



## CULTIVATING ALMONDS

ALWAYS MOVING, ALWAYS  
LEARNING



## I COULDN'T VOTE IN THE PLEBISCITE BUT I'M OKAY WITH THAT.

I'm going to activate my voice a little bit in this post for a very specific issue super relevant right now: The recent ruling on the Davis case regarding the plebiscite. Heard of it? If you haven't [here's a nice link for you](#). Take a minute. And I'll be here when you get back.

Got it? Okay. Recently, I've seen a lot of opinions on this case – both in support of the ruling and in opposition. After reading enough tweets, I decided there are a couple of things that absolutely need to be said so here goes:

Let me really quickly explain to you why the issue of the plebiscite is not about race. As defined by the United Nations, the 'native inhabitants' of Guam are in reference to any person who was living on Guam before the Organic Act was passed and their descendants. Yes, this funnels it out to a certain percentage of the island and yes most of those individuals are Chamoru. BUT this would not make it exclusively a Chamoru vote. My grandfather came to Guam from the Philippines in 1951 – literally one year after and not even because it was U.S. soil. If he'd been here just a little bit earlier, I would be able to participate.

This is more based on circumstance than it is on race so don't get mixed up.

THAT SAID, whether or not it's discrimination is not actually the point. It actually doesn't matter to me whether or not I, or any of my Kababayans, can vote. I have zero qualms with this being a solely Chamoru vote and let me tell you why.

Follow

**The purpose of the plebiscite is to determine the will of the Chamoru people.** They were given this right decades ago. **This does not actually determine what happens to the political status of the island** but what the indigenous people of the island – the people who have been here since ever since – would like to do with it.

EVEN IF IT DID determine what happens to the island's political status, that's something we have to come to terms with because....and let me spell it out very carefully: T-H-I-S I-S T-H-E-I-R L-A-N-D.

This is about rights that were stripped away from specific people and restoring it to those people as they rightly deserve.

Understand that Chamoru land is constantly being threatened of becoming taken away and destroyed. They are tired of this and tired of not being heard. This plebiscite was to act as their collective voice – a voice which is constantly being stomped on. They have been fighting for years to be able to make their own decisions – it's in the books – and still this ability was never fully received. They deserve this one.

This land is their exclusive right and it is their right to fight for it back. When a country decides to take their land back from a colonizer, it is the native people of that land who decide this and fight for it. This should be no different for Guam and the Marianas.

If the indigenous people of this land are unsatisfied with the way things are, let them be heard.

*If you're in a bad relationship or if you're in one that's clearly not going to be progressing, you need to move on. It's not easy. It takes time. But it's worth it and well deserved. That said if our friend Juan is in a bad relationship we shouldn't force him to be in a relationship just because we're good friends with Susan and we're scared she won't be friends with us anymore.*

This doesn't mean we don't get a voice and this doesn't mean that they're going to kick us out if the island decolonizes (*respetu, respetu, respetu y'all*). They aren't simply saying we don't belong here, they are communicating that *they* do and they want us to recognize that. Do I get slightly hurt when someone tells me I have no right to claim this land? Of course. This island is all I know, all my family knows. It's my home, too. But then I remember my place. I *don't* worry about being booted off an island that I respect and revere. Instead, I stand behind these people in their fight.

Do not let this ruling fool you and do not let this man speak for us as to whether or not we should be outraged.

We are not enemies. We are brothers and sisters of Austronesia. We welcome each other, support each other and we always have each other's backs. Let us lend our support as the people of the Marianas fight to restore harmony to their land.

Note: [Read this fantastic piece on our responsibility if you need some more perspective](#)  
Edit to include this letter written by another 'settler': [CLICK](#)

AdChoices 

AdChoices 

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- MARCH 12, 2017
  - AUSTRONESIA, CHAMORU, DECOLONIZATION, FILIPINO, GUAM, PLEBISCITE, POLITICAL STATUS
  - 4 COMMENTS

□ **GETTING TOGETHER.**

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## 4 THOUGHTS ON “I COULDN'T VOTE IN THE PLEBISCITE BUT I'M OKAY WITH THAT.”

### EDDIE

As a second-generation Palauan living on Guam, I whole-heartedly agree that the plebiscite vote belongs to the indigenous Chamorros. It's a decision long denied to them and a wrong that must be righted.

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- MARCH 14, 2017 AT 11:42 AM
- REPLY

### RUZELLE ALMONDS

Absolutely! It's super important that people understand that. This is all about what's fair and it is only fair to give them this right. Thanks for stopping by and giving this a read!

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- MARCH 15, 2017 AT 1:17 PM
- REPLY

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### ENRIQUE "SPORTY" BAZA

I really enjoyed this Ruzelle. Thank you.

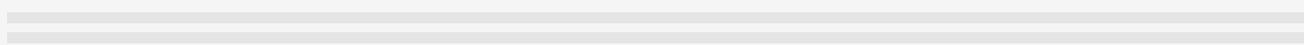
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- MARCH 29, 2017 AT 8:45 AM
- REPLY

### RUZELLE ALMONDS

Thanks for dropping by and giving it a read, Sporty! Glad you enjoyed it



MARCH 30, 2017 AT 6:03 AM

REPLY

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## LEAVE A REPLY