



THE HOPI TRIBE CHAIRMAN AND THE HOLOCAUST ART RESTITUTION PROJECT DENOUNCE THE DECISION BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO REFUSE THE SUSPENSION OF AN AUCTION SALE OF SACRED HOPI “KWAA TSI” HELD IN PARIS ON JUNE 1.

For Immediate Release

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Kykotsmovi, AZ/Washington, DC/New York, NY USA (June 01, 2015) - - Herman G. Honanie, Chairman of the Hopi Tribe Council, Holocaust Art Restitution Project (“HARP”), based in Washington, DC, chaired by Ori Z. Soltes, are denouncing the decision by the French “Conseil des Ventes” (“Board of Auction Sales”), an administrative body in charge of supervising auction sales on the French market, which refused to suspend an auction sale of sacred “kwaa tsi” owned by the Hopi tribe, scheduled for June 01, 2015.

Chairman Honanie stated, “The Hopi people are again deeply saddened by the auctions at the EVE Auction House in Paris, France. A sixth auction scheduled today resulted in the sale of six of eight Hopi kwaa tsi. I demand that the auctions cease.”

On May 29th, 2015, both Chairman Honanie and HARP’s Soltes appeared before the CVV to request an administrative suspension of the June 01 auction sale, which involved sacred objects belonging to the Hopi tribe, and for which title never vested with subsequent possessors due to the sacred nature of these objects.

“The decision by the Conseil des Ventes is both insulting and outrageous. The Conseil held that the Hopi tribe, in fact ANY Indian tribe, has no legal existence or capacity as a group or as a recognized nation to pursue any cultural claim in France. This decision closes the door to ANY tribal group AND their members to file any cultural claims in France involving auction houses, regardless of title-related merits. The French Government is sending a clear and appalling message that its market is wide open to looted property. Furthermore, this complete denial of access to justice flies in the face of international law principles in favor of all tribes and indigenous peoples, as the French government had endorsed, in the UN General Assembly, the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),” said Soltes.

A letter of support by leaders of a number of museums and institutes, in support of the Hopi Tribe was sent to French President Hollande. One of the signatories is the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe, NM. SAR’s President Dr. Michael Brown stands ready to do whatever he can to support the Hopi Tribe’s efforts. The Senate Judiciary Committee, Foreign Affairs Committee and FBI Art Theft Program have all been provided information on the continuing auctions and illegal sale of Hopi “kwaa tsi”. www.hopi-nsn.gov

The Hopi Tribe is a federally recognized tribe of American Indians, who live in northeastern Arizona. The Hopi Tribe remains one of the most religiously traditional tribes within the United States. HARP is a not-for-profit group based in Washington, DC, dedicated to the identification and restitution of looted artworks require detailed research and analysis of public and private archives in North America. HARP has worked for 16 years on the restitution of artworks looted by the Nazi regime.

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