



ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PACT FOUNDATION

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16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, 2021

Joint Statement of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation and Network of Indigenous women in Asia (NIWA) on Violence against Indigenous women and girls



It is evident that Indigenous women around the globe over-represent victims of sexual harassment and gender-based violence with limited access to justice system. Indigenous women's susceptibility to violence is high due to out migration from their community for work or education. In addition to it, high influx of workers, soldiers and security personnel in indigenous territories have led to increase in sexual harassment and violence against Indigenous women and girls. Violence against Indigenous women (VAIW) is not limited to gender-based discrimination within Indigenous and non-Indigenous sphere; but also contributed by ongoing colonization and militarism; racism and social exclusion; and poverty-inducing economic and development policies. In addition to pre-existing issue of violence against Indigenous women, COVID 19 has worsened the situation and heightened the risk and vulnerability to violence and trafficking.

The practice of law enforcement by states and authorities have been discouraging for Indigenous women to seek justice. Indigenous women have fear of reprisal in reporting their cases of violence and are often uncomfortable to be part of humiliating justice system collection with insensitive and culturally inappropriate setting. Indigenous peoples are not yet recognized by many states due to which there is dearth in disaggregated data. Data and statistics are of utmost importance to seek justice and advocate to end discrimination and violence against women. Despite the thousands of stories and reports of violence against Indigenous women and girls; the decision makers are yet to take it into consideration and act upon. Perhaps, with disaggregated data and statistics to reflect on size of issue it will enhance awareness and ignite political processes to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.

In Bangladesh from **January to June 2021**, there has been **33** incidences of violence against Indigenous women and girls were there were **37 Indigenous women victims**. In Philippines, there has been constant attack of trumped up charges, red tagging, vilification, arbitrary arrest, criminalization, threats, harassment, and attacks to Indigenous women human right defenders such as Betty Belen, Rachel Marino, Bai Bibyaon and so on. There has been brutal killing of young Krabi girl in North East India in April, 2021.



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These are some reported incidences and there are numerous cases which are silenced and are not reported. NIWA and our members totally condemn these incidences and call upon state, UN mechanisms and Non-for-profit organizations with following recommendations:

- Recognize the rights of Indigenous people and provide legal recognition to us.
- Implement the recommendations and obligations that Convention of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) committee has forwarded to each state regarding ending discrimination and violence against Indigenous women and girls in all our diversities. (LGBTIQ, Women with disabilities, Women who use drugs, Sex workers, Refugees)
- Stop violating the rights of Indigenous women and girls in the name of development and political processes.
- Ensure access to justice for violence victims.
- Ensure disaggregated data collection.
- End discrimination and stigmatization against Indigenous women and girls.