United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

A report on the rights of Indigenous Peoples





2024 to 2025

Easy-to-read

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This is an easy-to-read report from the **United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** (**OHCHR**).

The **OHCHR** is part of the **United Nations** or the **UN**.

The **UN** was set up in **1945** so that all countries could work together to make the world better and safer.



OHCHR makes sure that everyone in the world knows and enjoys their **human rights**.



Everyone has human rights and should have them no matter who they are or where they live.



Human rights include:

- the right to live
- the right to freedom
- many other rights.

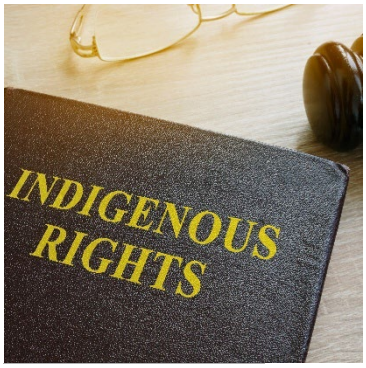


For example, Indigenous Peoples have the right to keep their way of life.



This easy-to-read report:

- Looks at the human rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world



- Suggests how the human rights of Indigenous Peoples should be protected.

How the UN is supporting Indigenous Peoples



The UN wants to make sure Indigenous Peoples are treated fairly and their rights are respected.





Indigenous Peoples are the first people of different lands around the world.



Every year the UN writes a report that explains:



- What has been done to protect Indigenous Peoples' rights



- The problems that Indigenous Peoples face



- How much work has been done



- How well the UN's rules about Indigenous Peoples' rights are working around the world.

Protecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples



Indigenous Peoples face discrimination when enjoying human rights, including:



- going to school



- getting jobs



- getting housing



- getting healthcare



- taking part in decisions that affect their lives.



Big projects like mining or construction can also harm their environment and culture.

The UN has suggested that:



- Countries should respect that Indigenous Peoples' have the right to agree to any projects on their land



- Cultural items held in museums and private collections that belong to Indigenous Peoples should be returned when possible



- Others should learn about the importance of Indigenous Peoples



- There should be local healthcare that respects traditions, including traditional medicine



- Indigenous Peoples should be involved in designing healthcare services.



Indigenous Peoples have a right to grow their communities that respects their culture, identity, and environment.



The UN organizes meetings, training, and projects and supports Indigenous Peoples to take part in these events.



This work supports Indigenous Peoples to speak up and protect their rights.

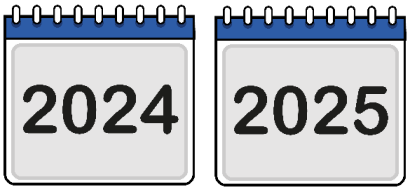


This work also helps Indigenous Peoples to get better education, health and jobs.

The right to give consent about how land or resources are used by others



Indigenous Peoples have **land rights,** and they can use the land as they always did.



In **2024** and **2025**, the UN made sure Indigenous Peoples could protect their land, resources, and rights.



The UN recognized how Indigenous Peoples defended their communities and democracy.



The land of Indigenous Peoples is being used by the military, for mining and logging without their agreement.



The UN made sure that:

- Countries or private companies ask for Indigenous Peoples' consent before they start these projects



- Indigenous Peoples could speak up in meetings about business and human rights, and make fair decisions.



The UN has supported Indigenous communities to take part in decisions about:



- Laws



- Mining



- Radio stations.



- Energy projects



The UN is supporting Indigenous Peoples to have more of a say about anything affecting their land, culture, and communities.

Land rights



Indigenous Peoples have special rights to their land, homes, and resources.



Sometimes their land is not officially recognized, or it takes a long time to get ownership.



So private companies or governments use their land without asking for consent first.



Some Indigenous groups, that move around a lot or live far away from other communities, are at risk from:



- Roads being built



- Mines being made and resources being exploited



- Logging



- War.

Indigenous Peoples face threats like:



- Being forced to move away from their land



- Damage to their land and their environment.



- Lack of services.

The UN has supported Indigenous Peoples to:



- get countries and private companies to accept their land rights



- defend their land



- recover from problems like fires or floods.



Contact can be dangerous for the health and culture of **Isolated Indigenous People**.



Isolated Indigenous Peoples are not in contact with other communities and avoid people outside their own community.



The UN is trying to protect the land, homes, and safety of Indigenous Peoples, so they can live and keep their culture.

Right to a healthy and clean environment



Indigenous Peoples have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment, often this right is not respected.

Their land and health are harmed by:



- Pollution from mining

- Poisoned air



- Polluted water



- Flooding



- Destroyed forests



- Lost animals and plants



Indigenous Peoples do not get important information about projects that affect where they live.



When they do get information, it is not in their own language.

Getting fair treatment from the justice system



Indigenous Peoples often find it difficult to get fair treatment in the justice system.



They face problems like:

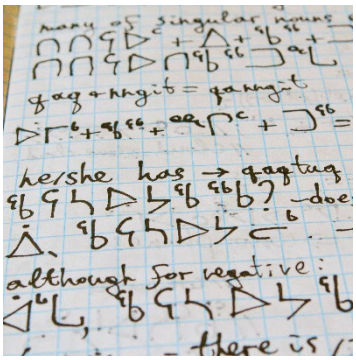
- Being treated unfairly



- Long journeys to law courts



- High costs of the justice system



- Difficulties speaking to the justice system using Indigenous languages



- All Indigenous Peoples being treated in a negative way.



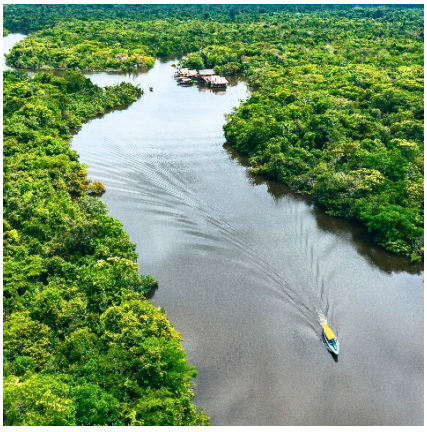
Indigenous women are often treated badly by the justice system.

The UN says member states should respect **Indigenous justice systems** and help them to work together with national and international courts.

Indigenous human rights defenders



People who defend the human rights of Indigenous Peoples are protecting their land, environment and culture.



Indigenous human Rights Defenders are:

- Protecting forests and rivers



- Fighting unlawful activities that have targeted them



But Indigenous Peoples' human rights defenders can be:

- Threatened and hurt



- Treated as criminals



- Killed by governments or criminals.

The UN is supporting Indigenous Peoples' human rights defenders by:



- raising awareness



- supporting victims' families



- training defenders how to protect themselves



- creating rules to keep defenders safe.

Indigenous women and girls



Indigenous women and girls face many challenges.

They often do not get enough access to:



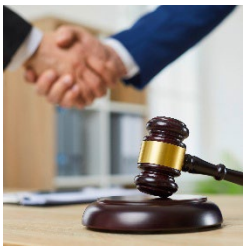
- Healthcare



- Education



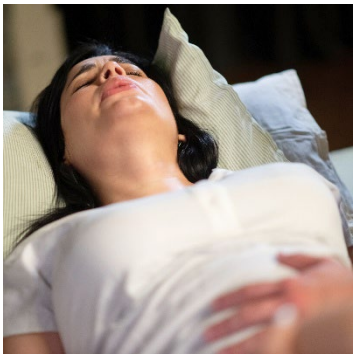
- Jobs



- Justice



Many women and girls face early pregnancies and different types of discrimination such as:



- abuse during childbirth



- difficulty with making choices about their body, sex and relationships.



Indigenous women also face problems because their families or governments do not always recognize them.



Indigenous women have important traditional knowledge of farming and protecting the environment.



But women are often left out of making decisions.

The UN has supported Indigenous women by:



- Training them about their human rights



- Supporting their leadership



- Protecting their culture

The UN also make sure the voices of women are heard in policies about:



- Indigenous land and places like rivers and forests



- Climate change



- Indigenous traditional knowledge and medicine



- Tourism.

Indigenous children and young people



Indigenous children and young people face dangers, challenges and being treated unfairly



Some are forced or tricked into joining armed groups or criminal activities.



Indigenous girls are especially at risk of abuse, child marriage, and being exploited.



The UN is protecting Indigenous children by:

- supporting communities



- helping to prevent abuse and support victims.

The UN also makes sure that children's rights are respected:



- to be safe



- to have their own culture

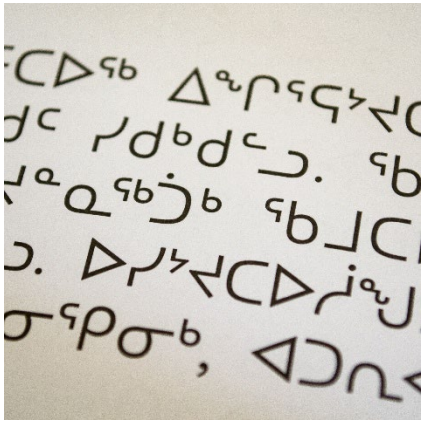


- to have a good education.

Language and right to traditions



Indigenous Peoples' languages and traditional knowledge are very important.



It is not easy for many Indigenous Peoples to access these services because they are not available in their language:



- Schools



- Hospitals



- Courts.



The UN wants member states to provide more services in Indigenous languages.

2022-2032 | INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF
Indigenous Languages

Programs have been set up around the world to protect Indigenous languages



The UN says Indigenous knowledge can help to solve global problems such as climate change.

Indigenous Peoples and the UN



The UN makes sure Indigenous Peoples can join important meetings and speak up.



Indigenous Peoples can now take part in UN Human Rights Council meetings.



The UN runs training sessions for Indigenous leaders to learn about the UN and how to protect their human rights.



The UN is supporting Indigenous Peoples to go to meetings and speak up with:



- Language support



- Visas

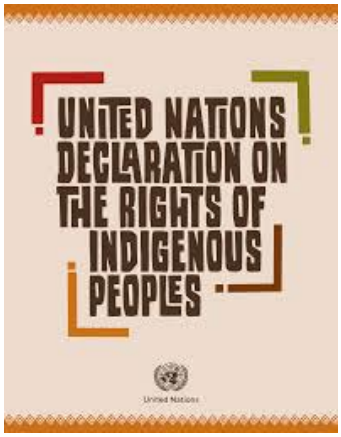


- Online access.

Conclusion



Indigenous Peoples still face many problems which make it difficult for them to enjoy their human rights.



It can be difficult to protect Indigenous Peoples' environment, culture, and ways of life because they are not always recognized.



Women, girls, young people, and **isolated Indigenous Peoples** are affected the most.



Many Indigenous Peoples are **not asked** to agree for big projects to start on their lands.



Indigenous women and children face:

- poor health care



- violence

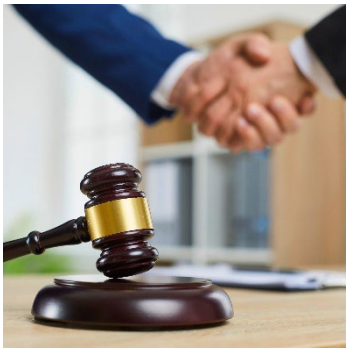


- forced displacement



- being exploited.

The UN recommends that all member states:



- Protect Indigenous Peoples' land and recognise it legally.



- Always get Indigenous Peoples to consent to projects that affect their land



- Make sure Indigenous Peoples get information about the environment and their rights



- Let Indigenous Peoples' take part in all decisions that affect their lives and environment



- Protect people who defend Indigenous Peoples from threats and attacks



- Protect children and youth from violence, exploitation, and being forced to leave their land



- Keep and respect Indigenous knowledge and culture, which is important for their communities and the planet.