

Thursday, April 22, 2010

INDIGENOUS WOMEN: Ofelia Rivas and Michelle Cook in Bolivia



VIDEO INTERVIEWS, VOICES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN: Ofelia Rivas, O'odham Voice Against the Wall, and Michelle Cook, Navajo, live from the Bolivia Climate Conference.

Photo: Ofelia Rivas at closing ceremony of World Climate Conference in Bolivia. Photo Ofelia Rivas.

Watch video, recorded live by Earthcycles in Bolivia:

<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/6343599>

Ofelia Rivas, founder of the O'odham Voice Against the Wall, describes recent beatings

of O'odham living in their traditional homelands on the US/Mexico border by the US Border Patrol. With the constant attacks by immigration officials, Ofelia said the O'odham elders ask: 'Will they stop the wind from coming across the border?' Ofelia said the Him'dag, sacred way of life, is disrupted by the border wall and militarization. During the construction of the border vehicle barriers, O'odham ancestors were removed from their burial places by Boeing. She said when the people were reburied, a blessing was said for a cleansing rain which came. O'odham ceremonies and daily lives are disrupted, along with the survival of the plants and animals in the Sonoran Desert by the heavy militarization. Ofelia describes how the US Border Patrol halted and violated the ceremonial deer hunt of the O'odham. *Recently, Ofelia Rivas was imprisoned in an immigration prison in southern Mexico on false charges for four days while supporting the Zapatistas. She has been handcuffed and held at gunpoint by the US Border Patrol and tribal police in her homeland. Ofelia was the recipient of a Borderlinks' Women on the Border Award 2010.*

Michelle Cook, Navajo arriving from Maori territory in New Zealand, urges unity in Indigenous struggles. "We really need to do what we can to work together."



Michelle said real change in the world begins within each us. She said Indigenous Peoples have the spiritual knowledge and power to bring about meaningful change that is needed. Along with Earthcycles Producer Govinda, Michelle describes the connectedness of humans with the earth. Michelle describes her Navajo grandmother, who walks the Beauty Way. Describing environmental racism toward Native Americans, Michelle said the brutal cost of uranium mining on the Navajo Nation has

meant cancer and disease for Navajos. Profiteering and deception by the carbon market is described. Michelle is a graduate of the University of Arizona in Indigenous and women's studies. She was active in border struggles with the Indigenous Alliance without Borders and

supported the Zapatistas in the struggle for autonomy and dignity. She is now a Fulbright scholar and graduate student in Maori territory in New Zealand. *Live from Earthcycles*
<http://www.earthcycles.net/>