

**24th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
21 April -2 May 2025**

Agenda Item 3: Discussion on the theme “Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within United Nations Member States and the United Nations system, including identifying good practices and addressing challenges” 22nd April 2025 Statement by Land Rights Defenders Inc, presented by Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. From the lands that have cradled our ancestors for millennia, from the rivers that sing their songs, and the winds that bruit their wisdom, we gather once more. We stand here not as petitioners, but as inheritors of ancient knowledge, as guardians of irreplaceable heritage, and as rights holders whose voices must not only be heard but heeded. I represent the resilient Huahi Achama Tutuwaa Royal Family, the Indigenous People of Benimasi-Boadi-Goaso, Ghana, and the unwavering hope forged in our fight: Land Rights Defenders. Our organization, a testament to the enduring spirit of those who refuse erasure, was born from the very earth we defend. These lands, now threatened by the insatiable desire for economic exploitation by the Kumasi Traditional Council, hold the sacred legacy of our ancestors. Their actions seek to desecrate this profound heritage, disregarding the wisdom and sacrifices that have shaped our identity.

While our connection to this land stretches back centuries, our fight for its recognition has intensified in recent times. It is from this very struggle, this refusal to be erased, that Land Rights Defenders emerged – a testament to the power of indigenous resilience and the urgent need for dedicated advocacy. Our call to action is embodied in the word "Benimasi," an Akan dialect meaning "Come and learn our roots." This phrase encapsulates the sacred bond we share with Ashanti heritage. It is an invitation to understand and appreciate the profound connection we have to our ancestors and the land they cherished. This land was not granted to a faceless entity; it was a personal gift from

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King Osei Tutu I to his beloved wife, Queen Huahi Achama Tutuwaa. This distinction is crucial. It birthed a unique lineage, solidified by the birth of their daughter, Konadu Afiya-Ofi, establishing our direct, inalienable right, separate and distinct from communal stool lands governed by traditional authorities. This personal grant, a testament to royal affection and lineage, forms the bedrock of our Allodial title, a right later prophesied to be safeguarded by our grandfather, **Nana Kwame Abosi**, a prophecy fulfilled through his unwavering dedication to our heritage and the continuity of King Osei Tutu, his grandfather's legacy.

And yet, our journey underscores a painful truth: the often-overlooked plight of the Global South. Despite the profound significance of our cause, despite our tireless efforts to uphold justice and protect our heritage, we have received scant attention and support on global platforms. Evidence of this stark reality lies in our partnerships with [GlobalGiving](#) and [Candid Guide star](#), where our noble fight for survival and recognition has garnered minimal traction. This lack of engagement highlights a systemic imbalance in global attention, a disparity that often leaves critical struggles like ours in the shadows.

Despite this disheartening lack of external support, fueled by our own hard-earned resources and an unyielding spirit, we achieved a monumental victory. [The courts](#) have unequivocally affirmed our rightful ownership, a testament to our resilience and the unwavering dedication of Land Rights Defenders. This victory, aligning with Ghana's own Land Act of 2020, which validates our inherent Allodial title, stands as a powerful symbol for all those who refuse to be erased from history, who fight for their rights against powerful odds, often in the silence of global indifference.

Our story is not just about land; it is about the birth of advocacy from necessity, the resilience of the marginalized, and the urgent need to rectify the imbalance of global attention. We, the Huahi Achama Tutuwaa Royal Family and Land Rights Defenders, prove that even without the global north's spotlight, our spirit shines as a fierce beacon for those who stand against historical silencing. We implore the permanent forum to recognize the vital struggles often fought in the shadows of the Global South and to stand with us, for in our victory lies a message of hope for all who fight for their right to exist and to be heard. Thank you.

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