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1000 HAWAIIANS EXPECTED TO ATTEND 24- HOUR VIGIL IN KAILUA-KONA, SATURDAY AUGUST 18TH TO SUNDAY AUGUST 19TH, TO PROTECT SACRED SITE

As scores of Hawaiians are made homeless by the real estate industry's relentless consumption of Hawaiian land and culture, and the state of Hawaii's unapologetic complicity in the subsequent dispossession of Hawaiians, one cultural group is refusing to allow the corporate takeover of Kamehameha the Great's heiau.

KULANA HULI HONUA is a group of Hawaiians who refuse to be evicted from their office and removed as the rightful guardians of Ahu'ena Heiau, the personal heiau of Kamehameha the Great. At 6PM, on Saturday, August 18th, they, along with the Priests of Lono, will begin 24-hour -long Ho'owehewehe ceremonies at Ahu'ena Heiau, located across from the Kailua Pier in Kona. The public is invited to attend and participate.

Located at Kamakahonu on the northern end of Kailua-Kona's tourist mecca, in what real estate and tourist industry promoters refer to as the "Gold Coast," this small area of sand, lava rock and sea is among the most sacred and relevant historical spaces to Native Hawaiians. It is also where hundreds of millions in real estate/tourist ventures turn a profit. (During the first four months of 2007, over 700,000 tourists came to the Big Island, which has a population of about 170,000 people.)

When a newly formed corporate entity, IWFKKH, LLC, bought the "King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel," they expected Kulana Huli Honua to accept an immediate eviction from its office located in the hotel's lobby. But Kulana Huli Honua is resisting that and more.

The new hotel ownership actions have lit a flame amongst Hawaiian and Public Trust activists worldwide. "Cultural sites like Ahu'ena Heiau belong to the Hawaiian people and today are commonly awarded historic easements and recognized as public trust resources," said Mikahala Roy, President of Kulana Huli Honua. "They cannot be claimed by private landowners under western law. Roy's father, David Kahelemauna Roy, Jr., charged her with the kuleana (responsibility) of Kulana Huli Honua, and named her, along with Kalani Nakoa, as co-kahu to continue stewardship and to protect the integrity of Ahu'ena Heiau.

Mike Barnard, one of the new owners, spoke to Hotel Online.com about the purchase of the hotel. "We look forward to further enhancing the valuable relationships that exist with both the Ahuena Heiau, Inc., and the Kona Historical Society. We are dedicated to ensuring that the rich Hawaiian heritage of the area will be incorporated into our design plans."

But Roy said, "They are attempting to convey stewardship of the heiau to Ahuena Inc. because that organization will do nothing to interfere with the hotel's plans. The hotel holds luau five nights a week within feet of the heiau, the iwi (bones) interred nearby, and the Hale Lua where Kamehameha the Great himself was prepared for burial. Clearly, the time has come to create a buffer to protect this sacred site from being completely inundated by tourists and corporate commodification. There is no way to measure the value of this site."

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