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Indigenous Peoples – lands and life under threat

370 million Indigenous women, men and children worldwide face racism, discriminatory laws and eviction from lands central to their cultures and livelihoods.

Sign our petition for global human rights standards to protect Indigenous peoples.

"Indigenous peoples the world over continue to be among the most marginalized and dispossessed sectors of society, the victims of perennial prejudice and discrimination"

Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

An estimated 370 million Indigenous women, men and children worldwide face racism, discriminatory laws and eviction from lands central to their cultures and livelihoods.

After more than two decades of negotiation and debate, the United Nations is moving forward with global human rights standards to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples.

The draft *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council at its historic first meeting in June. The Declaration must now be adopted by the UN General Assembly in order to become part of the body of international human rights standards.

The draft Declaration is intended to inspire and inform measures to address the widespread discrimination and deeply entrenched racism faced by Indigenous peoples in every region of the world.

The Declaration affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to have meaningful control over their own lives, to maintain their distinct cultural identities for future generations, and to have secure access to the lands and natural resources essential to their ways of life.

Canada, United States, Russia, New Zealand and Australia have opposed the adoption of the Declaration. It's feared that the small group of states that have opposed the Declaration will put pressure on other governments to join them in voting against the Declaration when it comes before the General Assembly later this year.

"We cannot really say that we are fully implementing human rights if we find groups of people... who are systematically denied these human rights." – Rodolfo Stavenhagan, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

On this year's International Day of the World's Indigenous People (9 August), we're calling on states around the world to support the adoption of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* at the UN General Assembly in 2006.

Call to action

Sign our petition calling on all states to support the Declaration

Intertribal song - a call to all nations of people to come out and dance.

Click on the images below (pop-up windows)

Cambodia

Canada

Brazil

[PHOTO]

Audio & video from Freedom Drum: a 24-hour drumming marathon in support of Indigenous Rights, held in October 2005 in Canada.

Indigenous peoples - Cambodia

In Mondulakiri province, Cambodia, Indigenous Phnong people lost both ancestral land and farmland when the government granted a concession in 2004 for a private company to establish a tree plantation, which vastly exceeded the legal limit of 10,000 hectares.

Villagers and local authorities were never consulted and no environmental or social impact studies were undertaken. The Phnong people's requests for information about the concession have continuously been ignored.

[PHOTO]

Indigenous peoples – Canada

According to Canadian government statistics, young Indigenous women in Canada are at least five times more likely than all other women to die as a result of violence.

Indigenous women have long struggled to draw attention to violence within their own families and communities. Canadian police and public officials have also been aware of a pattern of racist violence against Indigenous women in Canadian cities – but have done little to prevent it.

Irene Compton of the Minwaashin Lodge, an Indigenous women's shelter and healing centre, speaks out for an end to violence against Indigenous women on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, May 2004.

[PHOTO]

Indigenous peoples – Brazil

In January 2003, 72-year-old Guarani-Kaiowá leader Marcos Verón led a small group in an attempt to peacefully reoccupy a small area of the Takuara indigenous territory in Mato Grosso do Sul. He was severely beaten by a group of men reportedly made up of farm labourers and hired thugs, and died two days later.

His son, Ava Taperendy' i, stands next to a memorial to his father, Takuara, Mato Grosso do Sul.

[PHOTO]
