

As Indigenous Peoples, We Are Resilient

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

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Today, we celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and all Indigenous leaders who have been fighting for our rights. Today, we remember the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations that took place in 1982 in Geneva, Switzerland. Much progress has been made for Indigenous rights protections in the international arena, but too many countries remain behind in respecting, protecting, and fulfilling our rights. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the disparities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Everyday I hear inspiring stories of the ways our communities are mobilizing to protect our elders and those most vulnerable. How communities, especially youth, are relearning and returning to our traditional knowledge and practices to grow traditional foods and medicine to feed their families and keep them healthy. It is the passing down of this knowledge over generations, as well as our relationships to all our living and nonliving, animate and inanimate relatives, that have made us resilient. This knowledge carries strength and wisdom, and can guide us on how to cope with today's greatest challenges and to dismantle colonial and racist structures.

Human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights need to be respected and upheld today more than ever. We know change takes decades. Today, we celebrate all those who put their lives on the line defending Mother Earth from extraction.

Today, we celebrate all the Indigenous activists and leaders who have worked tirelessly to get rid of racist mascots and other forms of dehumanization against Indigenous Peoples. Today, we celebrate Indigenous journalists who defy oppressive State governments to go on air on the radio and speak their languages to share knowledge and inform their people. Today, we celebrate all those who are fighting to reclaim their ancestral lands, uphold treaties, and succeed like Indigenous Peoples in Oklahoma and the Maya Ixil and Chorti Peoples in Guatemala with their recent #LandBack wins.

Hain daa (Thank you) for your ongoing support and for joining us in this journey to secure a future that respects and honors Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and dynamic cultures, deeply and richly interwoven in lands, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expression, rooted in self-determination and self-governance.

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