

# SHAME THE STATE

In 2007 indigenous peoples around the world achieved something close to impossible: the passage of the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)**. Although initially contested by many states - including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia - by 2016 all of the member states of the United Nations have endorsed UNDRIP as **"the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world."** Although UNDRIP does not carry the force of law it can still be a vital tool in the defense of indigenous peoples' rights.

In 2001 the **United Nations Commission on Human Rights** appointed a **Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** whose mandate (aka duty) includes: promoting good states practices related to indigenous peoples, reporting on the overall human rights situation of indigenous peoples, conducting studies regarding the rights of indigenous peoples, and addressing cases of alleged violations of the rights of indigenous peoples. Alleged rights violations can be submitted to the Special Rapporteur using these steps:

**1. Know Your Rights:** The Special Rapporteur works most effectively when communications (aka complaints about rights violations) are based on the rights outlined in UNDRIP. Read the Declaration and include any articles you think were violated.

**2. Draft your Communication:** Effective communications will be 1-2 pages in length with any supporting documents (e.g. newspaper articles, photographs, personal accounts, etc) included in an annex. Communications can be submitted in English, French, or Spanish. If applicable, the communication should include

- **When and Where:** Date, time, and precise location
- **Victim(s) or community affected:** this information may be released by the Special Rapporteur in the process of addressing the violation unless anonymity is specifically requested in the communication.
- **What happened:** detailed description of the events and circumstances of the violation.
- **Perpetrator(s):** Details on the person(s) or institution(s) responsible for the violation.
- **Actions taken by State authorities:** has the government been involved? What has the government done to remedy the situation? Note: The government need not be contacted or involved before submitting a communication to the Special Rapporteur.
- **Source:** Name and full address of the indigenous group, individual, or organization submitting the communication. This information will remain confidential unless otherwise requested in the communication.

### 3. Submit:

- **E-mail (preferred):** [indigenous@ohchr.org](mailto:indigenous@ohchr.org)  
(Include "Communications regarding [country or indigenous people]" in the Subject Line)
- **Mail:** Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples  
c/o OHCHR-UNOGO Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais Wilson  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
- **Fax:** +41 22 917 92 32

**4. Keep Fighting:** The UN is not the solution but a strategy for bringing the issues of indigenous peoples into the international arena and holding states accountable to their promises. We must continue fighting for the full recognition of indigenous peoples and our rights.

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### Links:

UNDRIP:  
[http://staging.ilrc.vic.gov.au/sites/indianlaw.org/files/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://staging.ilrc.vic.gov.au/sites/indianlaw.org/files/DRIPS_en.pdf)

Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx>

Sending Communications (complaints):  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SubmitInformation.aspx>

UNDRIP for Youth:  
[http://files.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/HRBAP\\_UN\\_Rights\\_Indig\\_Peoples.pdf](http://files.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/HRBAP_UN_Rights_Indig_Peoples.pdf)