



Joint Letter by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, April 2025

In our capacity as Expert Members of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and as the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we signal our concerns on the vital matter of ensuring the full and effective participation of all Indigenous Peoples invited to attend in meetings and forums that directly relate to their rights and interests.

The right of Indigenous Peoples to participate in decision-making processes on matters affecting them lies at the heart of international standards and commitments. This is clearly affirmed in Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and further reinforced by Article 42, which calls upon States and the United Nations system to promote respect for, and the full application of, the Declaration's provisions.

This commitment is further grounded in the Charter of the United Nations, which obliges Member States to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind. In this context, we also recall the obligations of States under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly Article 25, which guarantees the right to take part in public affairs, and Articles 2 and 26, which affirm the principle of non-discrimination in the enjoyment of such rights.

We wish to recall Human Rights Council resolution 51/18 that "...expresses its concern at the practice of some countries, including those hosting meetings on indigenous issues, of intentionally delaying or denying entry visas to United Nations mandate holders or applying additional travel restrictions to them that interfere, inter alia, with their ability to return"

Regrettably, recent experiences have highlighted challenges in visa issuance and access to meeting venues, which place at risk the meaningful engagement of Indigenous participants in critical discussions. These barriers can have profound consequences for the inclusion of Indigenous voices at the international level.

With several important sessions imminently approaching, we respectfully urge Member States to take all necessary measures to facilitate the timely issuance of visas and ensure unimpeded access for all Indigenous participants and Mandate Holders invited to attend United Nations meetings and forums. We remain confident in your commitments to uphold international obligations and to support, in practice as well as in principle, the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in these essential processes.

Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim
Chairperson UN Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues

Mr Albert Barume
UN Special Rapporteur on the
rights of Indigenous Peoples

Ms. Valmaine Toki
Chairperson UN Expert
Mechanism on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples