



CHAPTER VI HUMAN RIGHTS

Highlights

Violence, forced assimilation, abuse. Despite all the positive developments in international human rights standard-setting, indigenous peoples continue to face serious human rights abuses on a day-to-day basis. Issues of violence and brutality, continuing assimilation policies, marginalization, dispossession of land, forced removal or relocation, denial of land rights, impacts of large-scale development, abuses by military forces and armed conflict, and a host of other abuses, are a reality for indigenous communities around the world. Examples of violence and brutality have been heard from every corner of the world, most often perpetrated against indigenous persons who are defending their rights and their lands, territories and communities.

Violence against women. An indigenous woman is more likely to be raped, with some estimates showing that more than one in three indigenous women are raped during their lifetime

Systemic racism. Indigenous peoples frequently raise concerns about systemic discrimination and outright racism from the State and its authorities. This discrimination manifests itself in a number of ways such as frequent and unnecessary questioning by the police, condescending attitudes of teachers to students or rudeness from a receptionist in a government office. At their most extreme, these forms of discrimination lead to gross violations of human rights, such as murder, rape and other forms of violence or intimidation. These forms of discrimination are often either difficult to quantify and verify or are simply not documented by the authorities, or not disaggregated based on ethnicity.

Criminalization of protest. Indigenous peoples have frequently faced detention due to the criminalization of social protest activities. One of the most serious shortcomings in human rights protection in recent years is the trend towards the use of legislation and the justice system to penalize and criminalize social protest activities and legitimate demands made by indigenous organizations and movements in defence of their rights.

Despite some progress, little change. Despite efforts over the last 40 years to improve conditions and to increase recognition of indigenous rights through law and policy, litigation, national dialogue and enhanced leadership opportunities, full accommodation of indigenous rights remains elusive.

** More information and data on specific countries is available in the publication and regional fact sheets.*

The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples was authored by seven independent experts and produced by the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

For more information, see: www.un.org/indigenous

