



## Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women by Addressing Its Root Causes

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

Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women  
Panel 1: Violence against indigenous women and girls and its root causes (June 16, 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.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calls on states to ensure indigenous women enjoy full protections against violence and discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Yet they often suffer multiple forms of discrimination and disproportionate violence, and they are murdered and disappear at extraordinary rates, because of their gender and because they are indigenous.<sup>2</sup>

In the United States, for example, despite recent law reforms, more than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence, and more than 1 in 2 have experienced sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> Alaska Native women report physical assault rates up to 12 times higher than the rest of the country.<sup>4</sup> And the vast majority of these crimes are committed by non-indigenous perpetrators<sup>5</sup> over whom tribal governments lack full criminal jurisdiction.

A root cause of the violence is a discriminatory legal system that limits the authority of indigenous peoples to protect their women and children, and that fails to prevent and respond to these crimes. To address this human rights crisis, the UN Declaration and the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples must be implemented by states and the UN. 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 hold a high-level panel in 2017 on intensifying efforts, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous women and girls.

<sup>1</sup> UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 22.

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/RES/26/15 (11 July 2014), 2. 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>3</sup> 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, Office of Justice Programs, available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>.

<sup>4</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>5</sup> 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, Office of Justice Programs, available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>.