



**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**

**20<sup>th</sup> session, April 19<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 \*Meeting held virtually\***

**Agenda Item 4: "Discussion on the six mandate areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights), with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"**

**Statement by the International Indian Treaty Council, presented by Rochelle Diver**

Thank you, Madam Chair. The IITC is presenting this statement today to address an urgent situation, and as follow-up to the intervention presented at the UNPFII North America Listening Session on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Just this past week three Diné women were murdered in the Southwest United States, reflecting a trend that has been seen throughout the pandemic, of an uptick in violence against Indigenous women and girls across the globe. Atrocities that impact Indigenous women and girls in particular, occur without national attention or accountability. The issue of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives is an epidemic in the U.S. and Canada but there's little data that tracks the number of victims.

This is directly related to oil production and extractive industry initiatives that take place disproportionately on or near Native lands, and it is also related to the legacies of colonization, endemic poverty, lack of adequate healthcare and mental health services, loss of culture, and lack of redress for long-standing environmental rights and human rights violations.

The FBI reports that Native Americans disappear at twice the rate per capita of white Americans, though they make up a much smaller portion of the population. And in some areas, Native women living on tribal lands were murdered at rates 10 times the national average.

The IITC also highlights the continued criminalization by countries and corporations of the defenders of Human, Treaty, Environmental, and Indigenous Peoples Rights.

In this regard, our recommendations are as follows:

1) We reiterate our call presented at the Listening Session for the UNPFII to conduct a cross-border study regarding missing, murdered and disappeared peoples happening in the Great Lakes region of the US and Canada; and 2) We make a call for full and effective access to justice for these defenders and for all Indigenous leaders and communities facing repression, threats, criminalization, imprisonment, assassination, forced disappearances, displacement, imposed development, resource extraction, and other violations of their rights.

**Thank you, Madam Chair.**