



International Indian Treaty Council
Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios

2940 16th Street, Suite 305
San Francisco, CA 94103-3664
Phone: (415) 641-4482
Fax: (415) 641-1298
Email: iitc@treatycouncil.org
www.treatycouncil.org

United Nations Human Rights Council, 45th Session

14 September to 6 October 2020

**ANNUAL PANEL ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, Half-day panel discussion
on the rights of indigenous peoples, on the theme Protection of indigenous human rights
defenders, 23 September 2020**

Intervention by the International Indian Treaty Council presented by Rochelle Diver

The IITC thanks the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Mary Lowler, and welcomes her report on killings of human rights defenders to be presented at the Council's 46th session.

Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately targeted while defending their territories from unlawful incursions, imposed development, land grabbing and forced removals, a situation that former UN Special Rapporteur Vicky Tauli Corpuz called a "global crisis". In 2019 28 Indigenous defenders were killed in South America alone. States are now taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to further diminish environmental laws and protections, fast-track extractive projects and criminalize defenders.

We highlight a current case from the United States regarding NDN Collective President Nick Tilsen, Oglala Lakota, facing up to 17 years in prison for participating on July 3, 2020 in a peaceful blockade on legally-recognized Treaty Lands to prevent a large campaign rally for President Donald Trump from desecrating a sacred site now known as Mt. Rushmore and further exposing the Lakota to COVID-19.

We call on States to halt such criminalization and repression and to instead initiate just processes, in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples concerned, for redress of rights violations in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Migwich.

*Working for the Rights and Recognition of Indigenous Peoples
Trabajando por el reconocimiento y los derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas*