



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians



INDIAN LAW  
RESOURCE CENTER

## Combating Violence Against Indigenous Women, An Essential Condition for Achieving Gender Parity

A Joint Oral Statement Offered at the 30th 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 8 – Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms – with a focus on gender parity (September 15, 2015)

The Indian Law Resource Center, National Congress of American Indians, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Native American Rights Fund, and Americans for Indian Opportunity offer this joint statement on combating violence against indigenous women to achieve gender parity.

Violence against indigenous women is a pandemic. International experts and bodies, including this Council, recognize that indigenous women often suffer disproportionate rates of discrimination, violence, and murder because of their gender and because they are indigenous and members of indigenous peoples and communities.<sup>1</sup> Violence against indigenous women significantly impairs and precludes enjoyment of their other human rights and stands as a main challenge to achieving gender parity.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calls on states to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy full protection against all forms of violence and discrimination. Yet, there is a global epidemic of violence against them. In the United States alone, American Indian and Alaska Native women are still 2.5 times more likely to be assaulted than other women; one in three will be raped and three in five will be physically assaulted. Alaska Native women continue to suffer the highest rate of forcible sexual assault with “reported rates of domestic violence up to ten times higher than in the rest of the United States.”<sup>2</sup>

The Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples contains critical decisions to help address violence against indigenous women, which in turn will help meet the call of Council Resolution 6/30 to integrate the human rights of women in all aspects of the work of the United Nations.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HRC Resolution 26/15. United Nations Economic and Social Council, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, *Study on the extent of violence against indigenous women and girls in terms of article 22(2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, E/C.19/2013/9 (Feb. 12, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> *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).

<sup>3</sup> G.A. Res. 69/2, U.N. Doc.A/RES/69/2 (Sept. 25, 2014).

The decisions include developing an implementing body and a System-wide Action Plan to achieve the ends of the Declaration.<sup>4</sup> We recommend that both pay particular attention to the rights of indigenous women and children and that indigenous women, including their representatives and institutions, be fully involved in developing the implementing body and action plan.

In the Outcome Document, states ask this Council to examine the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls.<sup>5</sup> Toward that end, we urge the Council to:

- a. *Decide* to hold at its 32<sup>nd</sup> or 33<sup>rd</sup> session, a half-day panel discussion on violence against indigenous women and girls; and
- b. *Invite* the Secretary-General to issue a report with concrete recommendations for action on the issue of violence against indigenous women and girls, with a view toward enhancing the Council's special procedures mandates by requiring regular joint reports.

We urge your support of these recommendations to identify and accelerate actions to eliminate violence and discrimination against indigenous women and children everywhere.

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at ¶¶ 28, 31, 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at ¶ 19.