

Strengthening Indigenous Rights through Truth Commissions

July 19-21, 2011 | 5 Hanover Square, Floor 23 New York

About our work | The rights of indigenous peoples are a paramount justice issue for many truth commissions, past, current and emerging. Indigenous communities are targeted by violence in ways that are distinct from the rest of society. Yet, in most legal systems, these experiences are marginalized or inadequately addressed. There are numerous commissions emergent on the horizon that will investigate the legacies of human rights violations in contexts where indigenous people are specifically targets of atrocity.

Conference Objectives | The goal of our work on this issue is to begin identifying what guiding principles can help ensure the truth commissions support the strengthening of an indigenous rights regime. The conference will approach the topics as both normative and operational concerns for truth commissions. As a practical question, we aim to begin identifying proper procedures for commissions to effectively document and convey the experiences of indigenous peoples. As a normative question, we hope this conference will be the first step towards developing guiding principles for truth commission to better address the distinct needs of indigenous peoples and support their rights.

Tuesday, July 19

Wednesday, July 20

Thursday, July 21

Identifying Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead

Considering the Key Concerns for Truth Seeking in Indigenous Rights

Setting New Standards for Truth Commissions Supporting of Indigenous Rights

9:30 – 10:00 | Morning coffee - Arrival and informal introductions.

9:00 – 9:30 | Morning coffee - Follow up from day before and introduction to today's topics.

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10:00 – 11:00 | **Truth Commissions and Indigenous Rights: What is at Stake?**

Understanding the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of indigenous rights and transitional justice.

Opening Remarks

Eduardo Gonzalez
ICTJ, Truth and Memory

9:30 – 10:30 | **Reflections for Discussion on Indigenous Rights for Truth-Seeking**

How do indigenous rights for social, political and material empowerment cross into the work of a truth commission? What range of rights violations will a truth commission report on to support indigenous rights? What is the potential of this mechanism to help right these wrongs?

Deborah Yasher
Princeton University

Pablo de Greiff, Discussant
ICTJ Research

10:30 – 11:00 | Break out session on defining rights and types of violations for truth commissions to address.

9:30 – 11:00 | **Designing a Truth Commission to Support Indigenous Rights Workshop**

How can we rethinking truth commission operations to best support indigenous rights? A workshop on recommendations for design, establishment, implementation and follow up.

Break 11:00 – 11:30

11:30 – 1:00 | **Indigenous Rights & Truth-Seeking in First Colonization Regions**

What can we learn from truth commissions in Latin America? What are the successes and where are the failures of the first intersections of Indigenous Rights and truth-seeking?

Alvaro Esteban Pop, Moderator
UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Leslie Villapolo
Centre for Practical Anthropology

Irma Velazquez (alternate Marcie Mersky) Mechanism to Support Indigenous Guatemalans

ICTJ Comments – Milosz Kusz

11:30 – 12:30 | **Truth commissions and Indigenous Rights to Land and Resources**

What is the potential and what are the challenges of land and resource rights as a topic of investigation for truth commissions?

Cesar Rodriguez-Garavito & Yukyan Lam
University of the Andes & DeJusticia

Bartolome Clavero, Discussant
UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

12:30 – 1:00 | Break out session on Land and Resource Rights.

11:30 – 12:30 | **Next Steps**

Where do we go from here? What networks, structures and strategies will take this work forward?

UN Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Issues
Claire Charters & Zaved Mahmood

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Chandra Roy & Arturo Requesens

NGO Cultural Survival & Amnesty International
Suzanne Benally & Andrew Erueti

Lunch 1:00 – 2:30

2:00 – 3:30 | **Truth Commissions as a New Approach to Seeking Justice in Settler Societies**

Understanding the ongoing impacts of the truth commission in Canada and the US as well as truth-seeking in Australia and New Zealand.

Marie Wilson, Moderator
TRC of Canada

Andrew Erueti
Amnesty International, New Zealand

Claire Charters
UN Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Issues

Ester Attean
Inter-Tribal Truth Commission, Maine

ICTJ Comments – Lisa Magarrell

2:30 – 3:30 | **Truth commissions and the Right to Self-Determination**

How can truth commissions support self-determination and other political rights of indigenous peoples?

Paige Arthur
Consultant/ICTJ

Chief Wilton Littlechild, Discussant
TRC of Canada

3:30 – 4:00 | Breakout session on the Right to Self Determination.

2:30 – 3:30 | **Summary session: Defining Principles, Setting New Standards**

What procedural standards and normative concerns should guide a truth commission to ensure it better supports indigenous rights?

Break 3:30 – 4:00

Break 4:00 – 4:30

4:00 – 5:30 | **Indigenous Rights and Truth Seeking in the Face of Post-Colonial Nation-Building**

The challenges and potential impacts of emerging truth commissions and truth-seeking in Indonesia, Nepal, Burma and

4:30 – 7:00 | **Outreach and Indigenous Rights**

Special screening followed by a discussion on the challenges and potential of outreach through film for strengthening Indigenous Rights.

Kenya.

George Mukundi, Moderator
CSV

Patrick Pierce
ICTJ Burma

Sangeeta Lama (Reshma Thapa,
alternate) Indigenous Nepalese
Women's Federation

ICTJ Comments – Njonjo Mue

** Private Preview for Conference Invitees**

“Granito”

Screening at the Museum of
the American Indian

Refik Hodzic
ICTJ Communications/ XY Films

Naomi Roht Arriaza
University of California / Granito
Project Advisor

Marcie Mersky
ICTJ / Granito Consulting Producer

Dinner – 7:30