



June 24, 2018

United Nations Human Rights Bodies, Committees and Special Procedures  
Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights  
United States Department of State  
Organizations in Solidarity  
Media and World Public Opinion

Re: Urgent Expression of Concern and Call to Action regarding Human Rights Violations being carried out against Indigenous and other children

Indigenous Peoples from the Americas, Arctic, Pacific and Caribbean participating in the 44<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) from June 21-24, 2018 at Mato Paha (Bear Butte), Oceti Sakowin Treaty Territory (South Dakota USA), express our collective outrage regarding the cruel, inhumane and racist actions of the President of the United States Donald J. Trump to forcibly separate thousands of children from their parents and families along the US border with Mexico.

Many of these children are from Indigenous communities in Latin America where violence and oppression are rampant. Some are children with disabilities and special needs. Many have been kept in cages like animals and have little hope of finding their parents. Children subjected to such treatment are victims of egregious human rights violations and extreme child abuse at the hands of the US government and its agents.

American Indians and Alaska Natives also experienced the trauma of being forcibly removed from their parents and families under United States government boarding school policies carried out previous centuries. We are broken-hearted to contemplate the life-long and inter-generational trauma which will impact the children experiencing similar abuses today under US “zero tolerance” immigration policies.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the US has committed to uphold and implement, affirms in Article 22 that “States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.” The practice of forcibly separating Indigenous children, including infants and toddlers, from parents who have come to this country safety and survival for their families blatantly violates this commitment. It also violates International Human rights standards to which the US is accountable. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of

the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It also violates all principles of basic human decency.

The IITC, as an Indigenous organization in General Consultative Status to the UN Economic and Social Council joins with all Peoples, governments and members of the human family who defend morality, compassion and human dignity in denouncing these odious practices. We call for their immediate halt, along with all other inhumane immigration policies that violate human rights of children and their families. We call for the impacted families to be immediately reunited. This government-sponsored child abuse is the direct responsibility of the US President and his administration. History and the world community will hold them accountable for the travesty they have deliberately perpetrated on thousands of innocent children.

For all our relations,

Participants in the 44<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the International Indian Treaty Council, Mato Paha (Bear Butte), Oceti Sakowin Treaty Territory (South Dakota USA), representing 45 Indigenous Peoples and Nations from North and Central America, the Pacific, Arctic and Caribbean

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