



**COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**April 4, 2023 | 3:00 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order at 3:24 p.m.**

**II. Roll Call**

- a. Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero
- b. Hon. Therese Terlaje
- c. Hon. Tina Muña-Barnes (**Excused**)
- d. Hon. Frank Blas
- e. Hon. Jesse Alig (**Absent**)
- f. Hon. Eddie Duenas (**Absent**)
- g. Dr. Michael Bevacqua (**Absent**)
- h. Adrian Cruz
- i. Dr. Mary Cruz
- j. Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper (**Excused**)
- k. Ty Whitaker (**Excused**)
- l. Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero
- m. Dewey Huffer (**Absent**)
- n. Others present:
  1. Joseph Madlangbayan (Office of Speaker Therese Terlaje)

**III. Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting March 7, 2023**

- a. **Motion by Adrian Cruz.**
- b. **Motion seconded by Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero.**
- c. **Motion passed by consensus.**

**IV. Old Business**

- a. Plebiscite Update & Strategy Discussion
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that the team has not received the revised draft plebiscite bill from Legal Counsel. He will be meeting with them to discuss the bill. Explained that the most useful section of the draft plebiscite bill is the legislative intent. This section can be sent to the Board.
  2. **Adrian Cruz:** Inquired about if a draft was produced by the Guam Legislature.
  3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that the Commission has not received a draft plebiscite bill from the Senators. Speaker Terlaje previously suggested that Vice Speaker Muña-Barnes’ Office should take the lead on the bill.
  4. **Governor Lou Leon Guerrero:** Suggested that Speaker Terlaje and Vice Speaker Muña-Barnes meet to discuss drafting sections of the draft plebiscite bill to assist Legal Counsel. Speaker Terlaje was involved in the Davis Case and can provide insights to create a comprehensive bill that addresses the issues highlighted in the case and speeds up the process.
  5. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that the Commission can coordinate with the offices of Speaker Terlaje and Vice Speaker Muña-Barnes and assist with the plebiscite bill



6. **Speaker Therese Terlaje:** Confirmed that she can help with the draft plebiscite bill. Suggested that the Board discuss and make decisions about what they would like to pursue prior to drafting the plebiscite bill.
  7. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Asked that by the next meeting, the Board to create a list of items that must be addressed prior to creating the draft plebiscite bill so that there can be a discussion on the items during the next meeting there.
  8. **Speaker Therese Terlaje:** Agreed with the suggestion by Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero. Added that Board members are experts in certain areas that should be discussed before making decisions and drafting the plebiscite bill. Suggested that the Board begin by discussing and making choices on the feedback received from the Attorney General.
  9. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Asked to compile a packet of all the legal opinions that the Commission has received since the Supreme Court's denial of the Writ of Certiorari. The Board would like the packet within two weeks of this meeting. Also asked for Speaker Terlaje to provide input from a legal perspective and create a list of the main decisions that need to be made.
  10. **Governor Lou Leon Guerrero:** Advised that the Board should focus on the concerns from the Davis case, such as the definition and use of the term "native inhabitants." Mentioned a bill that was drafted by former representatives of Legal Counsel that incorporated the settlement language and how to define eligibility.
  11. **Adrian Cruz:** Mentioned that Jack Hattig, the former Director of the CHamoru Land Trust, may also have a copy of the draft bill.
  12. **Speaker Therese Terlaje:** Asked that the packet include information that the Board has received from the Attorney General, Julian Augon, and any other lawyer.
  13. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Suggested researching New Caledonia to help define eligibility requirements and why or why not Guam should use this model. The Commission will produce the research.
  14. **Speaker Therese Terlaje:** Asked to examine all options, U.S. federal and international, so that the Board can decide which options to pursue. This will allow all Board members to provide input and create a multiple-pronged strategy for the plebiscite.
  15. **Adrian Cruz:** Proposed forming a special subcommittee that will meet in between the regular monthly meetings to discuss the draft plebiscite bill.
  16. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Once the research packet is received, she is committed to providing input and offering other resources. Invited other Board members to do the same.
  17. **Governor Lou Leon Guerrero:** Highlighted that the main issues to discuss include plebiscite strategy, drafting a plebiscite law, and defining eligibility to vote.
- b. Legislative Informational Hearing/ Community Roundtable
1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** The Commission would like to hold a basic informational briefing with the Guam Legislature that can be accessed by the community through streaming on the Legislative channel. The Commission would need about an hour for the presentation.
  2. **Speaker Therese Terlaje:** Suggested removing this item from the agenda because it was requested to the Commission by Senator Roy Quinata and should be planned with him/ the Guam



Legislature. Additionally, what should be presented to the Senators must be decided. For example, explaining the Commission's strategy on how to move forward.

3. **Governor Lou Leon Guerrero:** Suggested that the informational hearing/ community roundtable can be organized by the Speaker's Office. Also suggested presenting on the Commission's whole community education.
4. **Senator Frank Blas:** Volunteered to follow up with Senator Quinata.

## V. United Nations Updates

- a. UN-C24 Regional Seminar - May 24 - 26, 2023; Bali, Indonesia
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the United Nations invites the head of state and one academic expert. The Board will be informed when an invitation is received.
- b. UN C-24 Substantive Session - June 12 - 23, 2023
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reiterated that for the regular sessions, community members can petition if they represent an organization. Registration is online and a security clearance is required.
- c. UNC-4 Regular Session - October 3 - 7, 2023
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that the dates for the sessions have been adopted by the Committee. Additionally, the new Chairperson of the C-24 is H.E. Menissa Rambally (St. Lucia).
- d. Engagement Strategy and UN C-24 Letter
  1. **Melvin Won Pat Borja:** Reported that the Commission continues to engage with the United States United Nations (USUN) on Guam's request for a UN visiting mission. Initially, the USUN advised the Commission to draft a letter to the U.S. Ambassador. However, they later advised the Commission to send a letter to the C-24 Chair. They also confirmed that the Biden Administration will approve a visiting mission as long as COVID-19 restrictions allow and funding is available. A letter was submitted to Chairperson Rambally with the request for a visiting mission and to circulate *Giha Mo'na* to C-24 members. Chairperson Rambally acknowledged the Commission's historical requests for a visiting mission and will circulate *Giha Mo'na* to members. A copy of the letter will be shared with the Board.
  2. **Speaker Therese Terlaje:** Asked the Commission to research United Nations documents related to decolonization in New Caledonia and Guam's annual resolutions to examine if our requests for a plebiscite have been consistent.
  3. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Clarified that there was a long period of time during past administrations when the Commission did not engage with the United Nations. However, engagement and language have been more consistent.
  4. **Governor Lou Leon Guerrero:** Noted that the Government of Guam has made consistent requests for a visiting mission and a plebiscite.

## VI. COD Office Updates

- a. Educational outreach
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Updated the Board on the Commission's educational outreach efforts. The Commission has continued to conduct outreach tables and presentations at all high schools in



Guam, Guam Community College, and the University of Guam. Giha Mo'na: At a Glance, a truncated version of the larger study, has been distributed during outreach, and the Commission will also distribute the material to the Village Mayor's Offices. The Commission is also working on coordinating future village-level outreach. Additionally, they are collaborating with the University of Guam for the UOG Film Festival, which will have a 96-hour High School Film Competition. Finally, the PNC Viewpoint political status task force features have been aired and are available on Facebook.

## VII. Task Force Updates

- a. Statehood
  1. No updates.
- b. Independence
  1. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Updated the Board on the activities of the Independence Task Force. They continue to conduct their Fanachu! Podcast. They are also finalizing the Independent Sounds Music Series with Mighty Island and are looking to launch next month. Finally, the Task Force is painting new murals. Currently, they are working on a mural in Latte Heights.
  2. Free Association
  3. **Adrian Cruz:** Updated the Board on the activities of the Free Association Task Force. The Task Force is continuing their online groups and has conducted presentations at a few schools.

## VIII. Open Floor

### IX. Adjournment

- a. Motion by Adrian Cruz to adjourn.
- b. Motion seconded by Governor Lou Leon Guerrero.
- c. Motion passed by consensus.
- d. Meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.