



**NITIJELA OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS  
OFFICE OF THE NITIJELA**

NITIJELA (NATIONAL PARLIAMENT)  
POST OFFICE BOX 24  
MAJUŦO, MARSHALL ISLANDS 96960  
TEL: 625-8678 FAX: 625-3687  
EMAIL: NITIJELA@NTAMAR.NET

15 March 2010

H.E. Jurelang Zedekaia  
President  
Republic of the Marshall Islands

Dear President Zedekaia,

As a member of the Rongelap Atoll Local Government, I was provided a copy of the letter to Mr. Anthony Babauta, Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs, from several very distinguished members of Congress including Rep. Nick Rahall, Chairman, Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Doc Hastings, Rep. Madeleine Bordallo, Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, and Sen. Jeff Bingaman, Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The letter, dated October 7, 2009, refers to the resettlement of Rongelap Atoll.

While no one can dispute the fact that "the future of the people lies in returning to the land and waters where they have lived and taken strength for centuries", I cannot agree to returning people to contaminated lands and waters. The letter also seems to threaten discontinuation of support for the people of Rongelap if they do not resettle in accordance with provisions of the Resettlement Trust Fund Agreement and evacuate their settlement at Mejatto in Kwajalein.

I agree that a full and complete report must be made to Congress as to the expenditure of the funds connected with the resettlement program. However, I do not agree that the program has been carried out successfully, for much of the atoll remains contaminated and unsuitable for human habitation. Resettling the people of Rongelap under rules severely restricting their ability to move about their homeland, or to gather food from their traditional sources, does not constitute sensible repatriation. Threatening them with virtual starvation if they do not return is unjust and unfair. Even if radiological rehabilitation of the atoll were successful, which they have not been, public facilities and homes have yet to be completed. Housing the community in non-traditional locations leaves a lot of unanswered questions as to safety, security and survivability.

We are all witnesses to the debacle that was the resettlement of Bikini. It would be illogical for us to throw caution to the wind and disregard people's concerns for their own peace and comfort just in the interest of justifying the closing of an unsuccessful program. We asked for the position of the RMI on this matter during the recent session of the Nitijela. We were never given a response to this question.

I am therefore placing this matter in your hands and requesting you to take into account the position of the people of Rongelap in the matter of resettlement. The people want to go home but not to a land where the future of their children will be placed in jeopardy, where they themselves cannot be assured of safety and security, and where they will remain strangers in their own home.

Kommol tata,

  
Sen. Iroij Michael Kabua

**REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

CC: Hon. Anthony Babauta  
Ambassador Martha Campbell, United States Ambassador to the Marshall Islands  
Hon. James Matayoshi, Mayor of Rongelap  
Hon. Banny de Brum, Marshall Islands Ambassador to the United States  
Director Alcy Frelick, Office of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, USDOS  
Rep. Nick Rahall, Chairman, Natural Resources Committee  
Rep. Doc Hastings  
Rep. Madeleine Bordallo  
Sen. Lisa Murkowsky  
Sen. Daniel K. Akaka  
Sen. Jeff Bingaman, Chairman, Senate Energy Committee  
Min. Kenneth Kedi  
Min. John M. Silk