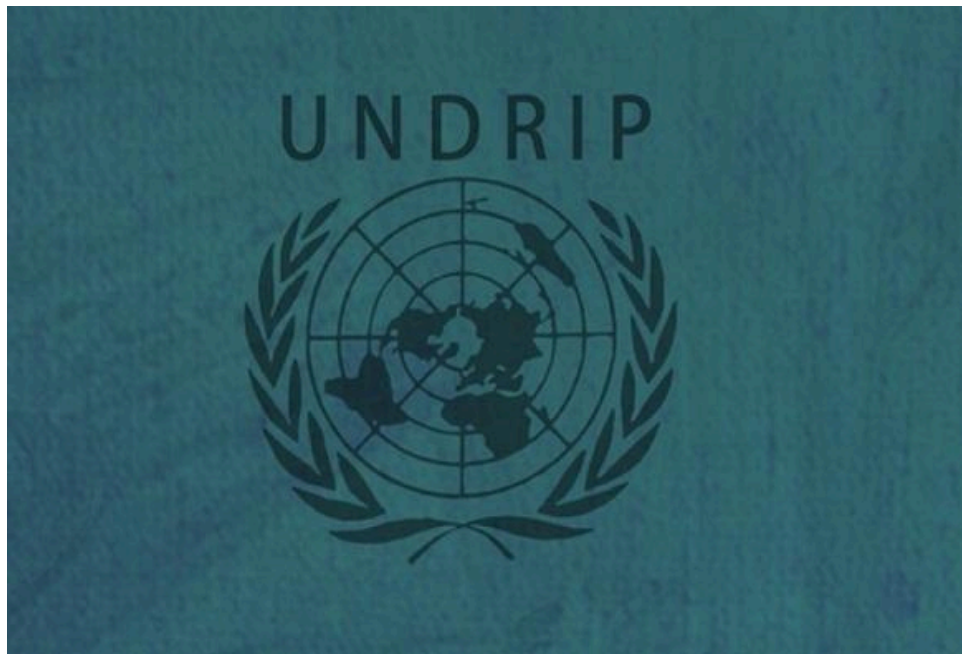




The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



Kate Morris

20 December 2023

Dear King'sMUN 2024 delegates,

We are truly honoured, as this year's Co-Secretary Generals of King'sMUN, to welcome you to our 10th annual conference. The Secretariat has been working hard throughout this school year to deliver you an incredible, in-person conference with a variety of creative committees, experienced chairs, and an overall successful day of debate.

Model United Nations, a reenactment of the function of the United Nations, is designed for students to come together to debate, discuss, and develop creative resolutions to some of the world's most pressing issues that plague our world today. In most committees, students take on the positions of various countries, characters, or political figures to create solutions for both real and fictional issues and crises. We also offer unique committees that explore historical, future, and fictional issues.

In our personal experience with MUN we have developed many valuable skills that we will take with us throughout our lives, such as confidence in public speaking, leadership, and creative problem-solving. Furthermore, MUN promotes lifelong connections, as we are constantly meeting delegates who share similar passions to us in committee sessions. We truly believe that your participation in MUN will guide you throughout your high school journey and beyond.

At King'sMUN, we provide a variety of committees to ensure that we have something of interest for everyone. From very current pressing issues (ie. UNSC and the African Union) and issues in sports (ie. International Cricket Council and WSF) to fictional, yet real, controversies (ie. Barbieland) and issues set in the past (ie. The Manhattan Project). We strive to ensure that there is appeal for a variety of delegates. Whether you have no experience or have been to a multitude of conferences, there is a place at King'sMUN for you!

Once again, we are thrilled to welcome all delegates, new or returning, back to King'sMUN. We hope that you engage in fruitful debate and have an amazing time at King'sMUN 2024.

Sincerely,

Serena Kalsi and Georgia Apostolopoulos

Co-Secretary Generals

King'sMUN 2024

History of the UN

The United Nations was founded after WWII on October 24, 1945, with the overall goal to promote peace, security, cooperation among nations, and to resolve conflicts through diplomacy rather than war. The foundational document called the UN Charter, was signed on June 26, 1945, by 50 countries at the San Francisco Conference. It was finalized on October 24, 1945, when the required number of countries approved it. The UN Charter outlines the organization's purposes, principles, and structure, emphasizing respect for human rights, international law, social progress, and economic development.

History of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

The General Assembly adopted the resolution to create this committee on September 13, 2007, after nearly 25 years of negotiations and discussions among member states, Indigenous representatives, and human rights organizations. The result was UNDRIP, after 144 states voted in favour, 4 were against, and 11 members abstained. The four countries who voted against it was due to land and resources concerns. These included Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. However, Canada officially endorsed UNDRIP on November 12, 2010, and the remaining 3 nations also eventually reversed their positions and now support UNDRIP. The declaration currently consists of 46 articles that cover a wide range of rights, including cultural integrity, language, education, health, and land rights. It emphasizes the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures, and traditions while combating discrimination and human rights violations.



On October 20 2006, representatives of the Indigenous Peoples Caucus, the Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the UN Special Rapporteur met with the President of the General Assembly, to discuss the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples.

Overall goals of UNDRIP:

- Advocate and implement policies to support Indigenous communities worldwide
- Encourage the protection and practice of Indigenous cultures and traditions, while promoting their right to participate in all matters that concern them
- Combat discrimination towards indigenous communities
- Discuss rights of Indigenous peoples to their lands, territories, and resources, and their right to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures, and traditions



Map highlights the countries that approved (green), rejected (red), abstained (yellow) and were absent (gray) in the UN General Assembly Resolution in 2007.

Issue 1: Resource Extraction and Indigenous Land Rights in Northern Ontario, Canada

Northern Ontario is rich in natural resources such as minerals, timber, and hydroelectric power, leading to significant primary industry activities in the region. However, this exploitation often occurs on lands that are traditionally owned or used by Indigenous communities.

Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario have faced challenges regarding their land rights when it comes to resource extraction activities. These communities have a deep connection to their traditional territories, viewing the land as their cultural identity, spirituality, and way of life.

Ten northern First Nations launched a lawsuit against the Ontario and federal governments, arguing that resource extraction on their territories has been violated upon their

authority for over a century. The communities behind the Ontario Superior Court case include Attawapiskat First Nation, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Aroland First Nation, Constance Lake First Nation, Eabametoong First Nation, Fort Albany First Nation, Ginoogaming First Nation, Kashechewan First Nation, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation and Neskantaga First Nation. These nations are asking the court to stop deciding how land can be used without Indigenous consent. If successful, the case would result in massive implications for the Ontario government's plans to jumpstart mining in the north, particularly in the "Ring of Fire" region, to dig up raw materials for technology like electric vehicles. This conflict is still not yet resolved because many Indigenous communities still have concerns regarding resource extraction on their traditional lands.

Impact of resource extractions on Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario:

- Struggle to maintain their spiritual connection to the land, which is tied to their identity and overall well-being.
- Pollution of waterways, destruction of ecosystems, and loss of biodiversity affect the livelihoods of indigenous peoples who rely on these resources for sustenance
- Resource extraction activities, such as mining have significant consequences that include deforestation, water pollution, habitat destruction, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Loss of access to hunting, fishing, and food insecurity among these communities
- Balancing economic development with preserving indigenous land rights and environmental sustainability remains a contentious topic in Northern Ontario.



Map illustrates the location of the Ring of Fire in Northern Ontario.

Further Questions:

1. How are Indigenous communities involved in decision-making processes related to resource extraction projects in their territories?
2. What challenges exist in ensuring genuine engagement and respect for Indigenous perspectives in these processes?
3. What legal framework exists or needs to be established in Canada to protect Indigenous land rights?

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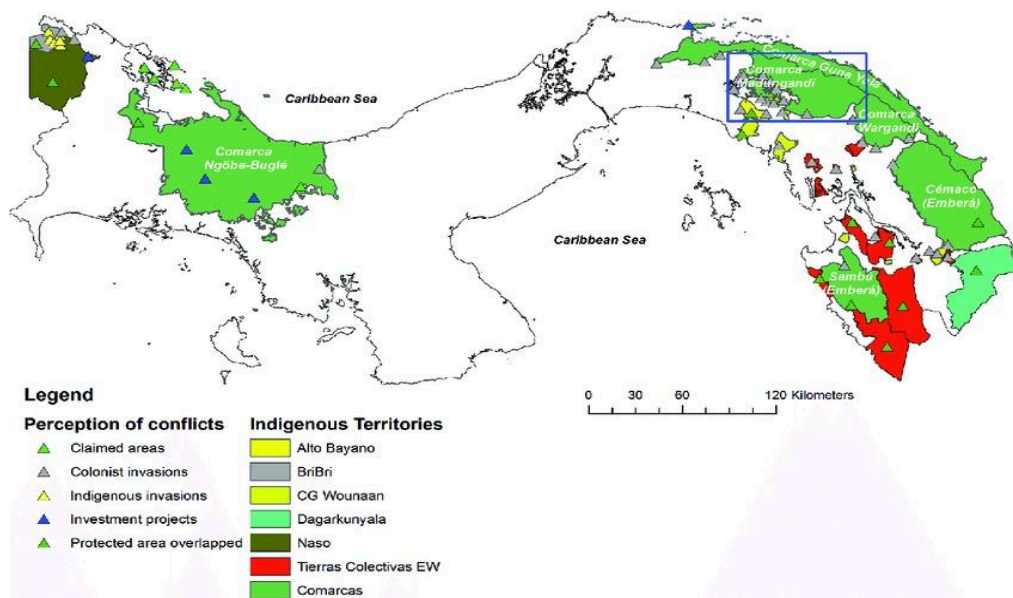
Issue 2: Indigenous Protests Against Mining in Panama

Since the early 1990's, Indigenous communities in Panama have been actively protesting against mining activities on their ancestral lands. The situation continued to worsen as multinational mining corporations gained access to Indigenous territories, causing environmental degradation and displacement of Indigenous communities. In 1997, an Indigenous group in Panama called the Ngobe-Bugle, organized a massive protest, demanding protection of their territories and natural resources. This led to the establishment of dialogue between Indigenous leaders and the government. In 2006 protests started again when they announced a massive copper mine in Cerro Colorado. Indigenous groups feared the environmental destruction and loss of traditional livelihoods. Despite the opposition, mining operations began in 2011. In 2012, the Panamanian government signed an agreement known as the "Comarca Law" with Indigenous leaders which would grant greater freedom to Indigenous communities over their lands. However, tensions escalated again in 2017 when the government approved a law allowing mining operations within these territories without proper consultation with affected Indigenous communities.

Currently, the Indigenous protests in Panama regarding mining on their lands still remain a struggle for Indigenous communities. Indigenous groups continue to be supported by environmental activists and they use their voice to address concerns over the impact of mining activities on their environment and the result it has on their cultural heritage. In November, 2023, after significant protests in the nation, Panama's Supreme Court made a historic ruling stating that legislation granting a Canadian copper mine, First Quantum Minerals, a 20-year concession was unconstitutional. This was a huge victory for Indigenous and environmental activists who had argued the project would damage a forested coastal area and threaten water supplies. The mine, which will now close, has been an important economic engine for the country, but the court highlighted the environmental and human rights concerns, and ruled the contract violated 25 articles of Panama's constitution. These include the right to live in a pollution-free environment, the obligation of the state to protect the health of minors and its commitment to promote the economic and political engagement of Indigenous and rural communities.

Impact of mining on Indigenous communities in Panama:

- loss of cultural heritage and traditional ways of life, forcing communities to abandon their homes and sacred sites creating cutting connections to the land
- devastating consequences for the environment such as deforestation, water pollution and soil degradation, which they rely on for medicinal purposes
- socio-economic inequalities due to limited job opportunities provided by mining companies which result in loss of traditional jobs in agriculture and fishing. This leads to increased poverty rates and dependence on government assistance.



Map of territorial and resource conflicts in Indigenous lands in Panama.

Further Questions:

1. How can Indigenous communities benefit from resource extraction on their lands without compromising their rights and well-being?
2. How can the Panamanian government balance promoting investment in the mining sector while ensuring a meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities and respecting their territorial rights?
3. What changes need to be made in order to actively involve Indigenous leaders in the decision-making process so they can utilize their expertise and contribute to developing environmentally responsible mining practices that minimize negative impacts on both cultural heritage and ecosystems?

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Related Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) was formed in 2015 by the United Nations with the purpose of setting global objectives. It consists of 17 goals created to address different social, economic and environmental challenges faced in the world by 2030.

The first SDG I chose was Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12). Recognizing and respecting Indigenous land rights is crucial for achieving SDG 12. Empowering Indigenous communities to manage their lands according to their traditional practices not only promotes sustainability but also helps preserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems, and promote responsible resource use. We must do our part by being involved and collaborating with Indigenous communities, respecting their knowledge, rights, and practices.

The second SDG I chose was Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16). We must continue to address Indigenous land rights and make sure Indigenous communities have a say in decisions that affect their lands.

The third SDG I chose was Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10). This SDG focuses on reducing inequalities based on gender, age, race and ethnicity. Specifically Indigenous people have faced discrimination based on their culture, so we must promote inclusivity and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

The last SDG I chose was Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11). Understanding and honouring Indigenous values and traditions is a huge step towards creating an inclusive and sustainable city. In order to do this, we must recognize the importance of Indigenous perspectives in urban planning, respecting their land rights and preserving cultural heritage.

