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Position Papers

Protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples

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Welcome from the Dias and Secretariat

Dear Delegates,

The following documents are a collection of position papers for the countries represented in our ATUMUN conference on the topic of *Protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples*. We expect you to have read the Study Guide beforehand and hope that you have had the time to research by yourself as well. It is of great importance that you read the Position Paper for your respective countries before the session begins, as this will serve as the very basis of the negotiations.

When reading your Position Paper, it is important to note the central view that your country represents. We recommend that you take note of your country's position regarding what we are discussing as well as how your country would be willing to solve this issue, if at all. We highly recommend that you compliment your Position Paper with your own research. The Position Papers are kept short for you to make your own conclusions as well as the position that the paper reveals.

In order for you to be able to have a fruitful debate, we highly recommend that you read other countries' Position Papers as well. By doing so, you will get a better understanding of the topic and the different perspectives that the countries represent.

If you have any questions, we would like to remind you that you can always write to atumunsekretariat@gmail.com, and if you need any help with your research, we would like to refer to *Questions a resolution should answer*, *Further reading*, and *Bloc positions* in the Study Guide.

Lastly we would like to thank all of those who helped us write these Position Papers: Arthur G. Bendixen, Catrine Lønneker, Freja Grønnegaard, and Oliver Frost. Our deepest gratitude to all of you.

Sincerely your Dias and Secretariat,

Camilla M. Kristoffersen, Dicte Møberg, Lucca Dybtved Kjærgaard, Natasha Singh, Nicoline Meng Aagaard Andersen & Simon Mosgaard Jørgensen

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Commonwealth of Australia

The commonwealth of Australia, henceforth known as Australia, has two distinct groups of Indigenous peoples, that being Australian Aboriginal Peoples and The Torres Strait Islander peoples. Before being colonised the indigenous population is estimated to have been between 300.000 and 1.000.000, with approximately 200 languages, spread out on 500 territorially anchored groups.^{1, 2}

In 1788, the British settlers arrived, initially the contact was indefinite and friendly. Friction developed quickly from conflicts with land, economics, religion, and culture. The British approached with the mindset of “*Pacification by force*” and “*Safeguarding Indigenous’ peoples rights and their treatment as British subjects*”. In other words the Aboriginals lost their autonomy and were forced to either live in camps and be a part of the work force or be driven into the bush. Today 984.000 people identify as First Nation People, most of which as being of Aboriginal origin.³

In the fight for Indigenous peoples rights in Australia there is a strong belief that the way to work for change is to spread the story and history of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders both before and after the British arrived.⁴ Furthermore, the organisation *Closing The Gap* is working on specific targets that have national agreement. However, 4 of the 7 the goals, set in 2008 expired unmet. Currently there are 17 goals with an expiration date in 2031.⁵ These goals include topics such as health, children, education, employment, housing, prison, and legal rights to land. *Closing The Gap* works closely with the first nation people, attempting to include them in the making of policies.⁶

Australia has strong roots in its indigenous history in its foreign policy. An Indigenous diplomacy agenda was released in 2021 and an Office for First Nations International Engagement established in 2023. The diplomacy agenda and office are both goals reached from Closing The Gap. When it comes to foreign relations in general, Australia has the ideals of a Western country, but a history of a colonised one. Furthermore, Australia is a member of MIKTA, which is an international grouping of Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia, with the goal of building bridges and cooperation between diverse cultures and regions.⁷

¹ Tribe is a word used by the Europeans, thus territorially anchored groups is used instead.

² <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/profile-of-indigenous-australians>

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://short-url.org/1hgxx>

⁵ <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>

⁶ <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/>

⁷ <http://mikta.org/about/what-is-mikta/?ckattempt=1>

Republic of Austria

The Republic of Austria, henceforth known as Austria, acknowledges 6 different national ethnic groups: Burgenland Croats, Slovenians, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks and Roma. National minorities are understood as “*groups of Austrian citizens living in parts of the Federal territory and having a language other than German as mother tongue as well as traditions of their own.*”⁸ The Roma are the most relevant when it comes to the discussions of Indigenous peoples. In 2011 the first EU-framework for the national integration of Roma peoples was adopted. The current framework is from 2020 and focuses on the inclusion, equality and participation of the Roma peoples.⁹

To strengthen the inclusion of Roma peoples, Austria has 6 key challenges they want to address. The challenges and strategies have been working on in collaboration with the Roma focus group, and are as follows: 1) Education - Roma peoples in Austria have a lower level of formal education compared to the general population. While the percentage with a vocational education or a high school diploma is on the rise, the continual improvement of education for kids as well as adults is still a priority. For this there is a focus on inclusion models, languages in education, and programs to help with learning. 2) Jobmarket - The lack of education also influences job opportunities, with Roma peoples having higher rates of unemployment. Especially, in regards to long term employment compared to short term/seasonal employment. Thus, job coaching and improvement of qualifications is a focus. 3) Fighting “antigypsyism” - Following the “home”-migration in later years different stereotypes have been anchored in the majority population. For this reason, the government has an interest in trying to fight stereotypes. Therefore, campaigns against hate on the web, as well as multiple different information workshops based in fact have also been employed. 4) Empowerment of Roma women and girls - The discrimination faced is twofold based on ethnicity as well as gender. To achieve empowerment, preventative work and consulting opportunities are used. 5) Strengthening the organised Roma communities - The main goal is self-representation. Antidiscrimination workshops and further education is part of the toolbox. 6) Empowerment of Roma youths - This is done through positive self-identification, information about opportunities, and education.¹⁰

Austria does not have the best history when it comes to minorities such as the Roma peoples, due to the second world war and national socialism which was both discriminatory and traumatizing. Since the immigrant worker movement of the 1960's more and more people have come to Austria, many of them Roma, to work. On the 23th of December 1993 the Roma peoples were acknowledged as a group by Austria.¹¹

⁸ <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/en/topics/ethnic-groups.html>

⁹ <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen/roma-strategie.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:b556a06c-cd86-4b3d-a492-815c8a1bfb84/Strategie%20Roma%20Inklusion.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid.

Federative Republic of Brazil

The Federative Republic of Brazil, henceforth Brazil, is a former colony of Portugal. When Brazil was colonised in the 1500s it is estimated that between 2 and 4 million Indigenous peoples, spread over more than 1000 denominations, lived in Brazil. In 2010 this number was around 900,000, spread over 278 people.¹² However, a census from 2022 puts the number at around 1.7 million over 266 people.¹³ And thus numbers can vary quite massively.

Brazil is a large country, and the indigenous population is spread throughout its massive territory. Due to this roughly 13% of Brazil's landmass is designated as territories for its indigenous population. However, close 98.5% of this landmass is in the Amazon, even though it is only roughly half of the indigenous population who lives in the Amazon.¹⁴ Nevertheless as a large part of the Indigenous peoples do live in the Amazon, the environmental policies of Brazil are closely tied to those of the Indigenous peoples.

Throughout the former President, Jair Bolsonaro's time in office a weakening of environmental and indigenous policies were observed. Additionally, an increase in violence against environmental and indigenous activists was noted. However, the current President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has given the Indigenous peoples unprecedented self representation. This has led to the creation of a *Ministry of Indigenous peoples*. This ministry is led by an indigenous rights activist, and its mission is to “*formulate and implement government policies that address the specific needs of Indigenous communities*”¹⁵. So far this does seem to be working, as many policies from Bolsonaro's time have been rolled back.¹⁶

Even as the government tries to protect the Indigenous peoples better, there are still plenty of issues. Many companies operate illegal mines in indigenous territories. Beside encroaching on indigenous territories, these mines also pollute the environment around them. Furthermore, Brazil does suffer from problems with deforestation in the Amazon. This is a significant problem, as Brazil is home to more uncontacted Indigenous peoples than anywhere else in the world, with 100 of these groups existing in the Amazon. These people can for obvious reasons not represent themselves or contact activists if illegal actions take place on their territories.^{17 18}

Under Lula da Silva Brazil will likely tend to work with other countries who are progressive, when it comes to the rights of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, Brazil is a country who can work with more or less every country in the world, and who has placed themselves as a nearly neutral actor in global politics. Brazil stands firmly with the rights of Indigenous peoples, however measures to help against illegal actions are needed. Additionally, measures which do not interfere much with the economy will be greatly appreciated by Brazil.

¹² https://pib.socioambiental.org/en/Who_are_they%3F

¹³ <https://iwgia.org/en/brazil/5378-iw-2024-brazil.html>

¹⁴ www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/brazilian

¹⁵ <https://iwgia.org/en/brazil/5378-iw-2024-brazil.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/brazilian

People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China, henceforth China, officially recognises 56 ethnic groups but rejects the international classification of Indigenous peoples despite supporting the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples* of 2007. Since the founding of China in 1949, ethnic governance has been framed through a model of socialist unity and regional national autonomy, and it was institutionalised by the 1984 *Law on Regional National Autonomy*. This policy establishes a legal framework for minority nationalities, creating autonomous regions that facilitate local governance and the preservation of distinct languages and cultures. These regions, including Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang, encompass approximately 64% of China's total land area. However, China's government still maintains strong central control.^{19, 20}

Contemporary challenges to the protection of indigenous rights in China are most visible in regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang where state policies prioritise national integration over cultural autonomy. In Tibet, recent education reforms have expanded state-run boarding schools for children as young as four years old, replacing the Tibetan language with Mandarin Chinese as the primary medium of instruction. Critics argue that this system accelerates linguistic assimilation and weakens community bonds, while Beijing frames it as essential for equal educational opportunity and economic mobility within a Mandarin-dominant state.²¹

In Xinjiang, the government has pursued an intensive security campaign targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim minorities since 2014. Measures include mass detention in so-called 'vocational education and training centres', pervasive surveillance, restrictions on religious expression, coerced labour schemes, and policies altering demographic patterns. Numerous scholars and human rights organisations contend that these practices violate international legal norms and may constitute crimes against humanity - or even genocide under some interpretations. China rejects these allegations, characterising its actions as legitimate counter-terrorism, deradicalisation, and poverty alleviation measures necessary for social stability.²²

China's approach to indigenous rights is state-centric, emphasising sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity over collective rights. In contrast to settler-colonial states, like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where Indigenous peoples are legally recognised and granted land and governance rights, China categorises its minorities as ethnic groups within a unitary state. This classification subjects cultural protections to policies aimed at assimilation. China's model closely resembles that of multi-ethnic centralised states, such as Russia and Vietnam, which prioritise state authority over claims of self-determination.

¹⁹ <https://iwgia.org/en/china/5662-iw-2025-china.html>

²⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/28/china-draft-ethnic-unity-law-tightens-ideological-control>

²¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-68492043>

²² <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights>

Arab Republic of Egypt

The Arab Republic of Egypt, henceforth Egypt, has a long history of being a colonised state, most notably under The Roman Empire, The Byzantine Empire, The Ottoman Empire, the French Empire, and the British Empire. Essentially, Egypt has functioned as a colony from 27 BCE^{23, 24} until 1922,²⁵ where the state gained its independence and broke away from the British Empire to form its own sovereign state.

Egypt is home to many religious and ethnic minorities that the Egyptian state discriminates against. By law, the religion an individual practices must be stated on their national identification, but only the three main abrahamic religions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism) are approved by the Egyptian state. This creates difficulty for indigenous groups practicing their own religions when pertaining to identification, such as drivers' licences, passports, and birth certificates, resulting in hundreds of undocumented indigenous children every year. This also creates an opportunity for the state of Egypt to lawfully discriminate against groups that do not follow the religions of the state, which in turn green-lights harassment and hate-crimes of these minorities with little to no repercussions.²⁶

The indigenous Nubian minority in Southern Egypt faced massive displacement when the state constructed dams along the river Nile. This happened due to thousands of years of history supporting the idea of the Nubian minority as lesser than the Egyptian minority, mainly caused by 'Nubian' being synonymous with 'slave' in earlier Egyptian mindsets. Under the 2014 constitution of Egypt, it is recognised as a right that those displaced by construction may return to their lands afterwards. Despite this, since the adoption of the 2014 constitution, complications have risen as the government of Egypt has been selling indigenous land to companies and using it for military endeavours at an alarming degree. Compensation has been given to the indigenous Nubians, though the process of consenting to and accepting the compensation was done unfairly by not allowing the Nubian people to make an informed choice in accepting the compensation allotted to them.²⁷

Today, Egypt still carries out many of their discriminatory behaviours towards indigenous minorities, but they have shown the capacity for change. In an effort to make reparations after displacing many indigenous communities to establish national parks and protected areas, the Egyptian Ministry of Environment, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) are partnering to promote the inclusion of Indigenous people in conserving protected areas that were originally indigenous lands.²⁸

²³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Egypt/The-Ottomans-1517-1798>

²⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Roman-Empire>

²⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Egypt/From-the-French-to-the-British-occupation-1798-1882>

²⁶ <https://minorityrights.org/mrg-urges-action-on-minority-and-indigenous-rights-in-egypt/>

²⁷ <https://minorityrights.org/communities/nubians/>

²⁸ <https://www.undp.org/egypt/stories/preserving-egypts-natural-and-cultural-heritage-embracing-egypts-local-tribal-communities-and-protected-areas>

Republic of France

The Republic of France, henceforth known as France, has a long history as a colonial power. Through the 16th and 18th centuries, France had multiple overseas territories, especially throughout the Americas, and to a lesser extent in Oceania. Even though the French laid a claim to these lands, brought more advanced technologies and diseases with them, the French Crown saw the Indigenous peoples as allies, and required peaceful relations with the Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it was instructed that indigenous land was not to be seized under the pretext they are more suited to the French.²⁹

The Indigenous peoples were seen as their own entities, and were furthermore treated as their own independent countries. Nevertheless, the French did continually represent the Indigenous peoples on the international level. This was accepted by the Indigenous peoples, as it offered external and international support, while they were still allowed to practice their own laws and customs.³⁰

While the Indigenous peoples of the Americas were treated less harshly by France compared to other colonial powers, the same can not be said of those from the African continent. France was the third largest slave trader. It is estimated nearly 1.4 million slaves were loaded onto ships, mainly bound for the French Caribbean islands. Furthermore, nearly 3000 Indigenous peoples were enslaved in the French Americas.^{31, 32}

Today France has given up most of its old colonial claims. However, a few still remain, namely those in French Polynesia, New Caledonia, French Guyana, Mayotte, and Wallis and Futuna. These territories are all comparatively small, and none are close to mainland France. Thus, these Indigenous peoples are largely overlooked by the French population and government. Furthermore, French history leads to a belief of shared unity and identity for the French people. This leads to a societal reluctance to acknowledge sub-national communities.³³

Modern France is a country deeply placed in the Western world, and will thus foremost work with other Western countries. However, France does believe in bilateral diplomacy, and is willing to work with most other countries. As a former colonial power France will mostly want to focus on the present, and not the past. It will especially wish to focus on matters, where Indigenous peoples are oppressed and not merely “forgotten” as is the case in France.

²⁹ <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-french-relations>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² <https://slaveryandremembrance.org/articles/article/?id=A0097>

³³ <https://www.climatescorecard.org/2023/04/frances-vision-of-the-unity-of-all-citizens-impedes-efforts-to-address-the-climate-needs-of-its-indigenous-peoples/>

Iceland

Iceland is the only one of the arctic states to not have a population of Indigenous peoples. The first settlers came to Iceland in the ninth century AD, and most of the population has ancestry from northern Europe.³⁴ Though there are no Indigenous peoples on Iceland, the country has still felt the effect of colonial powers, first by Norway, then Denmark-Norway in the mediaeval times, and later just Denmark as a dependency.³⁵ It gained independence from Denmark in 1944 with 98% of Icelanders voting in favor.³⁶

Iceland is part of the Arctic Council, which includes *Permanent Participants*. An initiative that “*was created to provide Arctic Indigenous peoples with the means of active participation and full consultation in the Council’s deliberations.*”³⁷ The main goal of the *Permanent Participants* is to address challenges faced by arctic Indigenous peoples and amplify their voices.³⁸ Iceland typically cooperates with other member states from the Arctic Council, NATO, EEA, and the EU.³⁹

Iceland made, along with the other Nordic countries, a joint statement in October 2023 on the topic of the rights of Indigenous peoples. In this statement, the commitment to the rights of Indigenous peoples was confirmed along with the goal of a universal implementation of the *UN Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous peoples*. The statement acknowledges the fact that Indigenous peoples are still fighting a battle regarding discrimination and land ownership. It also highlights that they are negatively affected by climate change and overrepresented among the poor and extremely poor. Additionally, it emphasizes how the knowledge and practices of Indigenous peoples can contribute to innovative and sustainable solutions, especially regarding the climate. Lastly, the importance of Indigenous peoples being included in the decision-making bodies is highlighted along with a reminder to make sure to include and empower indigenous women and girls on both a national and international level.⁴⁰

Generally, Iceland wants Indigenous peoples to be free from discrimination, the disproportionate overrepresentation, and for them to be included with the decision making process.

³⁴ <https://arctic-council.org/about/states/iceland/>

³⁵ <https://nordics.info/show/artikel/history-of-iceland-vikings-to-early-19th-century>

³⁶ <https://guidetoiceland.is/history-culture/history-of-iceland>

³⁷ <https://arctic-council.org/news/the-importance-of-the-arctic-council-for-indigenous-peoples/>

³⁸ <https://arctic-council.org/news/the-importance-of-the-arctic-council-for-indigenous-peoples/>

³⁹ <https://guidetoiceland.is/history-culture/international-relations-of-iceland>

⁴⁰ <https://fnnewyork.um.dk/en/statements/joint-nordic-statement-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

Republic of India

The Republic of India, henceforth India, still experiences effects of colonization that did not end with their independence in 1947. They left deep marks on the way society views class, race, and identity. While there are some positive consequences, there is a growing discourse in the media and academia that the so-called ‘benefits’ often attributed to colonization (railways, legal systems etc.) are overemphasized or were designed to serve colonial interests more than the local population. While the rich become richer and the poor become poorer, the widening of these socioeconomic disparities can be traced back to the British rule.⁴¹

Culturally, colonization left behind an obsession with being fair-skinned, English-speaking, and Westernized. Darker-skinned Indians still face discrimination in jobs, marriages, and media representation. This social divide mirrors the colonial hierarchy that once placed white Europeans at the top and Indigenous peoples at the bottom. This colorism was built upon the Indian caste system, but it is a direct result of colonization, as the British rulers would often make fair skinned Indians their allies, creating a sense of elitism.⁴²

While the British rulers divided India and Pakistan, around 14 to 15 million people were uprooted in one of the largest forced migrations in human history. In states like Punjab, trainfulls of refugees were massacred. Villages were burned, and women were often targeted with horrific violence. The chaos led to over a million deaths and countless missing or displaced families. This divide is still seen in the rivalry between India and Pakistan today, which has resulted in threats of war similar to the one in May 2025.^{43, 44}

The political corruption of India has simply changed hands and is still prevalent.⁴⁵ Now, the British rulers are not the ones in power, and it is just a few politicians, businesspeople, and bureaucrats. They often use their positions to secure power and money (just as colonial officers once did) using excessive regulations, complicated tax and licensing systems, the monopoly of government institutions on goods and service delivery are all causes of corruption in areas such as land acquisition, resource extraction, and public spending.

For a country as vast and diverse as India to overcome the aftermath of colonialism, a shift in cultural and social norms is required. As well as laws to overcome the corruption and poverty plaguing the country. For real implementations, the consequences of the British rule have to be acknowledged, and the country should be recognized as fighting a battle that has been sewn into its roots through 200 years of colonization. Otherwise, no real change will occur if the mindset remains that India is a third world country that is ruining its own reputation.^{46, 47}

⁴¹ <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/humanrights/2023/07/12/beyond-the-raj-how-british-colonialism-continues-to-impact-human-rights-in-india/>

⁴² <https://brightthemag.com/fair-but-not-so-lovely-indias-obsession-with-skin-whitening-beauty-body-image-bleaching-4d6ba9c9743d>

⁴³ <https://www.neh.gov/article/story-1947-partition-told-people-who-were-there>

⁴⁴ <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict-between-india-and-pakistan>

⁴⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024/index/ind>

⁴⁶ <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/indias-growth-story-being-disrupted-by-forces-with-colonial-mindset-pm-7643427/>

⁴⁷ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/beyond-the-headlines/prevalence-of-colonial-influence-in-indias-bureaucracy-unraveling-the-legacy-54081/>

Republic of Liberia

In the Republic of Liberia, henceforth Liberia, a vast number of Indigenous peoples makes up the nationals of the country. These being mainly Kpelle, Bassa, Grebo, Gio, Mano, Kru, Lorma, Kissi, Gola, Vai, Krahn, Mandingo, Gbande, Mende, Sapo, Belle, and Dey, not counting other African nationals and foreign nationals.⁴⁸

Conflict between ethnic groups has been a long-standing problem in Liberia, though the country has recently seen a rise in religious conflict - a phenomenon previously not experienced. Most notably is the Country-Congo conflict between indigenous Liberians (Country) and descendants of previous slaves and free-born African-Americans (Congo), which began in the 1820's and was one of the most active conflicts in the Liberian civil wars. The conflict was also rooted in the segregation of the two communities, where Americo-Liberians were relegated to the coastal areas and indigenous Liberians to the inland country. Today, the animosity between groups remains and has led to many violent altercations as well as harassment and hate-crimes.

Another conflict between indigenous groups is the Nimba County conflicts, which unfolded right on the border of Liberia, Guinea, and Ivory Coast. Consisting of land disputes, dispossession, and perceived state harassment, the conflicts in Nimba County are hostilities and fights between the Gio and Mano peoples, Indigenous to Nimba, and the Mandingo settlers. Conflicts are also numerous between the Nimba area and the neighbouring communities in Grand Gedeh. These conflicts have existed since before the civil wars, and many of the conflicts of the civil wars were centered in Nimba County.⁴⁹

After two decades of civil war, Liberia is still recovering from the poverty, economic damage, demobilisation, and general damage the civil wars caused. Despite this, the country has stated its commitment to peace and equal rights for all Liberians. Due to the fragile security in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia remained in the country from 2003-18, protecting civilians, advising on justice reforms, supporting the promotion and protection of human rights, and making efforts to combat sexual assault and gender-based violence.

⁴⁸ At the discretion of the writer, footnotes are not included for every indigenous group mentioned. It is, however, recommended to seek more information on these groups to better understand their cultures and conflicts with each other.

⁴⁹ <https://minorityrights.org/country/liberia/>

Republic of Lithuania

The Republic of Lithuania, henceforth Lithuania, believes in more equal rights between majorities and minorities, as they are a people that have suffered from discrimination under the Soviet occupation in large parts of the 20th century.⁵⁰

Lithuania defines “a person belonging to a national minority is defined as a citizen living in the territory of Lithuania who has a national identity different from that of the Lithuanians and who seeks to preserve it.”⁵¹ Furthermore, Lithuania defines national identity as “a person’s freely chosen identification with the nationality of their parents or grandparents, based on the totality of its characteristic features – culture, language, traditions, customs – or at least one of these features.”⁵² In 2021, the national minorities were counted and the most dominant minorities were Poles, Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians.⁵³ For these minorities, improvements have been made with a new legal framework adopted in November 2024. The law ensures that their native language can be freely used in public and private. Moreover, they have the right to learn their native language in schools, and schools must provide teachers who are able to teach those languages. Although improvements have been made, and surveys made by the Euromonitor shows that Lithuanians generally aren’t discriminative, the survey also shows that the Roma are still being discriminated against by the Lithuanian people.⁵⁴

To address the lack of inclusion of the Roma, Lithuania has made an *Action Plan For Roma Inclusion 2023*. The plan has eight steps to implement and improve the life of Roma in Lithuania. Some of those are: a) ‘Combat AntiGypsism and Roma discrimination’, which includes, but is not limited to, cooperation with employment services to combat discrimination on the labor market, and b) ‘Poverty reduction’, where the goal is to reduce the level of poverty in the Roma community from 96% to 80% by e.g. increasing the coverage of the unemployment social insurance system.⁵⁵

Generally, Lithuania supports the rights of minorities and Indigenous peoples by being a part of international organisations such as the European Council. They are also at the forefront against discrimination, according to the Euromonitor, and have extensive plans for lowering discrimination against the Roma people.

⁵⁰ <https://za.mfa.lt/en/welcome-to-lithuania/visit-lithuania/history/93>

⁵¹ https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/2407819/lithuania-passes-national-minorities-law-after-15-year-break?srsId=AfmBOoqRm8H6_-ENZBiLYnNGbDeO_dpMZm7V0arUIgEwn8QCySSX85d

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ <https://tmde.lrv.lt/en/national-minorities/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Lithuania.pdf>

⁵⁵ <https://tmde.lrv.lt/media/viesa/saugykla/2024/2/EwBBKB9fONY.pdf>

United Mexican States

The ancient civilization of the United Mexican States, henceforth Mexico, lasted about 2500 years. In the early 15th century, a group of Spanish explorers, with orders to colonize Mexico, arrived on the newly discovered continent. After a short period of trying to make allies and enemies, the siege broke out, and the Spanish and their indigenous allies were ruthless. Houses burned, temples destroyed, the Aztecs were subdued street by street, slaughtered indiscriminately.⁵⁶

After the fall of the Aztec Empire, the Spaniards called their new land ‘viceroyalty of new Spain’. And they ruled there for the next 300 years. All the properties belonging to the indigenous tribes were destroyed, such as buildings and temples. The materials were reused for new buildings in the colonial city. The colonizers employed the workers with low pay and made them dependent on the colonizers.⁵⁷

In addition to the forced labor and terrible work conditions, Indigenous peoples suffered from the diseases brought by the Europeans. These diseases, such as smallpox, measles, and typhus, reduced the population by an estimated 6 to 18 million people. Black slaves were brought in to replace the decimated population, creating a lot of different new ethnic groups with each racial mix having a different name and position in the societal hierarchy. Not only that, but the arrival of the catholic church also brought upon a whole new culture to ‘New Spain’. This intermingling resulted in the widespread disappearance of many aspects of Mesoamerican culture. Persecution of indigenous priests, destruction of temples and statues to native gods, among other things, caused the development of a completely new culture at the cost of the destruction of an old one.⁵⁸

Many Indigenous communities in Mexico live without access to clean water, electricity, or basic sanitation. More than 70% of the indigenous population lives in poverty, and nearly 30% face conditions of extreme poverty. These are the descendants of peoples who flourished on the land long before Spanish colonization in the 1500s. The arrival of the Spaniards not only took their land but also established systems of racism and discrimination that continue in modern society. The colonial caste system, which ranked individuals by race and ancestry, created a social hierarchy that still shapes Mexico today. This ongoing marginalization has been reinforced by the persistence of anti-indigenous prejudice and by political and social structures that have upheld racial inequality throughout the country’s history.⁵⁹

There are separate ways Mexico could go about solving their issues. One might consider formal recognition and reparations focusing on Mexico’s infrastructure and socioeconomic issues such as poverty as well as access to water, sanitation, and electricity.

⁵⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aztec/Establishment-of-the-Aztec-empire>

⁵⁷ https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/reinounido/images/stories/PDF/Meet_Mexico/9_meetmexico-colonialmexico.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://exhibits.lib.arizona.edu/exhibits/show/morales-de-escarcega/colonial-period>

⁵⁹ <https://pressbooks.claremont.edu/id001po12/chapter/vivis-chapter/>

Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, henceforth Nigeria, is a West African state whose historical development was significantly shaped by foreign intervention. Beginning in the 15th century, the region was drawn into the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, first by Portuguese traders and later by British involvement, often in cooperation with local groups.⁶⁰ This early contact led to formal British colonial rule in the mid-19th century lasting until Nigeria gained independence on October 1st 1960. Colonial administration introduced Western education, the English language, and Christianity, but these changes were distributed unevenly; they spread more rapidly in the southern regions than in the Muslim north, where traditional institutions remained dominant. This uneven development created regional inequalities that contributed to political tensions in the postcolonial era.⁶¹

Currently, in Nigeria, the recognition and protection of Indigenous peoples remain limited both internationally and domestically. The country abstained from the UN General Assembly vote on the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) in 2007⁶² and has not ratified *ILO Convention 169* (the international treaty that specifically protects Indigenous and tribal peoples).⁶³

Within Nigeria, there is no law that explicitly recognizes Indigenous peoples. Instead, protections are provided indirectly through the 1999 Constitution, which guarantees fundamental rights, such as non-discrimination, freedom of expression, and the right to life, and includes directives on environmental protection and respect for culture.⁶⁴ These protections apply to all Nigerians, including Indigenous and minority communities, but enforcement is uneven, and powerful economic interests - especially in the oil sector - often weaken their effectiveness. As a result, Indigenous communities remain vulnerable to land loss, environmental damage, and social marginalization. Despite being one of the states most vocal about its colonial history and often initiating dialogue on reparations between the government and Indigenous groups, Nigeria has yet to adopt strong legal measures to fully recognize Indigenous rights.

In discussions on Indigenous rights, Nigeria could look to countries like India and Brazil as potential allies, as they share similar colonial histories and face comparable challenges in protecting Indigenous populations. These shared experiences offer a foundation for cooperation in promoting stronger recognition and protection of indigenous rights in international discussions.

⁶⁰ <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/niger-delta-black-gold-blues/12-colonial-subjugation-of-people-land-and-nature-slave-trade-resource-extraction-palm-oil-and-the-invention-of-a-national-territory-kaitlyn>

⁶¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Nigeria-as-a-colony>

⁶² <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

⁶³ https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000%3A11210%3A0%3A%3ANO%3A11210%3AP11210_COUNTRY_ID%3A103259

⁶⁴ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nigeria_2011

State of Qatar

There is very little known about the history of the State of Qatar, henceforth known as Qatar, before the 18th century. Before 1766, the land now called Qatar was mostly inhabited by the Bedouin⁶⁵ people, whose nomadic way of life meant very few cities appeared. By extension there are no Indigenous peoples in Qatar. Modern Qatari history begins in 1766 with the emigration of families from Kuwait who settled in the now abandoned city of Al-Zubarah ruled by the Khalifah family. The country later came under partial Bahraini rule, which led to the British and Mohammed Ibn Thani, later ruler of Qatar, to sign an agreement, which would make Qatar a British protectorate. Qatar declared its independence from Britain in 1971.⁶⁶

Qatar is the richest country in the world due to its oil reserves. However, the country was previously known for pearl diving. The money made from oil is mostly concentrated around a few Qatari nationals. Qatari nationals being the minority group in Qatar, due to mass labour imports from other countries. These workers are subject to the *kafala* system, where workers need a sponsor to enter the country. Previously, this also meant, workers could not leave Qatar or change jobs without the consent of said sponsor, facing imprisonment or deportation in cases of insubordination. This was changed in connection with the 2022 FIFA World Cup, as the system was heavily criticised overseas, and it now allows workers to see their contracts before moving to Qatar as well as allowing a change of employer. Still, the conditions for workers in Qatar are not compliant with the International Labour Organisation's Domestic Workers Convention.

Women have few rights in Qatar and face physical and governmental discrimination, and above all cannot confer their Qatari nationality to their children – this can only be done through Qatari fathers. Residents in Qatar with a Qatari mother and a non-Qatari father are equal to foreigners in the eyes of the state. Women must also seek permission to marry non-Qatari citizens from the Qatari state.⁶⁷

The state owned Qatar Foundation, established by emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and his wife Moza bint Nasser Al-Missned, promotes the use and protection of indigenous knowledge. It has a special focus on the topic of food security and agriculture. The organisation founded Earthna⁶⁸ in order to promote environmental, social, and economic stability. This daughter-organisation also pioneers the inclusion and utilisation of Indigenous peoples knowledge. In promoting the use of traditional knowledge of agriculture,⁶⁹ Qatar also reinforces an implied willingness in bettering the treatment of Indigenous peoples internationally.

Generally, the issue of rights of Indigenous peoples is not a topic Qatar has made any clear statements on, though the state works well with the UN and often takes an active role in discussions.

⁶⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bedouin>

⁶⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Qatar/History>

⁶⁷ <https://minorityrights.org/country/qatar/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.earthna.qa/about-us>

⁶⁹ <https://www.qf.org.qa/stories/make-space-for-indigenous-knowledge-in-facing-our-food-security-challenges>

Republic of Serbia

The Republic of Serbia, henceforth Serbia, is a country with a fairly large non-ethnic population. In 2022, nearly 20% of the population did not declare themselves as Serbs, which is an increase from 2011 where the number was 17%. Most of these minorities are Hungarians and Bosniaks (Bosnian muslims). However, a not insignificant part of the minority are the Roma or gypsies.⁷⁰

The history of Serbia is long and diverse, and, for large parts of its history, Serbia has been occupied or controlled by some other nation. Between 1521 and 1878 Serbia was fully controlled by the Ottomans. After the first world war, Yugoslavia was established, which was a larger country including the modern Serbian territory among others. During the second world war Yugoslavia was disbanded and split between Hungary, Italy, and Croatia, which was a Nazi puppet. During this time, genocide was committed against Serbs, Roma, Jews, and communists. After the second World War, attempts were made to establish a common Yugoslav identity and ensure unity. However, this was not entirely successful, and in 1991 Yugoslavia attacked eastern Croatia and later Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 2003, Yugoslavia became Serbia and Montenegro, and in 2006, Montenegro declared independence.⁷¹

Thus, Serbian history is filled with many issues, and among them is indeed the treatment of Indigenous peoples. For nearly all of its history, the Roma has faced discrimination and exclusion in Serbia. The unemployment rate is high and those employed are usually employed in low paying jobs. Furthermore, the Roma have problems with access to basic services, such as health care and social assistance. It is estimated that routine immunisation is as low as 20-30% for the Roma, while it is 97% for the general population.⁷²

Even though the Roma and other Indigenous peoples face numerous issues, these are mainly societal and not part of the legal framework. In fact, Serbia has a high standard in their legislative framework, compared to the European average, when it comes to minority policies. A number of activities and affirmative measures are done by the government to improve the status of national minorities.⁷³

In general, Serbia is likely to advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples and will also agree to help and be helped depending on the resolution contents. Serbia is part of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (FCNM) in the council of Europe.⁷⁴ This, in combination with Serbia being a Western country, will most likely lead to Serbia cooperating with other European countries.

⁷⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Serbia/People>

⁷¹ <https://balkaninsight.com/2013/11/04/a-cultural-history-of-serbia/>

⁷² <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/mrgi/2008/en/64627>

⁷³ <https://mduls.gov.rs/en/human-and-minority-rights/minority-policies/>

⁷⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/serbia>

Republic of South Africa

The Republic of South Africa, henceforth known as South Africa, is a country where about 1% of the population belongs to an indigenous group. South Africa voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, which was passed in 2007.⁷⁵ However, the Country has yet to ratify the ILO Convention from 1989, which affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples.⁷⁶

South Africa is a former English colony. Since colonial times, the term ‘indigenous’ has been synonymous with the black population in the country. Thus, there is no segregation between black citizens and indigenous tribes within the country. This has led to a lack of recognition when it comes to language and cultural practices. The government of South Africa does recognise the leaders of Indigenous tribes, but does not recognise them as the first people of South Africa.⁷⁷

During colonisation, the Indigenous peoples suffered land dispossession. However, this did not end along with apartheid, and the Indigenous peoples have suffered eviction and displacement ever since. In October 2020, Indigenous tribes allied to regain access to the Table Mountain, a sacred place for their people. The mountain is currently under government control, and when Indigenous peoples tried to occupy the mountain, they were arrested. The Indigenous peoples used Article 11, to legally justify their right to the mountain. As it states, *“Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalise their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, [...]”*⁷⁸

In South Africa, the most well-known tribes are the Koi and the San people, together known as the Khoisan. They have been granted 68.000 hectares of land, in a place known as Heritage Park. Here, they have land-useage rights, and it remains the only successful claim of the Indigenous peoples of South Africa.⁷⁹

Through national and international frameworks, the country of South Africa has aimed to recognise and preserve the culture and language of the Indigenous tribes. The proposal of AI usage in the work to preserve the culture was proposed in 2024. The PanSALB (Pan South African Language Board) is bringing in stakeholders supporting their work to promote indigenous heritage and respect.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ <https://iwgia.org/en/south-africa.html>

⁷⁶ https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:55:0::NO::P55_TYPE%2CP55_LANG%2CP55_DOCUMENT%2CP55_NODE:REV%2Cen%2CC169%2C%2FDocument

⁷⁷ <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/cultural-survival-advocates-indigenous-rights-south-africa-uns-universal-periodic-review>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ <https://www.africanbudgetsafaris.com/blog/south-africa-people-culture-the-khoisan-people/>

⁸⁰ <https://iwgia.org/en/south-africa/5636-iw-2025-south-africa.html>

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, henceforth referred to as the UK, has a long history with imperialism and colonialism across the world.⁸¹ When it comes to the UK today, they do not have any Indigenous peoples. As stated in November 2023 by the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs: *“Our position remains that national minority groups, and other ethnic groups within the territory of the United Kingdom, and its overseas territories, do not fall within the scope of Indigenous peoples, to which UNDRIP applies.”*⁸² Though this has not previously stopped the far-right in trying to use the rhetoric as a means to support their anti-immigration agenda.⁸³ While the same wording has not been directly used in later years, the base idea that the UK is the native lands of the British people do still appear in rhetoric used by the far-right.⁸⁴

Officially, the UK has been supportive of Indigenous peoples when it comes to international politics, highlighting how Indigenous peoples are equally deserving of human rights as they should be universal and apply to all humans. This includes showing support to the draft resolution proposed by Ecuador and Bolivia on ‘The rights of Indigenous peoples’ in the 79th session of the UN General Assembly. In the statement posted regarding the draft resolution, the UK echoed their wish to continue their current efforts when it comes to both political and financial support, while also reiterating the importance of the right to self-determination.^{85, 86}

The UK has also highlighted the importance of Indigenous peoples on the international scene when it comes to their role in protecting the environment. This was done with a speech by the foreign secretary at COP29 focusing on the importance of Indigenous peoples in the conversation on protecting the forests. Here, the right to land and the importance of it was also highlighted, especially when it comes to being able to object to projects that are environmentally damaging.⁸⁷

The UK typically cooperates with other Western countries when it comes to international policies.

⁸¹ <https://themarginaliareview.com/a-cultural-history-of-the-british-empire/>

⁸² <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-10/1377/>

⁸³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/20/indigenous-britons-far-right>

⁸⁴ <https://inthesetimes.com/article/uk-immigration-race-riot-far-right-white-nationalist>

⁸⁵ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjui76JwqSQAxUpM1kFHR6gG944ChAWegQIJhAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstatements.unmeetings.org%2Fstatements%2F11_0030%2F20211112%2Fa3UkguFTYXna%2F4toVnNoEs69N_en.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3wq7M9tx2VX9vDLiUHYeL9&opi=89978449

⁸⁶ https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/news/3rd_C_2024

⁸⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretarys-speech-on-indigenous-peoples-and-protecting-forests>