

INDIAN LAW RESOURCE CENTER

CENTRO DE RECURSOS JURÍDICOS PARA LOS PUEBLOS INDÍGENAS

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 24TH SESSION AGENDA ITEM 8: ANNUAL DISCUSSION ON INTEGRATION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Violence against women is a form of discrimination and one of the most pervasive violations of human rights. A pandemic of violence is affecting indigenous women and girls worldwide.

Many human rights treaties and declarations set out rights critical to the protection of women, including but not limited to the right to life and security of the person and without discrimination the right to equal protection under the law.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is significant. Article 22 calls upon states, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, “to ensure indigenous women and children enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.”

International experts and bodies recognize that indigenous women suffer disproportionate, higher, diverse, and multiple forms of discrimination, violence, and murder based not just on their gender, but also because they are indigenous and members of indigenous communities.

In the United States, for instance, race-based, discriminatory laws perpetuate a cycle of violence and give Indian and Alaska Native women less protection than other women just because they are indigenous and are assaulted in Native communities. Indian and Alaska Native women are two-and-a-half times more likely to be assaulted than other women in the United States. One in three will be raped in her lifetime and, in some communities, the murder rate for Indian and Alaska Native women is ten times the national average.

The Indian Law Resource Center supports integration of the human rights of women into all United Nations activities, particularly the rights of indigenous women to be protected against violence and discrimination, and asks that the United Nations take strong action on this issue at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.