

Press Release

New York, NY -- On Oct. 28, 2013, United Nations Independent Expert Professor Alfred M. deZayas recommended to the UN Third Committee that the doors of the Decolonization Committee must also be opened to Indigenous nations including those from North America.

The Special Committee on Decolonization was established in 1961 by the UN General Assembly for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence of Colonial Countries and Peoples. On North America, this would include those Native American nations with Treaties with the United States that include Treaty Territories.

Until this past May, the Decolonization Committee had been inactive since 1986 on the basis that its mandate was limited only to those territories that are on the Non-Self Governing Territories (NSGT) list. Although three times the General Assembly declared a "UN Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism" for 1991-2000, again for 2001-2010, and again for the decade of 2011-2020, no new territories were added to the list. The General Assembly continued to ask all the Member States to redouble their efforts to achieve complete decolonization. Without adding new territories, however, the decolonization process itself acted as a roadblock for independence for many nations. Then this past May, a General Assembly Resolution added French Polynesia to the NSGT list and renewed hope that the process could work.

The Sioux Nation Treaty Council had approached the Decolonization Committee in the past, but this new recommendation to the General Assembly will advance their efforts for the upholding and enforcement of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 made with the United States.

Since 1984, Sioux Nation Treaty Council delegates have consistently held their position in many interventions at various UN meetings stating that the United States has illegally occupied the 1868 Treaty Territory since the early 1870s when gold was discovered in the Black Hills. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 is supported by Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, the March 3rd Act of 1871, and more recently by a federal case in 2009. Now this recommendation will enable the Sioux Nation Treaty Council to bring their case to the U.N. Decolonization Committee.

The report of Professor Alfred deZayas, the UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, can be found at the UN website as GA document A/68/237.