

FACT SHEET ON THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



1. Who the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is

The **Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (SRRIP)** is an **independent expert** who holds a **thematic mandate on the rights of Indigenous Peoples**.

- This mandate is one of the **thematic 'special procedures'** of the United Nations' Human Rights Council (HRC). There are 41 **thematic** and 14 **country** mandates. The HRC renews this mandate **every three years**.
- This mandate was originally established in 2001 by the Commission on Human Rights, which was replaced by the HRC in 2006.
- Using **strict selection criteria** (such as: skills, experience, independence, impartiality, integrity), the HRC selects a person to hold the mandate for three-year terms (renewable once).
- The current UN Special Rapporteurs on the rights on Indigenous Peoples is **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Philippines)** (since May 2014). More information about her can be found at: <http://bit.ly/rapporteur-05E>. Previous mandate-holders include Rodolfo Stavenhagen (Mexico) (2001-2008), and James Anaya (United States) (2008-2014).
- **What the Special Rapporteur is not: The Rapporteur is not a UN employee** and does not receive a salary. However, the Rapporteur receives certain support from the High Commission for Human Rights (for example: human resources, logistics, research and dissemination of information).

2. What the Special Rapporteur does

The Rapporteur's mandate is to **report and make recommendations and proposals on the situation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of Indigenous Peoples**.

- The Rapporteur **works in close cooperation** with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, other Special Procedures, the UN human rights treaty bodies and regional human rights organizations.
- The Special Rapporteur **promotes the different international legal instruments** for the protection and the defense of human rights, most specifically those pertaining specifically to Indigenous Peoples. To see the list, please visit: <http://bit.ly/rapporteur-07E>.
- The Rapporteur pays special attention to the situation of **Indigenous women, children and persons with disabilities**.
- The Rapporteur's activities are focused on 4 main areas (Human Rights Council resolution 15/14 and 24/9):
 - **writing annual reports for the Human Rights Council** (occasionally for the General Assembly) on the activities undertaken over the year or on relevant themes related to the promotion and defense of Indigenous Peoples' rights.
 - receiving and replying to **communications**
 - carrying out **official field visits**, and
 - **making recommendations** to States.
- **What the Special Rapporteur does not do:** The Rapporteur is neither judge nor police officer and cannot impose decisions on a State. Implementation of recommendations depends on the government's good will.

The participation and involvement of Indigenous Peoples and members of civil society in these different processes is very important in order for the Special Rapporteur to be able to carry out his or her mandate.

3. How to send a communication to the Special Rapporteur

The Rapporteur can receive “urgent appeals” or “letters of allegations” concerning individual or collective violations (for example: cases of torture, threats, forced displacement; land evictions, lack of consultation concerning development projects, legislation and policies which violate Indigenous Peoples’ rights, etc.).

- Violations mentioned in the communications can have **taken place in the past, be taking place in the present, or be likely to occur in the future.**
- The communication should be a maximum of **1 or 2 pages long.** The information must be **concise and precise.** It is also possible to include annexes, such as graphs.
- Communications sent to the Rapporteur are treated as **confidential.**
- After receiving the communication, the Rapporteur evaluates the **reliability and credibility of the information.** Then a decision is taken as to whether to intervene or not (for example: send a communication to the government concerned).

For more information concerning the procedures to follow and for contacts, visit: <http://bit.ly/rapporteur-04E>.

4. Official visits of the Special Rapporteur

The Special Rapporteur has the possibility to carry out **3 or 4 official field visits** each year. The Rapporteur decides independently which countries or regions to visit, based on information received.

- **The Rapporteur must have the permission of the government in question to carry out a field visit.**
- During the visit, the Rapporteur **meets** with Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, various government authorities, members of civil society organizations, representatives of UN agencies or other international organizations, etc.
- The Rapporteur then **writes a report** with information on the judicial and legislative framework of the country visited, key issues concerning Indigenous Peoples, and conclusions and recommendations.
- The Rapporteur can also **carry out unofficial visits**, which can take the form, for example, of conferences or thematic seminars.

5. How to contact the Special Rapporteur during sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Special Rapporteur also has the mandate to **cooperate with the other two main UN bodies** working on the rights and issues of Indigenous Peoples: the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism.

It is possible to **meet the Rapporteur** during these annual sessions, on the conditions that:

- you are registered for the session;
- your request is within the deadline for requesting an appointment (published on the OHCHR website and also disseminated by Docip), and you provide your name; and,
- you send/bring her written information regarding matters that fall within her mandate, including allegations of human rights violations.

6. Technical support from Docip for liaising with the Special Rapporteur during the Permanent Forum and Expert Mechanism sessions

Docip provides services during the Forum and Expert Mechanism, which may be helpful for your contact with the Special Rapporteur:

- **interpretation**, and **translation** of texts, from and to English, Spanish, French and Russian. To request interpretation or translation services, contact karen@docip.org in advance.
- **strategic support** from a person trained in the promotion and defense of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and accredited by Docip. This person can reply to your questions and read your communication to the Special Rapporteur. To request these services, contact josee@docip.org.

For more information on the Rapporteur, please visit: <http://bit.ly/rapporteur-01E>.

About Docip: With offices in Geneva and Brussels, Docip is a Swiss foundation working with Indigenous Peoples from all over the world since 1978, by facilitating their access to the international system. Docip conducts its activities following the principles of impartiality, neutrality, collegiality and non-interference. We respect the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples.

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