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Press Statement from Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu

**STATE OF HAWAI'I MAY BE WAGING AN UNETHICAL CAMPAIGN TO AGITATE
AND INTIMIDATE MAUNAKEA PROTECTORS**

PU'UHULUHULU, HAWAI'I, September 17, 2019 - The State of Hawai'i may be using unethical law enforcement tactics to harass, intimidate and vilify Maunakea protectors, incite fear in our communities, and escalate tensions in the Pu'uhonua. We are especially concerned about a recent act of possible misconduct by a law enforcement officer who attempted to turn protectors against each other and provoke tension and conflict among us.

We have video and audio documentation of the officer giving false information to one of our protectors in an apparent attempt to provoke him to retaliate against two supposed informants in our Pu'uhonua. This officer's actions, the escalating law enforcement activity in and around Maunakea Access Road, combined with recent public statements by the State of Hawai'i, appears to be a concerted effort to create conflict within the Pu'uhonua, sway public opinion against protectors, and provide justification for forceful action against us.

Over the past 10 days, law enforcement actions have included:

- No notice "sobriety checkpoints" on the Daniel K. Inouye highway, manned by the Hawai'i County's Special Response Team (SRT) and possibly State Sheriffs using Department of Transportation barricades on multiple nights, including this past Sunday night.
- State Sheriffs lining trucks along the road above the cattle guard on the Maunakea Access Road and shining high beams on kūpuna at 1:00 am on Monday, September 9 and Tuesday, September 10 for no apparent reason, causing anxiety and fear amongst the kūpuna.
- A blackhawk helicopter flying at a low-level over the kūpuna tent on Mauna Kea Access Road on Tuesday, September 10.
- Groups of 6 to 7 police vehicles staged in different areas near the Pu'uhonua over the last several days with no communication about their purpose, raising further anxiety.

Even more egregious are actions that appear to be aimed at inciting hostility and conflict in the Pu'uhonua. On September 6, a law enforcement officer used a power saw to saw a Hawaiian flag in half. The choice of using the power saw to enter the building through the one panel where the flag was situated, rather than any other panel, seemed calculated. The unnecessary

destruction of the Hawaiian flag occurred within the Pu‘uhonua and before a crowd of protectors that had assembled, suggesting an apparent attempt to inflame anger and test our Kapu Aloha.

On September 12, the State of Hawai‘i held a press conference in which they accused protectors of negative environmental impacts at Pu‘uhuluhulu, even though conservation efforts of the Kanaka Rangers are admittedly addressing the issue effectively.

On September 13, the State of Hawai‘i held another press conference inferring a connection between protectors and random online comments that violate Kapu Aloha. Just yesterday, Governor Ige posted on his Facebook page the following: “If the activists say there’s no compromise, then it leaves the state with few options.” Painting protectors as the side offering no compromise without offering meaningful compromise of his own, appears intended to add to this campaign to malign protectors and embolden negative opinion against us.

Most concerning, however, is a police officer’s purposeful sharing of false information that had a high potential to provoke conflict between protectors. This kind of tactic has no place in Hawai‘i.

We do not know whether the officer’s actions were his alone or part of a larger law enforcement effort. We ask that the officer’s personal information be kept confidential and that media use this information responsibly as we seek an investigation of his conduct.

These actions are possibly being employed to create a false pretext for the use of force on our peaceful protectors at Pu‘uhuluhulu. However, they only serve to strengthen our resolve and commitment to Kapu Aloha, peaceful, non-violent conduct. We will not be provoked or distracted from our purpose, which is peaceful protection of Maunakea. We humbly ask everyone to join in our pledge to KAPU ALOHA.

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