



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (HRC)

Chair: Monica Earley

The Human Rights Committee is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its State parties. For more information, go to: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/CCPRIndex.aspx>

REPORT: Rights of indigenous people

Introduction and General Overview:

Who are Indigenous Peoples? People who inhabited a land before it was conquered by colonial societies and who consider themselves distinct from the societies currently governing those territories are called Indigenous Peoples.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

(UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007, by a majority of 144 states in favour, 4 votes against, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, and 11 abstentions, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine.

Nine years since the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly, the four countries voting against have reversed their position and now support the Declaration. Today, the Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples.

Major Parties Involved: The vote was, in favour 143 countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, the Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab

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Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Against: The United States, New Zealand, Canada, Australia
Abstentions: Pacific Island States, Ukraine

Timeline of Events: The Declaration was over 25 years in the making.

1982: The idea originated when the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) set up its Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), established as a result of a study by Special Rapporteur José Ricardo Martínez Cobo on the problem of discrimination faced by indigenous peoples.

1985: The Working Group began working on drafting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

1993: The draft was finished and was submitted to the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which gave its approval the following year.

1989: During the International Labour Organisation adopted the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. The Draft Declaration was then referred to the Commission on Human Rights, which established another Working Group to examine its terms. Over the following years this Working Group met on 11 occasions to examine and fine-tune the Draft Declaration and its provisions. Progress was slow because of certain states' concerns regarding some key provisions of the Declaration, such as indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and the control over natural resources existing on indigenous peoples' traditional lands.

June 29th 2006: The final version of the Declaration was adopted by the 47-member Human Rights Council (the successor body to the Commission on Human Rights), with 30 member states in favour, 2 against, 12 abstentions, and 3 absentees.

September 13, 2007: The United Nations General Assembly voted on the adoption of the Proposal

Previous Attempts at this Issue:

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNFPII) has made many attempts at this issue but the Human Rights Committee has made more improvements on it than others.

Suggested Websites:

United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Declaration.aspx>

Educational Standpoint on Rights of Indigenous People's

<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/studyguides/indigenous.html>

Other Attempts at this Issue

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/693/rights-of-indigenous-people>

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REPORT: Reestablishing fundamental human rights in post-conflict zones

Introduction and General Overview:

There are over 44 Million people experiencing human rights violations especially in conflict zones areas. The Human Rights Committee of the UN are trying to find new innovative ways to prevent human rights violations in post conflict societies. Post conflict societies are defined as "populations belonging to countries that have recently emerged from war or large scale violence." Usually, experts focus on the historical event, which is at the end of any conflict, events such as deposition of a leader or fall of a capital city. However, the time where a city has entered a post conflict period does not necessarily mean that the conflict has ceased; largely, the conflict has escalated on a greater scale, diluting itself both in the society and in everyday life. Thus, it is important to ensure that the work carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the mandates of the United Nations Human rights Council (UNHRC) support the post conflict societies and the initiatives led by other UN agencies. Human Rights efforts, particularly in relief, recovery, and reconstruction activities are the key feature to the successful implementation policies and frameworks.

Key Involvement and Key Events:

The member nations of the African Union are bounded by the declaration stated in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Additionally, the then Commission of the African Union (now AU) for the first time in history, adopted the Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (2006). The policy is a guide also helpful for nations under post conflict stress. The guide successfully explains complete reconstruction and restoration of post conflict societies.

Some of the discussed topics in post conflict societies include security, women and gender, political governance and transition. Struggling post conflict nations include Kenya, Uganda, and Côte d'Ivoire, Africa. They have a variety of challenges to deal with from time to time, the key being "the promotion and protection of human rights." The Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development gives these countries a foundation for addressing those challenges.

Previous Attempts:

The United Nations Human Rights Council, has done a lot of work on human rights in post conflict societies. On the 10th of April 2013, the Council adopted the resolution 22/16 on the "promotion and protection of human rights in post-conflict and post disaster situations". Clearly directed by the resolution, the Human Rights Council requested its Advisory Committee to conduct thorough research and submit reports on the past challenges faced by governmental institutions on the subject of human rights in post-conflict societies. The resolution addresses special attention to relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts, and promotes "right approaches" towards humanitarian initiatives. The resolution also focuses on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence and self-sufficiency. As a result, the committee submitted a progress report (A/HRC/27/57) which was published in August of 2014, highlighting challenges faced by Member Nations on the subject of human rights, especially in post-disaster and post-conflict situations.

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Suggested Websites:

Human rights in post-disaster and post-conflict situations

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/AdvisoryCommittee/Pages/HRpostdisasterandpostconflictsituations.aspx>

General Assembly's take on the Issue

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session27/Documents/A-HRC-27-57_en.doc

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_76_en.doc

Protect Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/index.html>

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