The Peoples Forum: What Does Sovereignty Mean for the World's Indigenous Peoples?

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Overview: The objective of the lesson is to introduce students to the concept of sovereignty and its necessity to assure the survival of the Earth's most unique, as well as threatened, cultures. Through a simulated conference among representatives of various indigenous groups, students will investigate eight case studies of conflict and cooperation between indigenous groups and governments whose exercise of authority endangers their lands, political, and social rights. A review of the goals of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People serves as a catalyst for student-created resolutions to address the problems from these eight case studies through mock deliberation and debate.

Essential Question:
Why is self-determination vital to a people, their culture, and the preservation of their natural environment?

Supporting Questions:
What is the meaning and importance of sovereignty to the indigenous peoples of the world?
Why should and how can governments guarantee the future security of indigenous cultures?
How can and do indigenous people serve as stewards of the Earth's natural resources?

Grade Level: 6th or 7th grade Middle School Geography classrooms; high school Geography adaptable

National Geographic Standards:

9. The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.
18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

State Oklahoma Academic Standards for Middle School Geography: *(revised 2019)*
Grade 6.3.7 Identify and explain topics related to indigenous sovereignty.
Grade 6.5.2 Explain how cultural diffusion, both voluntary and forced, impacts societies of a region.
Grade 6.5.5: Analyze reasons for conflict and cooperation among and between groups, societies, nations, and regions.
Grade 7.3.5 Describe reasons for and analyze from multiple perspectives the challenges and benefits of migration on indigenous and immigrant populations.
Grade 7.3.4 Evaluate and summarize the impact of geography on population distribution, density, growth, change, settlement patterns, the availability of resources, and migration, including push and pull factors.
Grade 7.5.2 Describe how cultural diffusion, both voluntary and forced, impacts society.
Grade 7.5.6 Analyze reasons for conflict and cooperation among groups, societies and countries, including the creation and involvement of supranational organizations.

Resources Needed:
Livebinder Online Collection of all Resources (optional; downloadable or viewable by teachers and students; no login or password required) http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2574461
Invitation Entry Ticket to the Forum (one copy per student)
International Indigenous Peoples Forum powerpoint presentation
First Nations Statement cards (one set, cut apart)
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, excerpts (one copy per student)
What Sovereignty Means powerpoint presentation (optional; recommended for grade 6 students)
Sovereignty of the World's People powerpoint presentation (optional; recommended for grade 7 students)

International Forum Resolution
(one copy per pair of students; optional online form available through Livebinder collection of resources, below)

Case Studies Fact Sheets-
(one copy per pair of students; option, select the four case studies applicable to hemisphere focus for grade 6 or grade 7 only)
Western Hemisphere:
Canada's Pipeline and Issues of American Sovereignty Over Land Use
Bolivia's Indigenous Peoples Seek Stronger Sovereignty
Profile of Mexico's Indigenous Peoples
Water Rights of Wintu Territory in California
Eastern Hemisphere:
China's Tibetan Indigenous Peoples
Why No Indigenous Treaty for Australia?
Sami Struggle Over Land Rights
The Tuareg: A Nation Without Borders?
Team (or group) name tents
(labeled with the locations of each of the case studies selected from the above list of case studies for the simulation)
Parliamentary Rules of Debate (one copy per student)
Self-Reflection rubric (one copy per student)
Indigenous Groups are World's Environmental Guardians (reading, one copy per student)
Indigenous Peoples Day poster; optional for enrichment (displayed digitally for class viewing)
States Replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day article; optional for enrichment

Time Frame: three 50-55 minute class periods

Procedure:
1. Ask students enter the classroom, provide an invitation entry ticket to each student. Provide five minutes for each student to independently write their response to the essential question on the entry ticket. Inform students that they will return to this essential question following their participation as representatives to a mock International Indigenous Peoples conference.
2. Assign ten students to perform the opening ceremony. Provide each of the ten students with one of the First Nations Statement cards. Inform each student that they will be called upon to stand and read aloud the statement on their card during the International Forum's opening ceremony.
(Optional Procedure: Teachers may opt to use additional powerpoint presentations, listed above for their respective grade levels, if they wish to provide a general overview to the concept of sovereignty and some of the issues related to this concept.)
3. Divide the class into pairs of students. (Option, groups of 3-4 students as appropriate for larger classes.) Provide a name tent for each group and inform each group that they will now assume the role of representatives of their assigned group of indigenous peoples. They will be actively engaged in deliberation and debate, speaking on behalf of the interests and needs of their assigned indigenous peoples.
3. Using the Forum powerpoint presentation, guide students through the opening ceremony, the purpose of the forum (conference), and the overview of challenges of indigenous peoples to preserve their sovereignty.
4. Pause at the introduction of the United Nations' role and activities in supporting the rights of indigenous peoples. Provide a copy of the excerpts from the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* Ask student teams (groups) to read through the list of rights that the members of the United Nations have agreed are inherent to all indigenous peoples of the world. Provide time for each team (groups) to discuss this list of

rights and determine which they believe are the most important three. Ask students to be prepared to justify their prioritized rights to the Forum.
5. Continue with the Forum powerpoint presentation in order to introduce student-representatives to the purpose of resolutions and the importance of discussion over such resolutions as one method that nations, as well as groups of people, use to debate problems and agree upon solutions.
6. Provide each team (group) with a reading about issues facing the indigenous group of people each team represents. Allow time for each team (group) to investigate into the problems and needs facing each group.
7. Provide each team (group) with a copy (printed or digital copy for classrooms with mobile devices) of the Forum Resolution template. Instruct students that their team will identify a minimum of three problems from their respective readings. Allow time for teams (groups) to develop one clear statement summarizing each problem, noting their summaries in the appropriate places on the Forum Resolution template.
8. Ask teams (groups) to now discuss potential solutions to address one or more of the problems they have identified. Encourage teams to discuss who might be responsible for carrying out the solution. How would the solution specifically solve the problem?
9. Inform teams that they will be participating in a Forum deliberation about each of the team's solutions. Provide students with a copy of the Parliamentary Rules of Debate and briefly review and/or practice the formal conduct that team members will be required to utilize.
10. Conduct a Forum debate. The teacher may wish to serve as the chairman, regulating the progress and rules of the debate or assign a student to serve in this leadership role. Allow one representative from each team 2 minutes to read their resolution aloud and briefly explain how their proposed solution will successfully address one or more of the problems faced by the indigenous people they represent. Encourage other teams' representatives to take the floor and ask questions about the resolution or make statements in support of each resolution. (Option: conduct a voting process after five minutes of deliberation on each resolution.)

Assessment:
1. After completion of the mock forum, conduct a classroom discussion focusing on the three supporting questions:
   What is the meaning and importance of sovereignty to the indigenous peoples of the world?
   Why should and how can governments guarantee the future security of indigenous cultures?
   How can and do indigenous people serve as stewards of the Earth's natural resources?
2. Provide each student with a copy of the article, *Indigenous Groups are World's Environmental Guardians.* According to what they have learned from their deliberations and what they have learned from this passage, return students' attention to the essential question, "Why is self-determination vital to a people, their culture, and the preservation of their natural environment?" Encourage volunteers to share their initial responses to this question, as written on their Invitation Entry Tickets.
3. Provide each student with a copy of the Self-Reflection rubric. Ask each student to evaluate their own participation in and learning from the mock forum. Have opinions changed since the beginning of the lesson? If so, how? Encourage students to share their views.

Extension for Enrichment:
1. Ask students if they know anything about the background or purpose of a commemorative holiday known as Indigenous Peoples' Day? To stimulate discussion, display the Indigenous Peoples' Day poster for the class to view.
2. Encourage students to investigate the history and controversies surrounding the relatively new Indigenous Peoples' Day by reading the article, *States Replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day*. Do they believe it appropriate to move focus from a Columbus Day commemorative holiday to this new holiday? Why or why not?
3. As an extension, invite interested students to create their own Indigenous Peoples' Day posters to advertise this holiday in their own communities.

Sources:

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Indigenous Peoples
https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
CNA Strategic Studies Conference Report, 2018
New York Times
BBC News
Minority Groups International Report, 2018

Entry Ticket:

International Indigenous Peoples Forum

(Answer this question, based on your own views.)

Why is self-determination vital to a people, their culture, and the preservation of their environment?

Entry Ticket:

International Indigenous Peoples Forum

(Answer this question, based on your own views.)

Why is self-determination vital to a people, their culture, and the preservation of their environment?

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

(United Nations, excerpts)

"Recognizing that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional practices contributes to sustainable development and proper management of the environment…"

"Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination…
They freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

(Article 3)

"Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government
in matters relating to their internal and local affairs…"

(Article 4)

"Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture…"

(Article 8)

"Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories… without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples…"

(Article 10)

"Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures and traditions…"

(Article 15)

"Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop, and control the lands and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or use…"

(Article 26)

"Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands and resources."

(Article 29)

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

1

"We are the Indigenous Peoples… We possess inherent rights to self-determination."

2.

"Our right to self-determination means we have jurisdiction (the right, power and authority) to operate our own political, legal, economic, and cultural systems…"

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

3.

"The land is the source of our identity. Great responsibilities to protect and preserve the land have been bestowed upon us by the Creator... "

4.

"Therefore, our consent is required before any development or decisions are made which may impact our land."

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

5.

"As sovereign Nations we have never surrendered our rights…"

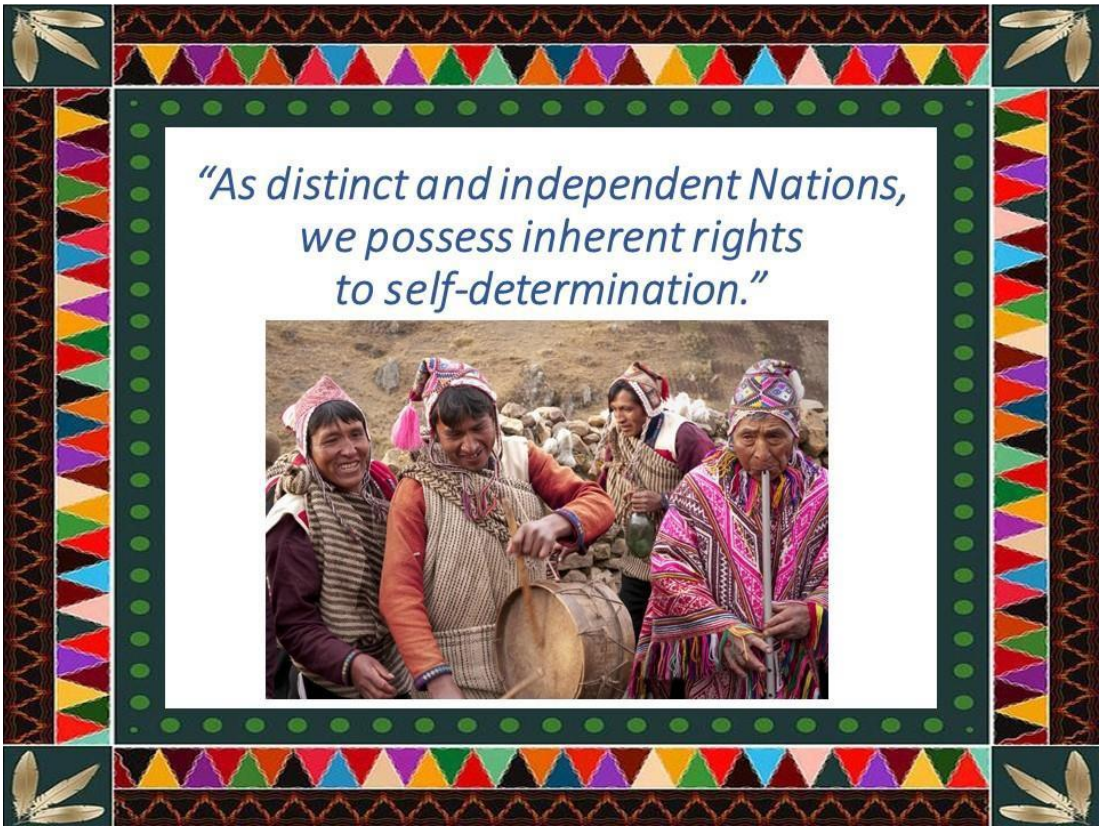
6.

"Prior to contact with the European settlers, our Nations and Peoples have thrived since time immemorial…

Our Nations possess distinct laws, language, culture, territories, economic systems, and history…"

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

7.



8.

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

9.

10

You are a representative of the First Nations of Canada. When called upon, please stand and read this statement aloud.

International Forum of Indigenous Peoples

Resolution from the People of

Whereas: *(Reason #1. Why should action be taken?)*

Whereas: *(Reason #2. Why should action be taken?)*

Whereas: *(Reason #3. Why should action be taken?)*

Be It Resolved that: *(State what action should be taken)*

So That:
(Explain how this action will help this group of people and fulfil one or more of the rights of indigenous people, as stated in the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People.)

Author(s) of the Resolution:

Parliamentary RULES for DEBATE:

MOTIONS: ***You Want To:***	***You Say…*** *(after standing and waiting for the presiding officer to recognize you…)*	***VOTE by the Assembly, needed to pass:***
Address the Assembly	**"Mister or Madam President, I wish to address the assembly."**	**None** *(Delegates may speak for a maximum time of one minute.)*
Ask a question	**"I rise to a question of privilege."**	**None**
Change the wording of a resolution	**"I propose the following amendment ..."** *(STAND and state what changes you propose)*	**Majority**
Vote on Resolution	**"I move to adopt the resolution presented."**	**Majority**

Procedures:

1. The Secretary General will preside over the General Assembly's debates.
2. Each member of the classroom will be considered a delegate of the General Assembly with equal right to speaking and voting on all resolutions.
3. Delegates of the Assembly will be denied speaking rights should there be two offenses of disregarding rules of Parliamentary Procedure.
4. Each Chief Delegate of the Individual Committees will be permitted three minutes to read the resolution and make a prepared speech in favor of his/her committee's resolution.
5. A copy of the resolution may be made available to all delegates of the General Assembly by posting in the room or on Smartboard.
6. Debate will be limited to a maximum of fifteen minutes per resolution. At this time, the resolution will be voted upon by all members of the General Assembly.
7. The classroom instructor will serve as Sargeant-at-Arms or designate a delelgate to assure procedures will be respected.

Self-Reflection: International Indigenous Peoples Forum

Use this form to evaluate your participation in the simulated international assembly and debate.

1= Weak 2= Below Average 3= Average 4= Above Average 5= Strong

Criteria for Evaluation:	Rating:
1. Clear understanding of the task	
2. Prepared with quality information	
3. Followed appropriate procedures	
4. Contributed to the discussion frequently	
5. Encouraged and respected the contributions of others	
6. Demonstrated understanding of the topics discussed	
7. Overall, my participation represented my fullest potential	

Comments:

Self-Reflection: Mock International Assembly

Use this form to evaluate your participation in the simulated international assembly and debate.

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Criteria for Evaluation:	Rating:
1. Clear understanding of the task	
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Comments:

Indigenous Groups are World's Environmental Guardians

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, JANUARY 11, 2019

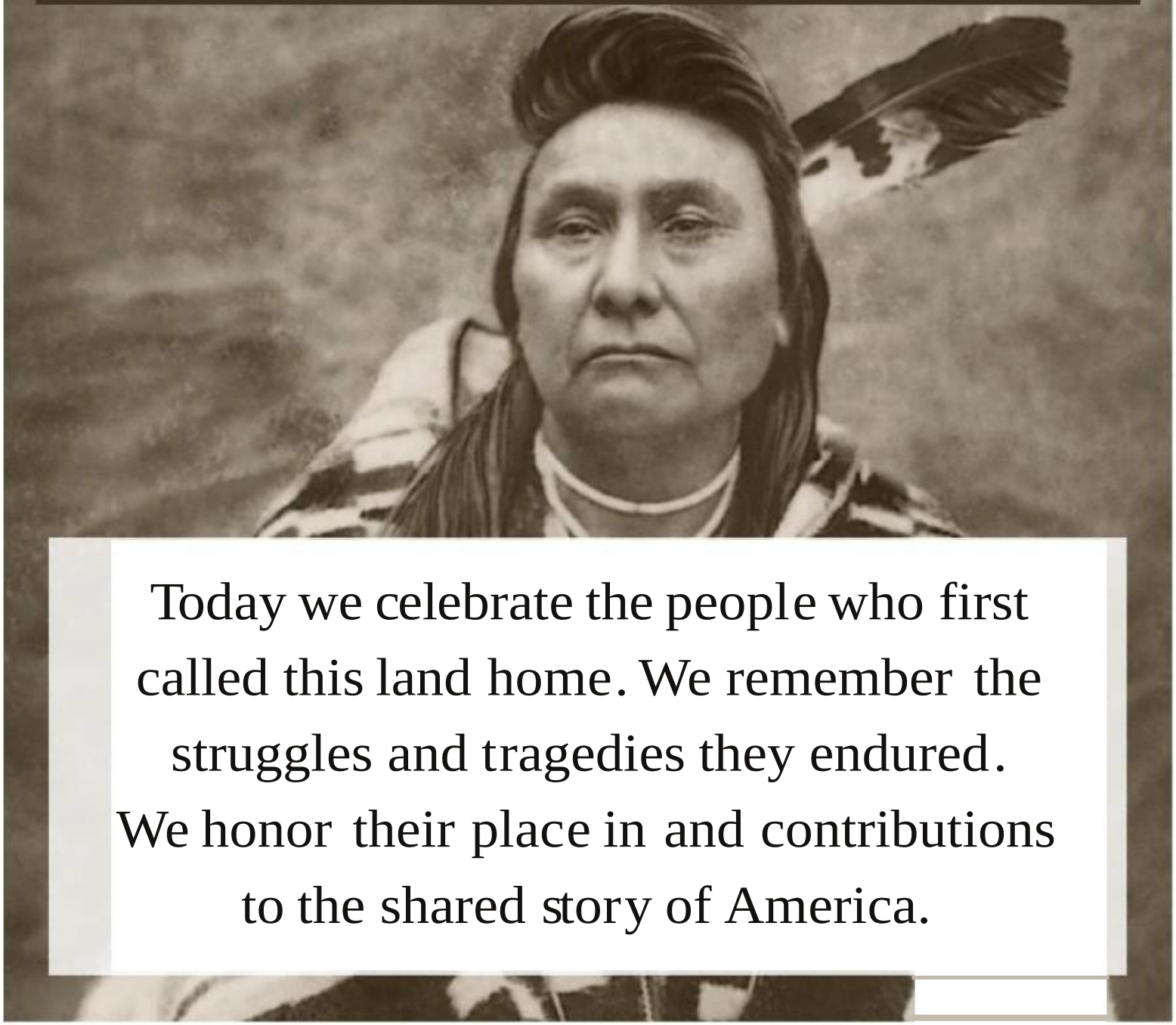
Indigenous tribes continue to confront mounting threats to their ways of life and their lives. From Canada and the Philippines to Japan and Indonesia, indigenous people face growing threats of discrimination and forced assimilation. As a result, the world's indigenous communities are rapidly dwindling in numbers due to the exploitation of their natural resources. With their combined share of the global population shrinking to 4 per cent, indigenous communities are locked in modern-day David-versus-Goliath battles against mining companies, dam builders, plantations, loggers, ranchers, hunters, and military forces. Their rights continue to be violated despite promises by governments to protect their lands, identities, and ways of life.

At a time when environmental degradation and climate change have become threats to humankind, indigenous peoples' ways of life- maintaining a balance between human needs and the preservation of ecosystems- serve as examples to the world. Living close to nature, these communities respect nature. They tend to understand nature better than modern societies.

The fact is that the clearing of more forests and other ecosystems for cropland, mining, pasture and other purposes continues to threaten the survival of isolated indigenous groups…The future of these endangered tribes depends on government policies and laws to safeguard their seclusion and privacy from encroachers who bring disease and exploitation.

Today, the world's indigenous groups manage 80 per cent of Earth's biodiversity; their ancestral lands make up 22 per cent of the world's land surface. By preserving forests, lakes, rivers, and other ecosystems on their territories, they play a valuable role in adapting to climate-change. Indigenous peoples have much to teach us about how to combat environmental degradation. In fact, their role as guardians of biodiversity is critical to modern societies and sustainable lifestyles.

Indigenous Peoples Day



Today we celebrate the people who first called this land home. We remember the struggles and tragedies they endured. We honor their place in and contributions to the shared story of America.

States Replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day

New York Times, October 4, 2018; April 28, 2019

Maine has replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, joining an increasing number of states and localities that have made the change. "There is power in a name and in who we choose to honor," Gov. Janet T. Mills of Maine said in a statement about the bill.

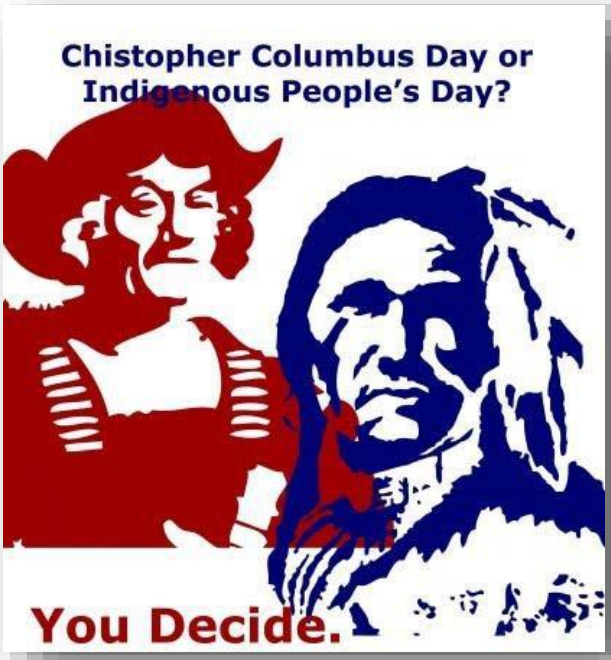
Those who favor renaming the holiday make the points that there were millions of people already living in North America in 1492 and that Columbus's journey encouraged centuries of exploitation of Native Americans.

Ambassador Dana of the Penobscot Nation spoke at the bill-signing ceremony. "As the original inhabitants of these lands and waters, we are happy that our ancestral ties and contributions are validated and celebrated instead of silenced and ignored by the previous holiday," she said in the statement.

Several states across the United States have already renamed the holiday since the first Indigenous Peoples Day in 1992. In Hawaii, the holiday is known as Discoverers' Day, and it's Native Americans' Day in South Dakota.

Others have tried to recognize Native Americans, without giving up the original holiday. Governor Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma signed into law a bill to dedicate the October holiday to both Columbus and Native Americans. "It just gives us one opportunity to celebrate Columbus, but also the indigenous people here in America," said Mr. Stitt, who is a member of a Native American tribe himself.

Columbus Day continues to be a federal holiday. Last October, President Trump released a statement celebrating the explorer. "On Columbus Day, we commemorate the achievements of this skilled Italian explorer and recognize his courage, will power, and ambition — all values we cherish as Americans," he said.



Why does the United States celebrate Columbus Day? In your opinion, is the holiday problematic? What do you think of the argument for changing the name and focus of the holiday from Columbus to Indigenous Peoples Day? Do you think changing the name of the holiday can change the way indigenous peoples are treated in United States history?

Why No Indigenous Treaty for Australia?

Source: BBC News, May, 2017

Almost 200 years later, Australia remains the only British Commonwealth country to have never signed a treaty with its indigenous people. Despite the government's words and gestures, there is still no treaty". An Aboriginal leaders' summit is hopeful of reaching consensus on whether - and how - the constitution should be changed. But some delegations are expected to make statements about the need for a treaty and financial compensation.

The meeting will also shine a light on white Australia's troubled historical attitude to the country's first inhabitants. The way Australia was settled was in fact quite extraordinary. To them, the Australian Aborigines didn't have permanent dwellings. It was hard to discern who their leaders were. So they were regarded as a backward people who could be treated as the invaders liked. Little changed in attitudes in the ensuing years. This was partly due to a widespread belief that the Aboriginal race would simply die out.

Despite Australia's troubled past on indigenous matters and fears from government on the implications of a treaty, of financial compensation, or of official recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty over Australian lands, change can be sparked. Many agree that a pressing need is the establishment of a national representative body allowing Aborigines to make their own decisions on matters affecting them.

FACT SHEET

Canada's Pipeline: Issues of American Sovereignty Over Land Use

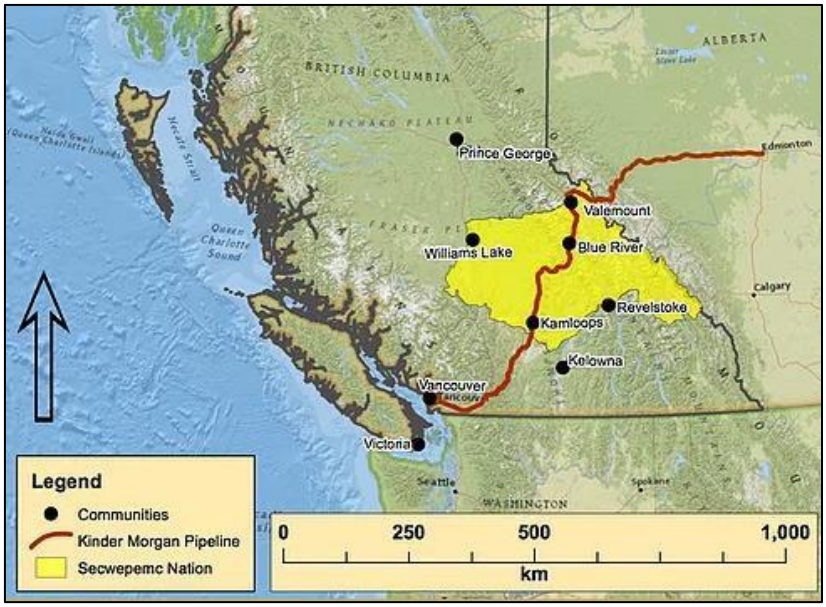
Source: Alicia Kroemer, *Minority and Indigenous Trends 2018,* Minority Rights Group International

In Canada, indigenous communities are facing an uphill battle against the construction of an oil pipeline on their homelands. The pipeline would carry crude and refined oil from Alberta to the west coast for export to global markets. Despite court challenges from many indigenous nations, the project has been approved by Canada's government. Tribal representatives claim the government has not properly advised the communities who would be most affected by the pipeline. They claim that these actions violate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The pipeline will go directly over Secwepemc land, which is home to over 10,000 people. The Secwepemc (pronounced suh-Wep-muhc) people occupy a vast territory of the interior of British Columbia. This traditional territory stretches from the Columbia River valley along the Rocky Mountains, west to the Fraser River. Most Secwepemc people live in the river valleys. The traditional Secwepemc lived as a self-governing nation grouped into bands.

The Kinder Morgan Pipeline Project is being built without the consent from the Secwepemc people. Critics accuse the Canadian government for stating its commitment to indigenous peoples, but behind closed doors are not true to their word. In addition to conflict over land use, tribal leaders are concerned about risks to the environment such as potential oil leaks and spills.

The struggle for tribal rights and recognition of tribal sovereignty is similar to other indigenous peoples in North America. Canadian Indians were displaced from their native territories as European settlers moved into Canada. Tensions have continued in recent years as new developments have been constructed in territory traditionally belonging to tribal communities. For example, the controversial, multimillion-dollar Sun Peaks ski resort was built on Mount Morrissey, which is sacred land to the Secwepemc people. The Kinder Morgan Pipeline represents another chapter in a long history of tribal sovereignty conflicts.



FACT SHEET

China’s Tibetan Indigenous Peoples

Source: Minority Groups International Report, 2018

Tibetans are composed of a number of ethnic groups sharing cultural similarities. Some of these include the Ü-Tsang, the Drokpa nomads, and the Khambas. Tibetans comprise roughly 90 per cent of the population of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Land reforms and the loss of traditional power led to unrest in the mid-1950s. The uprisings were brutally suppressed. Within a week the Dalai Lama, political and spiritual leader of Tibet, fled to India where he and the Tibetan Government in Exile remain to this day. Successive waves of Tibetan refugees have followed.

Thousands of monasteries and cultural sites were destroyed by the Red Guards, sacred books were burned, and thousands of monks were imprisoned or killed. Today, Chinese authorities have embarked on a vast program of economic development for Tibet. But ill-treatment and restrictions on religious or cultural expression have continued. Following lengthy investigations by Human Rights Watch, it was revealed that Chinese forces violated international law. Tibetans are left out of employment because the Chinese government refuses to allow the use of the Tibetan language.

In the last few years, China forcibly relocated over 2 million Tibetans. At the same time, travel restrictions imposed on Tibetans have resulted in a near-complete restriction on the freedom of movement. Such restrictions discriminate against Tibetans and directly target their religious and cultural rights. Arbitrary detention, disappearance, and deaths in custody of Tibetans remain a serious concern.

FACT SHEET

Bolivia’s Indigenous Peoples Seek Stronger Sovereignty

Source: Alicia Kroemer, Minority and Indigenous Trends 2018, Minority Rights Group International

The Aymara and Quechua make up the majority of Bolivia’s indigenous peoples, totaling 3.5 million in a recent census. They also make up the majority of the highland Bolivian population. Aymara and Quechua people share many cultural practices, living in rural areas and making their living as small farmers.

Aymara and Quechua peoples in Bolivia’s highlands were greatly affected by the Bolivian government’s decision to redistribute much of their lands in the last century. But now, Aymara and Quechua people have become active in local and national politics. They have also been involved in the mass protest marches against Bolivia’s treatment of indigenous people.

Today, the Aymara and Quechua people have been recognized in the Bolivian Constitution which provides indigenous people parliamentary representation.
The current president himself, Evo Morales, was born in an Aymara-speaking home.

After nationalizing the country’s oil and natural gas fields using the Bolivian army, President Morales used tax revenue for social programs that helped lift nearly a fifth of the population from poverty. Recent agrarian (agricultural) reform laws have helped to redistribute an increasing amount of land back to indigenous communities, although communities still feel that a great deal more could be done.

Once a hero to native peoples, Evo Morales faces growing opposition from the diverse ethnicities that made him Bolivia's first indigenous president. Protests are frequent, charging his government officials with corruption and demanding he step down from office.

FACT SHEET

Profile of Mexico's Indigenous Peoples

Source: Alicia Kroemer, Minority and Indigenous Trends 2018, Minority Rights Group International

Mexico has one of the largest and most diverse indigenous populations in Latin America. Mexico's indigenous population numbers 12 million people, which is 13 per cent of the total population, speaking 62 languages. The majority of the indigenous people is located in the southern regions of Mexico in states such as Oaxaca, Chiapas, Yucatán, and Guerrero.

Mexican government leaders have wanted to integrate indigenous people into Mexican society, but such programs have devalued indigenous languages, cultures and sovereignty. Officially, Mexico's indigenous communities are also protected by Mexican law, but many indigenous communities have even been discriminated against.

Many indigenous groups have arisen to fight for better living conditions, education, health services, fair wages, political representation, and the protection of local environments. They call for protection of communal land and self-rule. Several years ago, indigenous groups took over 38 towns in the state of Chiapas and held large demonstrations across Mexico.

Some indigenous organizations have demanded autonomous (self-governing) regions for indigenous populations. In effect, this would have established another level of government at a regional level. Autonomy would allow indigenous peoples greater control over their land and resources. The Mexican government signed the San Andres Accords, which guaranteed land rights and autonomy, but later refused to implement the agreement.

Today, an estimated two-thirds of the indigenous population live in poor, small communities in the least developed parts of the country. About half of indigenous people lack electricity and running water. Many indigenous communities regularly experience shortages of medicines and food. Child mortality is as high as 20 per cent!

FACT SHEET

Sami Struggle Over Land Rights

Source: Reuters, January, 2017

The indigenous Sami people in northern Sweden took a step toward self-determination recently when the government gave them full control of reindeer herding for the first time. Now the people, once known as Lapps, face a far more crucial battle — for rights to land they have used for thousands of years. This is a struggle that has raised complex questions about traditional land use and the north's vast mineral wealth.

The Sami parliament gained authority over such issues as local borders and compensation for losses to predators. These decisions were once made by non-Sami officials in federal buildings a thousand kilometers to the south. The Sami parliament, until now just an advisory body, has jurisdiction over affairs specific to Sami society. However, Sweden must set out clearly what herding, fishing, and hunting rights that the Sami deserve to the land they have walked for generations.

The Sami, who herd Sweden's 240,000 reindeer, need access to large swaths of the north so they can move their animals to ensure a proper supply of food. It has proven tough even to define "traditional" land, since until recent generations, Sami herders were nomads who followed their animals through the northlands of Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia. The Sami realize that if it doesn't turn around, they will stand one day without any land rights at all.

Many of the claims center on lands taken by the Swedish kings during the early settlement of Lapland. The Sami Land Movement claims this seizure violated the rights of Sami families who were tax-paying owners of much of that territory. Last month, a claim for such land went to the courts. The decision may force the Swedish government to set out clear guidelines at last.

Native groups may also have resource rights on traditional lands. Sweden's mineral resources include an iron ore operation in Kiruna, the world's biggest underground mine. Concerns of mining companies about potential consequences has led the Swedish government to repeatedly stall.

FACT SHEET

The Tuareg: A Nation Without Borders?

by Patricio Asfura-Heim, *CNA Strategic Studies Conference Report,* 2018

The Tuareg are an ethnic branch of the Berbers but also have members of Arab and black African ancestry. They are a stateless people with their own language and culture, spread across several countries in central Sahara and the Sahel.
They are descendants of the tribes who resisted the Arab conquest of North Africa by retreating into the desert and mountain strongholds in Mali, Niger, and Algeria. Until the 20th century, they remained largely nomadic, and made their living controlling the caravan trade across the Sahara.

The Tuareg are a culturally unique people. An ethnic branch of the Berbers, the Tuareg are culturally and linguistically unique. Despite strong tribal and caste divisions, they maintain a strong sense of identity and shared history. Their total population, which is spread across several countries, is estimated to be between 1.2 and 3 million members.

The Tuareg have legitimate grievances as other minority groups in the region. Historically, the Tuareg have had poor relations with governments. They claim that they have been systematically marginalized, both politically and economically. Since Mali and Niger gained their independence from France, the Tuareg there have mounted four independence rebellions. The rebellions are a result of fixed colonial borders that have split apart the Tuareg cultural group and the denial of political rights to vote and hold office.

Tuaregs are fleeing major cities such as Timbuktu and Bamako en mass, fearing retribution by majority “black African” ethnic groups. There is a great deal of pessimism about the prospects for a government solution that would alleviate the Tuareg problem. The Tuareg’s complex caste structure and the intervention of outside powers have prevented stable political relationships across Tuareg clans.

Despite their divisions, there is a strong sense of solidarity and shared identity among the Tuareg, who see themselves as very different from neighboring peoples. They assert that government-sponsored development projects have disturbed their pastoral lifestyle and reduced their access to livelihoods. With few employment options, and facing drought and starvation, many find employment as mercenaries.

Governments of the Sahara and Sahel should find means to resolve the grievances of the Taureg because radical Islamist terrorist groups are gaining a foothold here, offering social services to a destitute people who have been neglected by their governments.

FACT SHEET

Water in Wintu Territory: Issues of Sovereignty

Source: Alicia Kroemer, Minority and Indigenous Trends 2018, Minority Rights Group International

Chief Sisk of the Wintu tribe lives along the McCloud River watershed in Northern California. She is an activist on behalf of salmon restoration, water protection, and the right to clean drinking water for her tribe. She has been the leader of her nation's struggle to protect their precious natural resources from the attempts of Nestlé and other private corporations to bottle water on their tribal lands.

"We have had the problem of Nestlé coming into some of our small mountain communities," says Chief Sisk. "This impacts all people. When you tap into high mountain water sources, everything downstream is affected. This affects our fish and it affects our drinking water. These water-bottling companies contaminate half the water in the manufacturing process, then bottle the other half of the water and ship it to other parts of the world. This water will not go downstream."

The McCloud River watershed is an area already struggling with drought, a situation only worsened by the activities of water-bottling companies on Wintu land. If this issue goes unaddressed, the lack of adequate clean water could lead to the migration of the community. The tribe has found itself locked in a continuous battle with corporations misusing their water sources, resulting in severe environmental degradation to their sacred territories. While Chief Sisk launched a successful legal action against Nestlé, another water-bottling business has taken its place- Crystal Geyser.

Different communities of indigenous peoples across North America are similar to the Wintu. They are working to ensure that their land rights are protected. Today, the use of land, water, and forests by a wave of corporations, often with government support, creates a profound threat not only to the future survival of these American Indian nations and their way of life, but also the fragile natural environments on which they depend.

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