

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

To the House of Representatives

Around the world, indigenous peoples continue to be subjected to grave and persistent violations of their fundamental human rights, including genocide. On 13 September 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a move described by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as a triumph for justice and human dignity.

When adopting the Declaration, the General Assembly stated its conviction "that the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in this Declaration will enhance harmonious and cooperative relations between the State and indigenous peoples, based on principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, non-discrimination and good faith." One hundred and forty three UN member states voted in favour of the Declaration - the NZ government was one of only four that voted against it. NZ is now one of only three governments that continue to oppose it.

The Declaration provides minimum standards of protection for the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples. It does not create any special or new rights; rather it applies already existing human rights to the particular circumstances of indigenous peoples. Its adoption by the General Assembly is an indication of the international community's commitment to the promotion and protection of the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples.

We, the undersigned, are deeply disappointed by the government's ongoing opposition to the Declaration. It is unreasonable and unjust. It places NZ in a tiny minority of states that are ignoring their obligations under international law, and it makes a mockery of the government's claims to be a principled defender of human rights and a credible candidate for the UN Human Rights Council.

We therefore call on the government to support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to announce this in the General Assembly at the earliest possible opportunity.

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Address [optional]

Signature [required]

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Please note: all signatures collected for this petition must be on the front of this form, as the Office of the Clerk will not accept signatures submitted in any other way. The petition will be presented to parliament on Human Rights Day 2008. Additional forms are available at www.converge.org.nz/pma/decrips.htm or from Peace Movement Aotearoa. **Please return signed petition forms to Peace Movement Aotearoa, PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141 by 1 December 2008. Thank you.**