

WORLD COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

KIRUNA, SWEDEN, SEPTEMBER 24 - 27, 1977

DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Indigenous Delegates present at the Second General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, assembling at Kiruna, Samiland, Sweden, have studied the universal declaration of the United Nations on Human Rights and other international agreements, and, having analysed our present situation as aboriginals, we submit to the opinion of the world the following

D E C L A R A T I O N :

We have surveyed those areas which were invaded by the Europeans. To make their intrusion they used various means: direct or indirect violence, fraud and manipulation. These were the methods they used to occupy the land of the indigenous populations and acquire titles to such property which was rightfully owned by the aboriginals. These infamous conditions still prevail as of today, without any consideration to the fundamental declarations of the United Nations on Human Rights.

The most important ones are the Declaration of the General Assembly of 1948 and United Nations Convention on the abolishment of all forms of racial discrimination.

Here is not the question of ordinary political persecution, but of the white man's use of medieval methods to encroach upon and exterminate the indigenous peoples and take over their lands. This is possible thanks to the complicity between the land owners, the multi-national companies, and the governments.

Through our own members and individuals as well as international organizations, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples has received documented reports, at the first as well as at the Second General Assembly, of daily violations against indigenous groups

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and individuals. These are violations against the most elementary needs which are denied and the human rights such as we understand them and as they have been explained by the official agencies of the United Nations.

This applies in particular to the greater part of South America, where the conditions have been described as especially severe. Outright massacres have taken place, in the style of those enacted by the conquerors in the 15th and 16th centuries. People have been imprisoned without legal cause, they have been tortured and murdered. In this way almost all the articles in the Convention of 1948 have been violated.

Even participation in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples has constituted grounds for imprisonment, torture, loss of civil rights, and expulsion.

No less serious is the inclination of certain states to deny the indigenous population, in groups or as individuals, the right to land and water. These are fundamental resources for human life and prerequisites to an indigenous development of their own institutions, culture and language. All this also constitutes principles which have been manifested in international conventions:

1. International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
2. The International Labour Organization's Convention No. 107
3. International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples upholds, as a fundamental principle, that the Indigenous Peoples are the rightful owners of the land, whether they hold formal title deeds, issued by the colonists, or not. It is, anyway, up to the colonists and the intruders to submit evidence to their title, and this should be

required on the part of the aboriginals. This principle should be considered as a fundamental element of legal justice.

- I. All those Conventions and Declarations on the Human Rights which have been approved in the United Nations or in other international bodies by representatives of the National Governments, are not adhered to because the United Nations has no mandatory power nor are the member states particularly keen on realising them in practice. These conventions, furthermore, do not take account of the true situation and rights of the Indigenous Peoples.
- II. We, therefore, wish to make clear those irrevocable and inborn rights which are due to us in our capacity as Aboriginals:
 1. Right to Autonomy;
 2. Right to maintain our culture, language and traditions in freedom;
 3. Right to have the World Council of Indigenous Peoples as a United Nations member representing our people;
 4. Right to recover the land which rightfully and according to millenary tradition belongs to us, but has been robbed from us by the foreign intruders;
 5. Right to occupy land collectively with sole rights as something irrevocable and non-transferable;
 6. Right to organize ourselves and administer our land and natural resources;
 7. Right to demand from the governments of the countries sufficient land to improve the conditions of the Indian communities and promote their development under their own tutorship;
 8. Right to make use of the natural resources existant in the areas of the indigenous peoples, such as forests, rivers, ore deposits and the riches of the sea, and a right for the indigenous people to take part in the project and construction work and the use of it.

9. Right to demand the states that such laws are passed, that will be of benefit to the Indigenous People, particularly for the protection of their right to land ownership, recognizing representative aboriginal organizations and their full involvement in the process of making laws;
10. Right to secure requisite funds for the Indigenous Peoples from the individual countries to be used for agrarian and natural resources development;
11. Right to acquire a share in the funds accruing from the member states to the United Nations, either through a project or directly, and right to exchange technical and scientific information between the Indigenous Populations of different countries;
12. Right to subsidies from governmental or international economic institutions through the granting of long term credit at low interest;
13. Right to respect our Indigenous culture in all its modes of expression, for the protection of which appropriate by-laws should be passed;
14. Right to an appropriate education in accordance with our culture and our traditions, without any foreign elements and within the framework of an educational system which recognizes the values of our culture and acknowledges an official status to our language at all educational levels;

The Second General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples addresses itself to all the peoples of the world, to individuals and to nations, to the United Nations and all its agencies, and to other international organizations, with an urgent appeal that all the violent actions and measure against indigenous peoples, as related above, be immediately brought to an end.

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples requests all its members to exert strong pressure wherever possible on the agencies in their respective countries to make those agencies co-operate with international organizations to ensure that the inhuman conditions of Aborigines is abolished.

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples urges the United Nations

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to establish a special fund for the support of groups or individual
Aboriginals so that they may be able to bring their cases to national
or international courts and that they may be able to develop their
areas economically and culturally.

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples should also work for the
establishment of an international university for Indigenous Peoples
having its seat in, for instance, the capital of Bolivia.

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