



International Indian Treaty Council
Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios

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For Immediate Release

International Indian Treaty Council’s Indigenous Peoples Thanksgiving Sunrise Gathering on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco (Yelamu) California, November 28, 2024



Round Valley Pomo dancers at the Alcatraz Indigenous Peoples Thanksgiving Sunrise Gathering,
November 23, 2023, *photo credit: IITC*

November 25, 2024, San Francisco California: The International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) will commemorate the Indigenous Peoples Thanksgiving annual Sunrise Gathering on Alcatraz Island, 5-9 AM on November 28, 2024, to give thanks for the resiliency and survival of Indigenous Peoples’ cultures in California and around the world.

The gathering will present Indigenous Peoples’ living cultures, ongoing struggles, and highlight the true history of colonization and survival on this continent. IITC’s commitment to “Truth in History” includes sharing the true history of “First Thanksgiving”, which, according to the Wampanoag Tribe of Massachusetts, was declared by the governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to give thanks for the massacre of 700 Pequot Indians.

The gathering will also honor and commemorate the historic occupation of Alcatraz that began on November 20, 1969, when Native American students from San Francisco State

University, joined by other Indigenous students and activists from around the US, took over and held Alcatraz Island for 19 months as "Indian Land." The occupation brought widespread national and global attention to the continuing struggles of Indigenous Peoples to defend their rights and ways of life in this country.

IITC Co-founder and Board member William A. Means, Oglala Lakota Nation, reconfirmed the importance of the occupation and IITC's annual gatherings; "The Alcatraz occupation was the spark that lit a flame seen around the world. We gather on Alcatraz Island every year to honor the resisters that stood up for our rights in 1969 and all the way back to 1492. On behalf of IITC, we also remember and recognize the late great Bill Wahpepah who had the vision back in 1979 to hold these sunrise gatherings every year so that we will never forget what happened here and why this place is so sacred for our movement".

Morning Star Gali, Pit River Nation, is IITC's California Community and Tribal Liaison and will be the MC for the event. She also affirmed the significance of this annual gathering, stating: "We are coming together in prayer and solidarity, sharing our resilient cultures and honoring the original occupiers who stood up for the sovereignty and Self-determination of all Indigenous Peoples. We continue their commitment to defend the rights, cultures and lands of Indigenous Peoples in the spirit of unity, resistance, and healing."

The gathering will open with an Ohlone welcome in recognition of the ancestral homelands of the Ramaytush Ohlone which are now known as San Francisco. Participants will offer a sunrise prayer and tobacco to give thanks for our lives, those that came before us and those still to come. The program will feature Indigenous speakers, singers, drummers and dancers from California, the Americas and the Pacific. Over 4000 participants are expected to attend. For those unable to attend in person, the event will be broadcast via live radio on KPFA, 94.1 FM, and online at <http://www.kpfa.org> from 5-8 AM.

The event is open to the public. Boats will leave from Pier 33 in San Francisco starting at 4:15AM. Limited ferry tickets will be available for sale at the pier 33 box office which opens at 3:30 AM. Participants are encouraged to purchase ferry tickets in advance on the City Experiences website: [City Experiences](#).

Contact IITC's San Francisco Office, (415) 641-4482 or marina@treatycouncil.org, (650) 255-1594, for general information. Media and interview requests can be directed to IITC Tribal and Community Liaison Morning Star Gali, morningstar@treatycouncil.org, (916) 996-6580 or IITC Executive Director Andrea Carmen, andrea@treatycouncil.org, (520) 273-6003.

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