



# International Indian Treaty Council

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## United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, makes historic visit to American Indian Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier

**San Francisco, Jan. 24, 2014:** Today James Anaya, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, made a historic visit to American Indian political prisoner Leonard Peltier, Turtle Mountain Ojibway, in the United States (US) Federal Penitentiary in Coleman, Florida. He was accompanied by Leonard "Lenny" Foster, member of the Board of Directors of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) and representative of the National Native American Prisoners Rights Coalition.

Leonard Peltier was convicted in 1977 for "aiding and abetting" in the deaths of two FBI agents during a fire fight on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1975. Two other defendants were acquitted based on self-defense. Although the US courts as well as Amnesty International have acknowledged government misconduct, including forcing witnesses to lie and hiding ballistics evidence indicating his innocence, Mr. Peltier was denied a new trial on a legal technicality. The late Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, 55 Members of the US Congress, the National Congress of American Indians, Assembly of First Nations, the US Human Rights Network and many others -- including a judge who sat as a member of the Court in two of Mr. Peltier's appeals -- have called for his release.

Lenny Foster confirmed that "the visit today by Special Rapporteur James Anaya to Leonard Peltier in prison is very significant and historic for us and we thank him for working with IITC to make this possible. This will support efforts for Executive Clemency for Leonard Peltier and promote reconciliation and justice in this case."

In April and May 2012, UN Special Rapporteur Anaya carried out an official visit to the US to examine the human rights situation of Indigenous Peoples in this country. After visiting and hearing testimony from Indigenous Nations, Peoples, organizations and communities around the US he issued a report "The situation of indigenous peoples in the United States of America" [A/HRC/21/47/Add.1]. It was presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2012 and contained observations regarding the case of Leonard Peltier:

**"A more recent incident that continues to spark feelings of injustice among indigenous peoples around the United States is the well-known case of Leonard Peltier... After a trial that has been criticized by many as involving numerous due process problems, Mr. Peltier was sentenced to two life sentences for murder, and has been denied parole on various occasions. Pleas for presidential consideration of clemency by notable individuals and institutions have not borne fruit. This further depletes the already diminished faith in the criminal justice system felt by many indigenous peoples throughout the country."**

Special Rapporteur Anaya's recommendations to the US government included the following:

**"Other measures of reconciliation should include efforts to identify and heal particular sources of open wounds. And hence, for example, promised reparations should be provided to the descendants of the Sand Creek massacre, and new or renewed consideration should be given to clemency for Leonard Peltier."**

For more information about the case of Leonard Peltier and the current campaign for Executive Clemency contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee: [LPsupport@whoisleonardpeltier.info](mailto:LPsupport@whoisleonardpeltier.info) or (505) 301-5423.

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