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# **Kumeyaay warriors march to Tecate border crossing on Indigenous Peoples Day**

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Photos: Nicole Antonacci





On Indigenous Peoples Day, Oct. 12, a hundred warriors mostly from the Kumeyaay Nation marched to the Tecate border crossing in the San Diego-Tijuana metropolitan region. They were led by Bird Singers and carried signs saying “Make America Native Again” and “F\*&\$K Columbus” and chanting “Land back now!”

On the Baja side of the border, there were also another hundred Kumeyaay singing bird songs. We could hear each other, but we could not see each other due to the border entrance structure and the wall. Not very many people in San Diego realize that there are Kumeyaay villages in Baja, Mexico. They have an extremely hard time getting visas and permits to visit their family here in San Diego County. So, very literally, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us.”

Stan Rodriguez, a tribal leader from the Santa Ysabel Kumeyaay, said on Oct. 12,

“They’re trying to keep us away from our own family, our own friends. Our own relatives. These walls are put up, but they do not work. It’s a waste of time, waste of money”

Brooke Baines, an organizer with the group SHIELD and a Manzanita Kumeyaay said, “On Indigenous Peoples Day, it’s important to raise awareness of the people who were here before borders. The Kumeyaay people and the Native people of this land in general, we go unnoticed a lot.” She added, “Especially on the other side of the border, they go unnoticed a lot.”

We then marched to the California Border Patrol station where we were met by armed California Border Patrol/Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents who were in full gear and militarized. We chanted at them for a while. The goal was to let CBP/ICE know that there are Kumeyaay on both sides of the border and once again another perfect example of how CBP/ICE enjoys separating families.

Trump, in his proclamation, called us radical and extremist because we don’t and won’t celebrate Columbus Day. There is nothing radical or extreme about telling the historical truth about a man who never set foot on U.S. soil and is responsible for genocide and the enslavement of Native Peoples, which includes forced Christianity and rape.

Columbus was a slaver of Natives. He was a founding father of the American slave trade. When Columbus returned home to Spain, not Italy, the king and queen gave Columbus 17 ships to take back to the Americas to fill with “riches.” Columbus’ men went from island to island capturing Natives, stealing gold, silver and turquoise. They filled the 17 ships with our culture, including sacred things, but most important, in 1495 he captured 1,500 Arawak men, women and children and sailed back with them in the holds of the ships to be sold as slaves.

The pope, believing he was in charge of the world, “gave” Spain the Americas. Pope

Alexander VI issued a May 4, 1493, papal bull granting official ownership of the New World to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. In his order he wrote;

“We of our own motion, and not at your solicitation, do give, concede, and assign forever to you and your successors, all the islands, and main lands, discovered; and which may hereafter, be discovered, towards the west and south; whether they be situated towards India, or towards any other part whatsoever, and give you absolute power in them.”

The pope’s declaration ultimately had dire consequences for native inhabitants of the Americas. Beginning in 1514, Spanish conquerors adopted “the Requirement,” an ultimatum in which the Indigenous Peoples were forced to accept “the Church as the Ruler and Superior of the whole world” or face persecution. If Native peoples did not immediately comply, the Requirement warned them:

“We shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do all the harm and damage that we can.”

It goes without saying that the Requirement was read to the Indigenous Peoples without translation, or in some cases even from ships before crew members had landed to kill Natives and take slaves.

So the struggle continues at the border and to put characters like Columbus and Father Junípero Serra into their proper place in history. They were no heroes! We charge them with genocide!

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