

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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## **Statement**

January 31, 2022

### **UBCIC, FAFIA, and Dr. Palmater Release Comments on Draft *General Recommendation No. 39 on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls***

(Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – January 31, 2022) Today the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and Dr. Pamela Palmater released joint comments on the draft *General Recommendation No. 39 on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls* to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The development of this new General Recommendation is an important new initiative which will strengthen the recognition and realization of the rights of Indigenous women and Girls, and UBCIC, FAFIA and Dr. Palmater welcome this ground-breaking step by CEDAW.

The draft recommendation provides an overview of salient issues and barriers compromising the Title, Rights, and welfare of Indigenous women and girls, including intersecting forms of discrimination, anti-Indigenous racism, colonial laws and practices, and social and economic marginalization. Invited to make comments on how the general Recommendation can be improved before it is finalized, the comments put forward by UBCIC, FAFIA's and Dr. Palmater highlight the large gaps and discrepancies in action and dialogue around addressing and resolving the centuries of State and non-State violence towards Indigenous women and girls.

The joint submission emphasizes the need for explicit language and actions that underscore the ongoing impacts that colonial law and violence has upon the socioeconomic and systemic oppression and marginalization of Indigenous women and girls by forcibly and violently removing them from their lands, territories, and Nations, thus denying them the full right of participation and self-determination. Specifically, we identify the necessity for Indigenous women and girls to be afforded their inherent right to participate fully and meaningfully within the political life of their communities and Nations, and in broader society at large. This includes mechanisms and laws to

ensure Indigenous women and girls are recognized as full citizens within their Nations and are able to transmit their nationhood, identity and culture to their descendants.

As the rates of murdered and disappeared Indigenous women and girls as well as those represented in the prison systems and experiencing sexualized violence in society and the healthcare systems continue to increase at record pace, we further emphasized that the need for explicit recommendations to recognize and address these issues beyond an access issue, and instead one that is intrinsically linked to colonial systemic violence and oppression, are necessary.

Until Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ persons are afforded equitable rights and protections under law and within every level of these systems, the methods that have been used to erase their very existence will continue, and we call upon the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to ensure these critical points are included within their final recommendations on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls, forcing Canada and all nation-states to be accountable to rectifying this ongoing discrimination.

[Link to submission](#)

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*UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.*

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