



International Indian Treaty Council
Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios

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United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
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Agenda Item 9: Interactive dialogue with UNPFII, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples
International Indian Treaty Council Intervention presented by Ruth Anna Buffalo

Thank you, Madam Chair. We thank EMRIP for the Study on Militarization, for referencing the impacts to Indigenous women and girls and for citing state obligations in Article 22 of the UN Declaration. We acknowledge that actions of non-state actors such as private corporate security guards are mentioned. However, we respectfully recommend the intersection of these two issues be highlighted, and the ongoing environmental violence against Indigenous women and girls in the context of extractive industries be emphasized as a stand-alone matter of great concern for many Indigenous Peoples.

The UN Permanent Forum was the first UN body to recognize the term Environmental Violence in 2012 which includes the deliberate proliferation of toxic chemicals impacting reproductive health as well as sexual violence, trafficking and exploitation carried out by private security guards and private militia in the service of corporate activity. We also thank CEDAW for recognizing in General Recommendation 39 on Indigenous women and girls that environmental violence against Indigenous women and girls “needs to be promptly addressed”.

This type of violence impacts Indigenous women and girls, in what are called developed and developing countries. On my tribal nation lands, Ft. Berthold in North Dakota, United States, where oil development has proliferated since 2010. Private corporation security guards and private militia are hired by oil companies like Exxon Mobile and Conoco Phillips, are complicit, and often involved in acts of sexual violence and exploitation, trafficking, and the disappearances of Indigenous women and girls. The economic power of the corporations they work for in many cases means that their actions are carried out with impunity. Indigenous women face murder rates ten times the national average within the US, and 96% of our women experience violence from a non-Native perpetrator. 84% of us will have experienced violence within our lifetime.

Thank you for including this very issue as advice presented in your study on militarization as a matter that merits special attention by the Council.