

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) on Rights to Lands, Territories and Resources

“The land and territories we are living in is a natural blessing from our creator and a legacy for our future generations. And no matter how good the rehabilitation and resettlement programme is, it will never be able to replace the blessings we have received from our land.”

– Mapithel Dam affected Naga villager, North-east India



Forest rituals of Karen community in northern Thailand

Indigenous peoples have distinct spiritual relationship with their traditional lands, territories, waters and resources and they have the right to maintain and strengthen this relationship.

Article 25



Land titling among the Buhid Mangyan of Mindoro Island, Philippines

Indigenous peoples have the right to own, develop and control the lands, territories and resources they have traditionally owned or acquired for various purposes. States must legally recognize and protect this right by respecting indigenous customs, traditions and land tenure systems. Such recognition and protection must be conducted through an impartial, open and transparent process and with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples.

Article 26, 27



An aerial view of palm oil plantation in Malaysia

States must have effective mechanisms and laws to prevent dispossession of lands, territories and resources and forced assimilation or destruction of cultures of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples will not be removed from their lands by force or be relocated without their free, prior and informed consent.

When dispossessed, indigenous peoples have the right to redress that includes just compensation in the form of land, territories and resources equal in value and quality and where possible, with the choice to return. Compensation must be decided with their full and effective participation.

Article 8, 10, 28



Processing site of open-pit gold mining in Itogon, Cordillera region, Philippines

Indigenous peoples have the right to conserve and protect the environment and the productive capacity of their lands, territories and resources. States must establish and implement assistance programmes for such conservation and protection.

States must also ensure that harmful materials are not stored or disposed in the lands of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent. When affected by harmful materials, programmes for monitoring and restoring the health of indigenous peoples, as developed by the affected people, must be duly implemented.

Article 29



Militarized area of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

No military activity can take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent or unless requested by them.

Article 30



Forest clearing in Yeav village of Kratie province, Cambodia for rubber concession

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine strategies for the development of their lands and resources. States must obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before approving any project affecting their lands and resources, particularly related to the use of mineral, water and other resources. States must provide fair redress for such activities and take appropriate measures to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

Article 32



Background pictures:
A Buhid Mangyan boy from Mindoro Island, Philippines
Banaue rice terraces in Ifugao, Cordillera region of the Philippines
Photo credits: Christian E. Erni, AIPP Archives

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