdish troops within the Ottoman Army. This particular level of cruelty and sadism during the Assyrian genocide was not an exception, unfortunately, it was the general norm.

“These Assyrians were assembled into one caravansary, and shot to death by guns and revolvers. Blood literally flowed in little streams, and the entire open space within the caravansary became a pool of crimson liquid. The place was too small to hold all the living victims waiting for execution. They were brought in groups, and each new group was compelled to stand over the heap of the still bleeding bodies and shot to death. The fearful place became literally a human slaughter house, receiving its speechless victims, in groups of ten and twenty at a time, for execution ...The executioners began by cutting first the fingers of their victims, join by joint, till the two hands were entirely amputated. Then they were stretched on the ground, after the manner of the animals that are slain in the East, but these with their faces turned upward, and their heads resting upon the stones or blocks of wood Then their throats were half cut, so as to prolong their torture of dying, and while struggling in the agony of death, the victims were kicked and clubbed by heavy poles the murderers carried many of them, while still labouring under the pain of death, were thrown into ditches and buried before their souls had expired.” (wikipedia.org: Assyrian Genocide).

Assyrians who were able to flee the carnage had no place to go, at least not nearby. Fleeing away without food, water, shelter, medical care, and having to face a hostile environment were additional horrors. Sadly, the world powers were too pre-occupied with the ongoings of the war, and probably wouldn't have intervened anyway even if they could have; this is an all too often repeated problem in modern human history.

“In 2007, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) reached a consensus that the "Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks.” It "calls upon the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocides against these populations, to issue a formal apology, and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution." (December 16, 2007; web.archive.org: GENOCIDE SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES ASSYRIAN, GREEK GENOCIDES). (NOTE: The aforementioned resolution passed with the support of over 80 percent of IAGS members who voted. IAGS member Adam Jones drafted the resolution. He and Thea Halo lobbied for it. Halo's mother miraculously survived the Pontian Greek genocide).

"This resolution," stated IAGS President Gregory Stanton. "is one more repudiation by the world's leading genocide scholars of the Turkish government's ninety year denial of the Ottoman Empire's genocides against its Christian populations, including Assyrians, Greeks, and Armenians," said IAGS President Gregory Stanton.” (ibid).

Larger targets of attack included farming villages and tribes; confiscation of land and property was another important factor. The main oppressors were Ottoman troops and Kurdish paramilitary personnel or tribesmen. However, civilians from the targeted areas also helped themselves to much booty from Assyrian villages.

The initial mass slaughters occurred in Diyarbekir, under the command of Reshid Bey. A German Vice-Consul disclosed that in July 1915, Assyrians were being slaughtered in Diyarbekir Vilayet. A German Consul indicated that in September 1915, that a massacre of adult Christians occurred in Diyarbekir, Harput, Mardin, and Viransehir. He also indicated that acts of extreme brutality had occurred in Urhoy. It was reported that the Assyrians of Faysh Khabur had been exterminated, as well as male Assyrians of Mardin and Sirt. The widows and orphans of the murdered apparently allowed to flee to Mosul; starvation and the harsh elements took their lives.

"These atrocities {and there were to be many others} prompted the Assyrian patriarch to appeal to the Russian representative in the Caucasus, claiming that the Turkish leaders were intent on killing all Assyrians." (Hannibal Travis. "The Assyrian Genocide: A Tale of Oblivion and Denial" in Lamarchand, Rene, 2011).

"According to the Syrian Patriarchate, the Turkish government ordered an attack on the Christian villages near Mardin, which were mostly inhabited by Assyrians. The soldiers went beyond attacking property and killed civilians, for instance, the Assyrians of Kiziltepe/Tell Armen were gathered in a church and burned. In Diyarbekir, women and children were deported, but only a very small number reached their destinations as women were killed, raped or sold." (Sebastian de Cortois. *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans*, p. 248; Georgias Pr Llc 2004).

ISIL, which wreaked havoc and chaos on countless people in the region, chose the Assyrians as one of their targets. One example is the capturing of 2 Assyrian villages from Kurdish troops in Hasasakah, Syria, in February of 2015, entire residential areas were ransacked, houses were set-ablaze, those who could not escape the carnage were killed or kidnapped, as conveyed by their relatives in Lebanon.

"All of my relatives have been kidnapped, and their houses and the churches in the area burnt ... Apart from the first day's brief phone call, we haven't been able to speak to them, and we know nothing. All we want is some news on them, on what is going on. This is all we're asking for," said Nino Youkhana to Al Jazeera. (By Nour Samaha, March 1, 2015; [aljazeera.com](http://aljazeera.com): Syria's Assyrians: 'No One Helped Us').

Thankfully, ISIL rule in parts of Syria and Iraq was short-lived. They killed and brutalized Sunni and Shiite Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, and any other groups or individuals they perceived as enemies. On February 27, 2015, a meeting took place at the Assyrian Church in Beirut, the mood was very tense. The people were fearful, anxious, and understandably frustrated. Once again, they felt abandoned by the international community, wor-



ried that history was repeating itself. However, this time they said they were planning to do something about it.

"We have men, we have a military council for Assyrians [in Hassakah], but no one is giving us weapons to defend ourselves. There is a conspiracy against us to push the indigenous people off their land," said Ibrahim Murad to Al Jazeera. (ibid).

The Assyrians are frustrated, politicians and leaders who can help spurt out worthless words with no clout. Unfortunately, this is a commonly heard complaint from victimized peoples of the world. Their fears are legitimate. In August 1933, Assyrians were forced to flee from 63 Assyrian villages in northern Iraq following the Simele and other massacres carried out by the Iraqi government. The number of dead is estimated to be between 3,000 and 6,000, with reports of large-scale massacres. In addition, women were raped, a number of people were burned alive, acts of humiliation occurred. Kurdish irregulars were also involved in the carnage. To date, neither the Iraqi government or the Kurdistan Regional Government has recognized the Simele massacre as an act of genocide.

The Awa' live in the eastern Amazon rainforest, they are one of the world's most endangered tribes. They carry everything they own, children, weapons, food, and pets. Before the arrival of the Portuguese 500 years ago, tens of thousands of them lived in Maranhao State, Brazil. Today only 400 remain, 60 of which are uncontacted. The Awa' speak Guaja', a Tupi-Guarani language. Uncontacted tribes live without modern amenities, and they are extremely susceptible to external diseases and contagions.

The beautiful and dense amazon rainforests that once covered vast areas of Northeast Brazil have all but vanished. The Awa's lands have been stolen by European colonists, the logging industry, and ranchers, the latter have enslaved them. The Awa' need their lands and freedom in order to survive. They live in balance with their environment. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century colonizers cleared a massive amount of forest lands. In Brazil alone, there are about 100 tribes that live in the Amazon basin, some of these tribes are in grave danger.

**"If you destroy the forest, you destroy us too," said Blade Awa'. (Survival International; EARTH'S MOST THREATENED TRIBE).**

In 1835, following generations of unbearable oppression, the tribes of Maranhao State staged a 5-year uprising against their European oppressors. Unfortunately, 100,000 indigenes were wiped out. Other enemies included smallpox, measles, and flu. The Awa' were forced to live a nomadic lifestyle to evade the ongoing exterminations. For 200 years they were talented hunters and acquired the ability to build shelters in lightening speed and to leave them days later.

In 1982, the Brazilian government received a \$900 million loan from the World Bank and European Union, to protect indigen-

ous lands. Nevertheless, illegal logging and the dangers posed by loggers continued. According to the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) 450 tribal people were murdered between 2003 and 2010.

The Awa' take in animals as family members, women breast feed the young ones. Every family has several wild animals as pets, including agoutis (large rodents), parakeets, wild boars, squirrels, and monkeys, the latter being their favourite. Some of the animals help them do daily chores including nut-cracking, acquiring fruits from high trees, and guarding them while they're asleep. If they let a family animal free and they see it in the forest it will not be hunted, it is a hanima (part of their family).

**"I SPEND A LONG TIME BREASTFEEDING the baby monkeys ... And when they have grown they go back to the forest to live. I hear the howler monkey that used to be my pet, singing there in the forest," said Parakeet, an Awa' woman. (ibid).**

The forest provides a variety of food, capybara and harpy eagle are prohibited; bats, large opossums, and hummingbirds are considered repulsive. Other animals are hunted in specific times of the year, it aids conservation. The Awa live in extended family groups that engage in the gathering of nuts and berries. Hunting ventures can last up to several weeks.

In late 2011, Brazilian loggers tied an 8 year-old girl Awa' girl to a tree and burned her alive after she accidentally wandered out of her village and then entered a government-protected area in Maranhao State. Members of another tribe witnessed this monstrous act.

Historically, the Brazilian Government has not done its share to protect its indigenous peoples, and at times has been complicit in their persecution. As conveyed by Luis Carlos Guajajara, a local Indian leader from another tribe, to Brazil's Terra website:

**"It happened deep in the forest. The loggers were doing business with the Guajajara Indians and found the Gwaja girl. And they burned the child. Just because they wanted to, out of nothing but pure wickedness. She was from another tribe, they live deep in the jungle, and have no contact with the outside world. It would have been the first time she had ever seen white men. We heard that they laughed as they burned her to death." (By Matt Roper, January 8, 2012; dailymail.co.uk: Brazilian loggers 'tied eight-year-old Amazonian tribe girl to a tree and burned her alive').**

The Ayoreo (Ayoreod) live in the Gran Chaco, a largely uninhabited, arid subtropical area of low forests and savannas crossed by 2 rivers and hardly any roads or rail lines. There are around 5,500 living in Paraguay and Bolivia. Of the various subgroups of Ayoreo the Totobiegosode (humans from the place of the wild pigs) are the most isolated. The tribe were traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers, later, most were sedentarized (a transitioning process in which a nomadic population becomes sedentary, taking long-term or permanent residence. In this particular

case, it was done by force). They speak the Ayoreo language.

The Totobiegosode live in small groups. They plant squash, beans, and melons, and hunt in the forest. Large tortoises and wild boar, and honey are delicacies. Communal houses contain 4 or 5 families. Houses are supported by small branches and dried mud. Indoor sleep occurs when it rains.

Ayoreo who live in settled communities inhabit single family huts. Those whose lands have been confiscated must survive by working as cheap, often-times exploited cattle ranch workers; a terrible humiliation and insult. The evangelical New Tribes Mission attempts to curb the practice of traditional rituals. The idea is to 'civilize' and 'Christianize' them; take the Indian out of the Indian, and to isolate and pacify them; cheap labour for the colonizers is a bonus. Some Ayoreo within the Chaco whose lands were sold away are desperately trying get back at least some of their lands, and to hang on to their way of life.

**"This is all our territory ... The white men tried to take it from us, but we're here again now. When we first came back, I enjoyed exploring that part of the land, But I don't go any more. I don't want to get shot!"** said Unine Cutamoraja, an Ayoreo in his 50s who was a young boy when he left the forest to live with the missionaries. (By Toby Stirling Hill, January 25, 2016; [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com): Disappearing world: Paraguay's Ayoreo people fight devastating land sales).

**"The evangelists told them that the end of the world was close, that the forest would soon be destroyed, and that they could survive only by moving to the missionary settlements. As the years passed, Ayoreo elders grew restless in the confined space of the settlements. They travelled to see what had become of their old territory. And they found that the missionaries had lied."** (ibid).

Since the late 1960s many Ayoreo have been forced to leave the forest, but some chose to hide from outsiders. The first sustained contact with white people was in the 1940s and 1950s; Mennonite farmers built colonies on their land. The Ayoreo tried to oppose this colonization, resulting in death on both sides.

In 1979 and 1986 the American Fundamentalist New Tribes Mission helped to form manhunts, in which many Totobiegosode were forcefully removed from the forest; a number of Totobiegosode died during these encounters, additional deaths occurred due to disease. Other missionary groups included Catholic, Evangelical, and Mennonite. In the late 1990s and early 2000s other Totobiegosode groups were forced to leave the forest due to land invasions, causing them to abandon their homes regularly, making life very difficult.

Today, the biggest threat to the Totobiegosode is Yaguarite Pora'. This Brazilian firm 'owns' 78,000 hectares of land within their territory. The firm plans to bulldoze most of the area to establish cattle ranching. Note that a 2013 University of Maryland study found that Paraguayan Chaco has the fastest rate of deforestation in the world. Nearly all Ayoreo ancestral lands are

owned by non-Indians, who hire workers to extract timber from the forest and then switch to cattle ranching. For isolated Amazonian rainforest Indians the sound of chainsaws, bulldozers, and the voices of non-Indians are clear indications of upcoming danger.

The Batak People (Philippines) are one of around 140 indigenous peoples in the Philippines. They live mainly in the northern part of the island of Palawan. The word Batak means 'people of the mountains'. Although they are people of the mountains today they are settled along the coastline and river valleys Northeast of Puerto Princesa (Cuyonon), the capital of Palawan. They are believed to have been the first wave of people who traversed the land bridges connecting the Philippine Islands to mainland China, 50,000 years ago.

The Batak is the smallest of the Palawan tribes. Unfortunately, their population is declining at a steady rate. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there was an estimated 600 Batak, dropping to 400 by the 1970s; today there are only 300 remaining.

Batak are small in stature, dark complexioned, short, with kinky hair. They are a negrito tribe. They speak Batak or Binatak, Tagbanwa, and Cuyonon. They are generally introverted, quiet, non-violent, and many of their women are topless. The Batak belief system is animism, a belief that plants, animals, and other inanimate objects are alive. Polygamy was a practice of the past, the strongest man in the tribe acquired the most number of wives and children. But following the introduction of Christianity, monogamy has become the norm. Women earn income by making woven articles, flower pots, and necklaces.

The Tarek Festival is celebrated every third week in January in Palawan to manifest the Batak's traditional dances, woven clothing, and other accessories. Tarek is a ritual performed before planting. A male babaylan (shaman) liaise to placate the spirits by music and dance in ceremonial activities. Before the dance, food and animal sacrifices are set on the altar as an offering to ask the targetted spirit for plentiful harvest.

Large-scale land loss, forced relocations, logging, a government ban on shifting agriculture, government 'protected areas', settlers, introduced diseases, malnourishment, high infant mortality, low birth rates, poor literacy and lack of teachers, exogamy (marrying outside of the tribe, resulting in a population decline of full-blooded Batak), and the gradual obliteration of their culture are devastating threats.

In 1956, the first road was built through Batak land, resulting in the entry of large numbers of settlers to the area. The Batak were forced to leave, moving to the less fertile hills. In the late 1960s the government attempted to sedentarize them, with terrible consequences. In the 1970s, the appetite for forest products grew. The Batak entered deeper into the cash economy,

resulting in debt.

During the 1980s logging companies occupied and seized more Batak territory swelling vast tracts of kauri trees. These trees were an important lifeline for the Batak; the valuable resin was sold and used as a tarnish. Although the Philippines Government passed an indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, it was hardly enforced. Nonetheless, in 1994 the Philippines Government outlawed the Batak peoples' farming methods. In order to survive, they had to gather and sell from the dwindling forest products.

The Bedouin (Bedu) are nomadic Arabs living in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, and North Africa. The term 'Bedouin' is derived from the Arabic word 'Badawi', meaning desert inhabitants. They are composed of clans or tribes, sometimes with extraordinary attachments and identity. Most Bedouin herd goats and camels; horses and donkeys are also used but to a much lesser extent. Some Bedouin tribes own dogs, which are considered 'Najasa' (unsanitary or filthy) by Islamic and Arab tradition.

The modern world has spread its tentacles far and wide, reaching many Bedouin who have given up their traditional lifestyle for that of city and town life. Music, poetry, clan and tribe identity often follows them. There are an estimated 4 million Bedouin worldwide. Most live in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States. They do not have as much power as in the past. Bedouin originated in modern day Saudi Arabia, they migrated in search of food, water, and better pastures.

The Bedouin of North Africa and the Middle East are talented herders, especially of goats and dromedary camels (also called the Arabian or Somali camel). The dromedary is a massive, single-humped, even-toed ungulate. It's the largest of the 3 species of camel. Goats and camels are the lifeline of traditional Bedouin, supplying meat, dairy products, and wool. For Bedouin, the camel is a mercy and gift from GOD. The Arabic word for beauty is 'Jamal', it is derived from the Arabic word 'Jml' which means camel.

In the past, the vast deserts were dangerous places to travel unprotected. Some Bedouin tribes were notorious for being bandits, they raided caravans and communities in search of food, animals, and other booty. This practice has virtually disappeared. Today, if anyone is a victim it is the Bedouin, the forces of the outside world are considerably more powerful, greedy, organized, and ruthless.

Marriage between close relatives, especially cousins was traditionally common. It was not unusual for 3 generations of a family to inhabit a single unit. The Bedouin-Arabs of Palestine-Israel are an indigenous people, most were internally dispossessed from the lands that they had owned for centuries-on-end. Seizure of Bedouin lands was done through the enacting of laws

passed by the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), the legal system, and a variety of administrative actions.

Today, the 190,000 Palestinian Bedouin living in the Naqab (Negev) are the most deprived and destitute citizens of Israel. They are crying out for their land ownership rights, equality, acceptance, and their traditions. Because of the dismal media coverage and outright blatant dishonest information spread by governments, there are many myths and fallacies about the Bedouin people. Below are 8 myths and fallacies regarding the Naqab Bedouin people:

1. THE ARAB BEDOUIN ARE NOT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: Historians recognize that the Arab Bedouin have lived in the Naqab since the 7<sup>th</sup> century and were the only inhabitants there until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2011, James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, came to the conclusion that the Arab Bedouin, a community with a long-established standing throughout a geographic area with a link to lands and a preservation of cultural traditions that are separate from those of majority populations, have the right to international protection as an indigenous people. The Arab Bedouin have organized in communities since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they were mostly sedentary and secured by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These settlements and long-existing villages are not recognized by the State of Israel.

2. THE ARAB BEDOUIN ARE CLAIMING ALL OF THE LAND OF THE NAQAB: In 1969, Israel instituted a process by which citizens could register declarations of land ownership claims with the state. The Palestinian Bedouin were accorded Israeli citizenship in 1954. Between 1970 and 1979, the Arab Bedouin presented 3,221 land ownership claims, equalling an area of 971,000 dunums (242,750 acres). Today, the Bedouin comprise 30 percent of the Naqab population, and are justifiably declaring 600,000 dunums (200,000 acres), which is less than 5 percent of the Naqab. This is far too much for the Israeli Government and settlers to accept.

3. THE BEDOUIN CULTURE IS ENTRENCHED IN CRIME/CRIMINALS: The 7 government-organized Bedouin townships, the most destitute in Israel, do have some of the highest crime rates in the nation. Even so, these high crime rates must be recognized within the special circumstances of the concentration of destitution, imposed urbanization, and dismal state investment. Below are some relevant figures:

- 67.2% of Palestinian Bedouin families in Israel live in poverty
- 20.5% of all families in Israel The school drop-out rate for Arab Bedouin children in unrecognized villages is 70%.
- State expenditure per capita on social welfare is 30% lower for Arab localities

than for Jewish localities. (By Pamela Dimitrova/Arab America Contributing Writer, December 4, 2019; arabamerica.com: The Bedouin of the Naqab: Myths and Misconceptions).

4. THE BEDOUIN LIVE IN DISPERSED, UNDEFINED SETTLEMENTS; IT IS QUITE IMPLAUSIBLE TO LINK SETTLEMENTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE: Nearly 50 percent of the Bedouin community in the Naqab reside in 45 permanent and identified villages, no less than 10 of which are in the 'course of recognition' by the State. The aforementioned 45 villages were set up prior to the establishment of the State of Israel or were established in the 1950s by directive of the military government that packed the Bedouin into the controlled 'Siyag' area in the northern Naqab. Hypocritically and expected, in 2010, the Knesset retroactively legalized about 60 settlements, all except one of which were Jewish owned. The lone non-Jewish settlement is likely on borrowed time. These settlements have access basic services and are usually located near the 'un-recognized' Bedouin villages. It is not a matter of inability, but a matter of superpower-supported apartheid, 'separate and unequal'.

5. THE BEDOUIN DO NOT HAVE A SOLUTION FOR THEIR COMMUNITY: Historically, every governing authority in the Naqab, not including the Israeli Government, acknowledged the Arab Bedouin traditional land ownership system as the acceptable framework for Bedouin settlement. Furthermore, in 2011, the Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages, Bimkom and Sidrah, issued an 'Alternative Plan' for the unrecognized villages, offering to recognize villages and traditional land ownership. The plan provides a model of sustainable development of the Naqab, premised on the principles of equality and respect of human rights.

6. THE BEDOUIN UNDER ISRAELI RULE ARE OFFERED 'FREE' LAND IN GOVERNMENT-PLANNED TOWNS, BUT MANY REFUSE TO LIVE IN THEM: The first government-arranged town of Tel Shiva was created in 1969, six more townships were created over the next 30 years. The internally displaced Bedouin (those who were coerced into leaving their ancestral land and take up residence in the Siyag area) comprise 85 percent of the population in the destitute government organized towns. Most of the Bedouin who were not displaced from their ancestral land have stayed put, even though the State of Israel intentionally deprives them of access to basic services. This policy is used as a weapon to induce the Bedouin to move to the so-called free land in the recognized towns. The word 'free' in this context is an outright lie. The 'free land' is claimed by other Bedouin. In addition, the rule is, 'no free land in the townships' unless all ancestral land claims are renounced.

Today, the Bedouin people in the West Bank are originally from the Naqab Desert, where they lived there before the brutal 1948 ethnic cleansing campaigns. These Bedouin belonged to a body of tribes with common a history and lineage, who followed a strict tribal system that had rules set up among the leaders. Their lives were well-adapted to the tough conditions of the desert. They had values, customs, codes of conduct, and means of earning a living, some of the aforementioned qualities are still retained today.

Between 1948 and 1951, many Bedouin tribes were forced to evacuate the Naqab Desert and take residence in the West Bank. The massive expulsions wreaked havoc on the Bedouin lifestyle and severely curtailed their freedom of movement. In 1967, the Bedouin people were again forced to become refugees; they took residence in rural areas of Bethlehem, Jericho, Jerusalem, Hebron, and the Jordan Valley. The brutal occupation of these areas by Israel once again severely curtailed the freedom of movement of the Bedouin, and seriously altered their traditional lifestyle. The former goat-tent designs were now replaced by metallic-based shelters, in filthy cramped camps, that didn't have running water, sewer system, or electricity.

Most of the Bedouin live in Israeli-controlled 'Area C'. The Bedouin people therein have Palestinian identity cards. Bedouin populations frequently face eviction orders issued by the Israeli authorities. They also face shelter destruction. As a result of harsh restrictions caused by closed military areas, the Apartheid Wall, and the numerous Israeli settlements, it is very difficult for Bedouin to have proper access to water resources and grazing lands. The water problem is having an adverse effect on livestock farming. By October 2019, the village of Al-Araqib had been demolished more than 160 times in less than a decade! In August 2019, an Israeli court approved the state billing of 6 local villagers an amount equivalent to \$370,000 for the multiple demolitions. Keep in mind that for the typical Bedouin this is an astronomical amount of money.

In January 2019, Uri Ariel, Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Development of the Negev developed a massive plan to expel an estimated 36,000 Bedouin Palestinians from their unrecognized villages, as stated by the Israel Today Hebrew Newspaper.

**“Israel uses benign terms to hide the true nature of its plans to evict tens of thousands of indigenous Bedouin from their homes, many of whom have been uprooted at least once before. The reality is that this is part of Israel's overarching, 70-year-long ethnic cleansing project to create a Jewish state.” (By Sayah Abu-Madhim, October 19, 2019; [israelpalestineneews.org](http://israelpalestineneews.org): Cleansing the Negev: Israel Plans to Evict “Tens of Thousands” of Palestinian Bedouin).**

The Bidoon or Bidun (Bidun; in Arabic it means without na-



tionality, country, homeland), are a stateless Arab people in the Gulf Cooperation Council (all Arab countries of the Persian Gulf except Iraq); especially Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. The word 'Bidoon' entails being treated as foreigners, illegal immigrants, illegal settlers, filthy poor, the other, unwanted and unwelcome.

In Kuwait, the Bidoon were not counted as citizens when the country gained its independence or for the short period thereafter. This group of Bidoon have no legal or true connection to any country other than Kuwait. Because they are stateless, it is difficult for Bidoon to receive civil documents, find work, receive adequate healthcare, education, and other vital services. These services are usually satisfactory or plentiful to Kuwait citizens. As such, destitution and deprivation are common among Bidoon; they're forced to work in menial, humiliating jobs, under the table, and likely to be cheated and abused. There is an estimated 500,000 Bidoon throughout the Gulf States.

Most Bidoon trace their origin to nomadic tribes of the Arabian Peninsula who were already residing in Kuwait when the country gained its independence in 1961. The procedure for deciding eligibility for citizenship, as set forth by the 1959 nationality law, highly favoured Kuwait's urban residents and those with close ties to powerful tribes or families (in other words, connections).

Unfortunately, many tribal groups failed to register as citizens when the law passed because they didn't know of, or comprehend what the law entailed. This new concept of nationalism, nationality, citizenship, and passports was a colonialist strategy to divide and conquer peoples. The aforementioned concepts were simply alien to the Bedouin, Bidoon, and many others. Allegiance was tribal, with tribal elders and a likely sheikh who was trusted, respected, and obeyed. Nation-states did not exist in their minds. Nearly one-third of Kuwait's residents were not granted citizenship. Officially, they were deemed as 'Bidoon jin-siya' (without nationality, passport). Even the Palestinian refugees can say 'I am a Palestinian'.

A second, smaller group of Bidoon, who previously lived in Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria enlisted in the Kuwaiti military and police forces in the 1960s and 1970s. The newborn Kuwaiti state had a very difficult time trying to find citizen recruits. Later on, the Kuwaiti government decided that they could not readily admit that they had hired foreign recruits, so they decided to label them as Bidoon. Many Bidoon under this classification left Kuwait following the Gulf War.

"Categorized as "illegal" residents, Kuwait's stateless population (called "Bidoon") are denied citizenship, despite many of them having been born in Kuwait. While Kuwaiti citizens receive financial and social benefits from the wealthy state, Bidoon are denied even basic social services by virtue of their lack of citizenship." (By Helal Aljam-

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