

NAIROBI DECLARATION



We, the Indigenous Peoples of the world, are the guardians who have an embedded customary relationship with our lands, waters and territories. Our ecosystems do not belong to us, we belong to them. We are the pastoralists, fisherfolk, and hunter-gatherers; we practice our systems of ancestral knowledge rooted in our philosophies of life. We hold our territories under the natural law of our peoples, and we protect them for the generations alive now and for those still to come.

For decades, our lands have been grabbed and stolen by conservation cartels under the guise of saving Mother Earth. Our territories are turned into national parks, tiger reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, conservancies and trophy hunting reserves without our consent.

Our territories are sold through carbon markets, biodiversity credits and offset regimes that greenwash the destructive behavior of transnational corporations. Despite being designated as “protected areas”, they are destroyed, handed over for open-pit mining, “green” mining for critical transitional minerals, and commercial plantations of rubber, pine, tea, coffee, soy and teak. They are opened up for safari tourism that disrespects Indigenous Peoples and our ancestors.

Our way of life and defense of our rights and lands are criminalised. Our people are intimidated, beaten, jailed, tortured, shot and assassinated. Our houses are burnt, our belongings destroyed, and we are forcefully evicted from our villages, communities and territories. Recognition of the demarcation and land titling of the surface and sub-surface of our lands and territories is deliberately denied, and the “laws” that do exist are violated continuously. The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is continually abused. The lives and self-determination of uncontacted Indigenous Peoples (peoples living in voluntary isolation) are gravely threatened.

Behind all of it stands a coalition of governments, transnational companies and international "conservation" NGOs (non-governmental organisations). They control our territories because they are bankrolled by wealthy northern countries, multilateral development banks, multilateral financial institutions, the World Bank, fossil fuel and polluting industries, and the like. Today our lands are administered by governments, NGOs and elites. Not by us. **This is not conservation. It is nothing more than a cartel.**

We have gathered in Nairobi, from across Africa, Asia, North America and Latin America. We assert our inherent and distinct collective rights. We shall no longer wait for anyone to recognise them or to give them to us, we are taking them back.

True conservation is part of our traditional systems. **We oppose conservation characterised by market systems**, land grabbing, financialisation of nature, greenwashing by major polluters, and false nature-based solutions.

We demand equality, consent, transparency, respect and dignity. We reject using our sacred relatives and spirits – such as the jaguar, the lion, the elephant, the whale, and the buffalo – and their ecosystem as carbon sponges and biodiversity credits and offsets for corporate pollution. **We demand that our ancestral lands**, including those grabbed for parks and wildlife sanctuaries, be returned. **We demand self-determination and self-rule.** Conservation must be led by Indigenous Peoples, because we know better. **We demand FPIC**, for everything. **We demand our inherent and distinct collective rights**, exercised in practice and not only on paper.

We are against the commodification of our relationships with land, air, water and every living thing, against carbon trading and offsets, REDD+, biodiversity credits and offsets, and geoengineering. We are against colonial and fortress conservation. We are against extraction dressed up as protection.

To the media who report on conservation: name the perpetrators and follow the money. Expose the funders behind our dispossession and the violence inflicted on us, and the NGOs who benefit from conservation funding.

To the conservation industry, WWF, Wildlife Conservation Society, African Parks, UNESCO, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Frankfurt Zoological Society, the International Big Cat Alliance, the Zoological Society of London, Wildlife Alliance, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and Northern Rangelands Trust: leave our lands and respect our rights, else we shall kick you out in exercise of our own system of justice. Disclose every carbon and biodiversity deal you have made over Indigenous territories.

To the funders: stop funding colonial conservation, and support Indigenous rights and the strengthening of our autonomy and self-determination.

To our governments: return our ancestral lands and correct every historical injustice. Recognise our communities and our lands in law. Cancel the projects imposed on our territories. Release everyone you have arrested for protecting their territories. Compensate the lives and livelihoods you have taken and repair the

historical plunder. Comply with national and regional court judgments, and with FPIC, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO 169. You are on notice. Your funders will be exposed.

To the Indigenous Peoples of the world: let us come together in this fight to protect our lands, territories, livelihoods and ecosystems. We have a common enemy, who is determined to exterminate us and our rights and defile Mother Earth. The time to fight as one is now. Our solidarity is our strength. They threaten one of us, they threaten us all.

We make these demands on behalf of those who have no voice: our lands, waters, territories and ecosystems.

Our land.

Our rights.

Our knowledge.

Our future.

Nothing about us without us.

Indigenous Land Alliance

Nairobi

25 September 2026