

SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

#HRC54. ANNUAL PANEL ON RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

STATEMENT ON FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT WITH REGARDS TO ANY BUSINESS CONTEMPLATED ON INDIGENOUS LANDS AND TERRITORIES.

I deliver this statement on behalf of ALMACIGA and Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI). My name is Cristina Coc, a Maya leader from Belize, also the Global Advocacy coordinator for IPRI, an International Indigenous Rights organization that focuses on violence and criminalization and resulting impunity affecting Indigenous Peoples all over the world.

I would like to thank the Human Rights Council for devoting this panel to the impacts of business on the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women. In this context, I would like to reflect on the issue of Indigenous Peoples' right to Free Prior Informed Consent with regards to any business contemplated on Indigenous lands and territories.

FPIC of Indigenous Peoples is a universal Human Right principle enshrined in the UNDRIP. UN treaty bodies have restated the State's duty to comply with FPIC as part of their Human Rights obligations under fundamental Human Rights treaties. Therefore, we would like to stress the following recommendations:

1. Member States should fully respect Indigenous Peoples' FPIC in the context of any business operation affecting them as part of their International Human Rights obligations.
2. They are also obliged to protect Indigenous Peoples from the violations of these rights by third parties, including businesses.
3. Business companies planning to operate on Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories should ensure that FPIC is respected.
4. We would like to request the Human Rights Council to take into account State compliance with the Indigenous Peoples' right to FPIC in the context of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
5. The OHCHR should provide any assistance needed for States to understand and comply with this human right.

Finally, I would like to invite the Special Rapporteur to make an official visit to Belize to assess the situation of human rights with respect to the Indigenous Maya People.