

Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination

Periodic Review for the United States of America

NGO Briefing from: United Confederation of Taíno People – Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean – August 9th, 2022

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Hahom, Mr. Chairman kena taigüey guaitiao. Thank you, Mr. Chair and good day relatives.

The United States in its combined **periodic report** ignores and renders invisible the Indigenous Taino Peoples of the insular territories in the Caribbean region that the U.S. claims under its legal jurisdiction and obligations under the ICERD.

The United Confederation of Taíno People’s (UCTP) Alternative Report primarily focuses on the Taíno Peoples of Puerto Rico and the violations of the ICERD by the U.S. Federal government and the government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In 2008, the UCTP and other local entities submitted an Alternative Report to the CERD, which highlighted many examples of racial discrimination committed against us. Unfortunately, the CERD never addressed our report, nor did it address any questions to the United States concerning their obligations to the Taíno or any other Indigenous Peoples of insular U.S. Territories.

Therefore, we also call upon the current CERD to not repeat the complicity of its predecessors in 2008, and in 2022, call attention to the need of reform at all levels and minimize, if not eliminate any laws, policies and practices which serve to tolerate, support, and promote the discriminatory denial of our rights.

When U.S. government officials were asked by a UCTP Representative what agency or program deals with violations of the ICERD against Indigenous Peoples of Puerto Rico, during a US Consultation prior to this review, the officials had no knowledge of any such mechanism and could not provide that information. While Puerto Rico is an insular territory, the representative of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, in particular, claimed **it did not deal with issues relating to the ICERD and Puerto Rico.**

The situation of the Taíno Peoples of Puerto Rico, should be viewed in a larger context.

- 1- **How does the U.S. Government fulfill its obligations to the ICERD with regard to Indigenous Peoples of insular territories under its jurisdiction, including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico?**

- 2- **What is the U.S. government doing to ensure that Free, Prior Informed Consent is upheld regarding the use and development of lands, resources, and cultural practices with regard to Indigenous Peoples who reside in insular territories under its jurisdiction, including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico?**

We have provided four recommendations to you in our report, encompassing law & policy reform; Treaty of Paris responsibilities; protection of religious freedom; engagement for dialogue and reconciliation; and FPIC.

Having stated our disappointment to our plight to you after our 2008 Report, we trust we can begin a path in the right direction in 2022, by having you ask the United States those two simple questions we have posed in this briefing.

Hahom.