



In light of this year's theme “ [Indigenous Media, Empowering Indigenous Voices](#) ”, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya, have stressed the vital role that media can play in the respect for, and the promotion and protection of, indigenous peoples' rights.

The right of indigenous peoples to establish their own media in their own languages is a key right in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (article 16). The Expert Mechanism, in its 2012 study on indigenous peoples' languages and cultures, highlights that media can be an essential tool for the revitalisation of indigenous languages, especially in the education of indigenous children.

The Special Rapporteur, James Anaya, has similarly emphasized the importance of media for maintaining indigenous languages as well as for exercising and defending indigenous peoples' rights. Indigenous media can reduce the marginalisation and misinterpretation of indigenous voices, which has been detrimental to their attempts to secure an understanding of, and respect for, their rights within the broader societies in which they live.

Indigenous peoples are increasingly using the media and social networks to raise awareness about and to defend rights that are threatened by a variety of activities, especially, in the experts' experience, activities related to extractive industries taking place in or near indigenous peoples' traditional territories. Actions on the part of indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, and other advocates have increasingly helped to draw attention to the devastating impacts that many of these activities have had or could have on indigenous peoples.

The Expert Mechanism and the Special Rapporteur noted that extractive industries active on or near indigenous peoples' territories have created some of the most pressing issues facing indigenous peoples globally today.

The Chairperson of the Expert Mechanism, Chief Wilton Littlechild, noted “the need for all parties, including business, to ensure that extractive activities which can impact on indigenous peoples, their communities and their lands, territories and resources do not commence without the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in associated decision making.”

The Special Rapporteur also emphasized “the need for an approach regarding extractive industries that comprehensively takes account of the primary substantive rights that may be affected by potential projects, including rights to property, culture, religion, health, physical well-being and the right to set and pursue their own priorities for development as part of their fundamental right to self-determination.”

Mr. Anaya stressed that consultation and consent, along with other safeguard mechanisms, including impact assessments, mitigation measures and compensation or benefit-sharing, are essential to protecting indigenous peoples’ rights when natural resource extraction activities may affect those rights.

Source: [OHCHR News](#)