

INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL
STATEMENT FROM LEONARD PELTIER©

With honor, I congratulate the International Indian Treaty Council on its 50th Anniversary.

We, the First People, have been nurtured by Mother Earth for millennia as we nurtured her. She shaped us, flowed in our veins, and into her womb, we returned.

In the 1970s, we found ourselves on the brink of extinction, facing those who saw us as obstacles in their unquenchable thirst for more - more land, more resources, more of everything. They didn't see us as human but as impediments to their greed.

Gathering around campfires and dinner tables, Dennis Banks, Russell Means, Vernon Bellecourt, and I, along with our respected elders, fostered a deep connection rooted in our shared commitment to protecting Mother Earth. Bill Means has always been a passionate protector of our Mother, and my brother, Lenny Foster, has devoted his life to safeguarding our Sacred Traditions.

We realized that our pleas for sovereignty, dignity, and survival fell on deaf ears. The government refused to acknowledge, let alone respect, our treaty rights. We were disregarded, unheard, and dehumanized as expendable savages.

A prominent magazine cover proclaimed the Vanishing of the American Indians.

We sought the support of international Indigenous communities and the leadership of their nations to amplify our voices, lost in the wind.

Forged by Mother Earth, our people united as one, establishing the International Indian Treaty Council.

Together, our voices now resound, no longer lost in the wind. We are heard. We are seen. And our traditions endure for generations to come.

We are the First People.

We. Have. Not. Vanished. We have endured. Mother Earth's fortitude sustains us and allows our children to thrive.

In The Spirit of Crazy Horse.

Doksha,

Leonard Peltier