

How to Use the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

This international document, as well as other international treaties such as [I.L.O Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples](#), provide a different legal framework to assert rights and examine the existing relationship between states and indigenous peoples to ensure that international human rights standards are met. The UN Declaration provides, in part, a new language for indigenous peoples and those with whom they engage to ensure their rights are respected, protected and promoted.

The UN Declaration has already proved useful to several U.S. indigenous communities advocating for rights at the international level to lend support to their advocacy efforts domestically. Such as the [protecting the sacred San Francisco Peaks](#), ensuring for the proper [implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act](#) and raising awareness of the high rates of [violence against indigenous woman](#).

Most recently in May 2015, members of the United Nations made several [recommendations](#) to the United States (and therefore to Massachusetts) to ensure for the protection of indigenous peoples' human rights. Countries called for the implementation of the UNDRIP, the protection of traditionally owned lands and resources and sacred areas, to fully consult with indigenous peoples regarding their land, autonomy, environment and language as well as to "correct the historical injustice and offer compensation." Two native communities (Nipmuc Nation and the Chappaquiddick Wampanoag Tribe) submitted a [report](#) to the U.N. as part of this review outlining their concerns and issues, such as access and ownership of traditional lands and protecting their children in the state's child welfare system.