



Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women by Implementing Key Decisions of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

A Joint Oral Statement Offered at the 32nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council by the Indian Law Resource Center, National Congress of American Indians, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, and Native American Rights Fund

Item 3 – Clustered ID with Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice (June 17, 2016)

The Indian Law Resource Center, National Congress of American Indians, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, and Native American Rights Fund offer this statement on ending violence against indigenous women and girls.

Violence against women is a pervasive human rights violation throughout the world that is so significant it “precludes the realization of all other human rights.”¹ Indigenous women often suffer multiple forms of discrimination and higher rates of violence, including trafficking and murder, because of their gender and because they are indigenous.²

In the United States, a new government report finds that more than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence and more than 1 in 2 have experienced sexual violence.³ Alaska Native women in particular suffer the highest rates of forcible sexual assault in the United States, and experience domestic violence at rates up to 10 times higher than in the rest of the nation.⁴ Among those indigenous women experiencing violence, 97% have experienced that violence by an interracial perpetrator over whom tribes lack full criminal jurisdiction.⁵ We welcome the Working Group’s recommendation that tribes be empowered “to ensure justice in their communities through the exercise of full criminal jurisdiction within their lands.”⁶

The Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples includes decisions to focus UN attention on addressing violence against indigenous women. States committed to support empowerment of indigenous women and to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against them. States asked the UN to enhance participation by indigenous peoples’ governments and to consider an implementing body for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, work that is underway.

We welcome the Council’s decision to hold this panel and the half-day panel discussion on violence against indigenous women and girls during its next session.⁷ To fulfill commitments in the Outcome Document to address violence against indigenous women, we urge this Council:

- To request that the Office of the High Commissioner respond to the panel on violence against indigenous women in September with a report of recommendations for actions;
- To request a report from the Secretary-General on ways existing special procedures can better respond to this issue; and
- To request that the Secretary-General, during the 2017 event marking the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration, convene a high-level panel on intensifying efforts, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous women and girls.

¹ *Violence against women – Joint Press Release by UN and IACHR Rapporteurs*. Trinidad (28 April 2015), available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15939&LangID=E>.

² A/HRC/RES/26/15 (11 July 2014), 2.

³ Rosay, André, PhD, *National Institute of Justice Research Report: Violence Against Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men 2010 Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*, p. 2-3 (May 2016), U.S. Dept. of Justice, available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>.

⁴ *A Roadmap for Making Native America Safer, A Report to the President and Congress of the United States*, Chapter 2, Reforming Justice for Alaska Natives, p. 41 (November 2013).

⁵ Rosay, André, PhD, *National Institute of Justice Research Report: Violence Against Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men 2010 Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*, p. 46 (May 2016), U.S. Dept. of Justice, available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>.

⁶ *Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, on its mission to the United States*, A/HRC/32/44/Add.2 (June 2016), Para. 91(xix).

⁷ A/HRC/RES/30/4 (Oct. 1, 2015).