

The **Aboriginal** sovereignty movement disrupted a fraud trial in the Northern Territory yesterday with claims the judge and prosecutor were guilty of “treason” and the defendant should be released because she misused funds to protect against witchcraft.

Original Sovereign Tribal Federation spokesman **David Cole** labelled the federal government “a corporate entity fraudulently imposing its laws ... on sovereign tribal land that it has no jurisdiction over”.

In a later statement, tendered in court and purporting to represent the views of defendant Rosalie Lalara, he said she and other directors had misused Groote Eylandt **Aboriginal** Trust funds to avoid “having pouri-pouri used against them (or being ‘sung’) to make them ill or kill them. ‘Singing’ is a very real element of our religious law and is the method by which we invoke the spirits to make others ill or to take their lives,” the statement said.

Ms Lalara sacked her lawyer moments before the start of the hearing before NT Supreme Court judge Graham Hiley. She then handed up the statement, given to her by Mr Cole.

Justice Hiley said the statement appeared to “challenge the jurisdiction of this court” and to make certain allegations about Ms Lalara’s former legal representatives.

Mr Cole accused Justice Hiley of illegally imprisoning Ms Lalara and committing treason. Ms Lalara was remanded in custody. She has pleaded guilty to two charges of misappropriating almost \$500,000 from the trust. The hearing was adjourned until December.