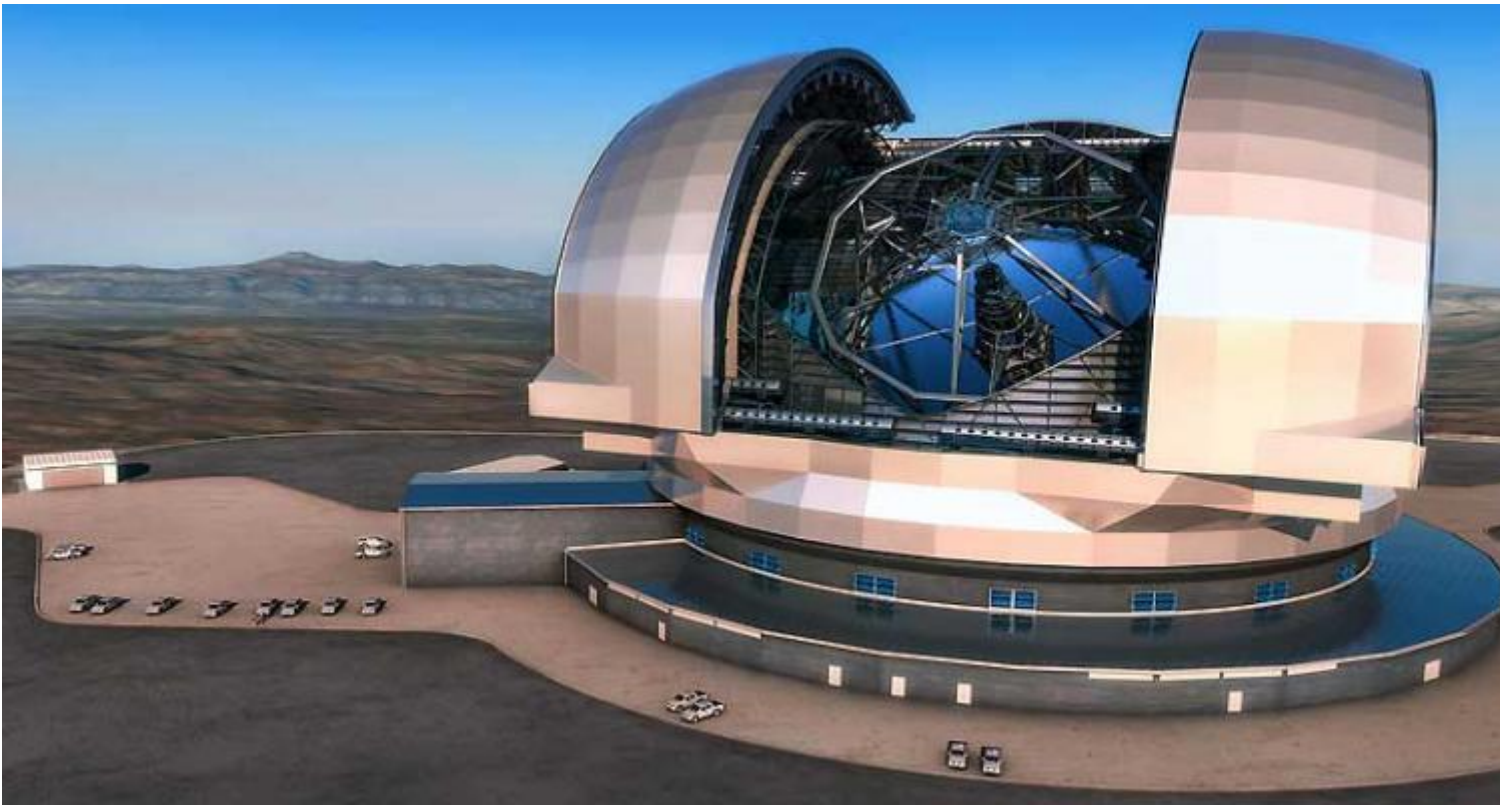


Hundreds of indigenous protesters denounce telescope project



Honolulu, July 21 (RHC)-- Hundreds of Hawaiian protesters, led by a group of Native Hawaiian elders, were able to deter the construction of a giant telescope by gathering at the entrance of the site where the observatory is supposed to be built.

"We are here on the slopes of Mauna Kea doing what is necessary to protect our land, our sacred space," protest organizer Andrew Perez told a local media. "This mountain represents more than just their building they want to build. This mountain represents the last thing they want to take that we will not give them," said Walter Ritte, another activist.

Police arrested various demonstrators and the state pledged to carry out the project. The protesters refused to stop blocking the area, preferring instead to receive a citation and to appear in court. Officials did not disclose the number of arrests, nor did they say what charges people faced.

For the third consecutive day, the activists have managed to obstruct the way to the summit of Mauna Kea, a dormant volcano that stands up 4,205 meters on Hawaii's Biggest Island. The site is considered sacred ground in Hawaiian mythology and yet the government wants to use it to build a billion-dollar

observatory.

Native Hawaiian elders known as kupuna, say the observatory will disturb the deeply sacred place, vital to their connections to ancestors and considered “as a home to the gods,” while the consortium of astronomers from the California Institute of Technology, as well as Japan, India, and Canada, supporting the project, say the location is one of the bests on earth to observe the cosmos, thanks to its elevation and clear skies.

Opponents have been fighting for years against the plan but Hawaii Supreme Court endorsed it and granted a building permit last October. The project construction was supposed to start next week and construction teams planned to move material and equipment to the site where the Thirty Meter Telescope is expected to be built, making it the world’s most advanced observatory.

A spokesman for the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, Dan Dennison said both police and protesters were “absolutely respectful” of one another. “Some of the people arrested were related to some of the officers.”

“Right now, there’s nothing happening on top of the mountain at all,” Dennison said. Construction vehicles would be kept off the road “until all the activity behind us is secured and people are well off the road,” he said.

He refused to speculate how long that would take but said state officials, including Governor David Ige, were “totally committed to seeing this project move forward.”

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/196695-hundreds-of-indigenous-protesters-denounce-telescope-project>



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