

Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition ratification of the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations

WHEREAS we, the representatives of the Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition, declare:

- A. We, the Kalash, are among Pakistan's oldest and smallest groups of indigenous peoples with only five thousand people residing in the Chitral region in northwest Pakistan. The government of Pakistan recognizes the Kalash as a religious minority, but not as an indigenous people. Our culture, little changed over the past three thousand years, may not survive beyond the next few generations, besieged as we are by modernity as much as by missionaries.
- B. The Kho or Chitrali people are a Dardic ethnolinguistic group associated with the Dardistan region. We speak Khowar, a language of the Dardic subgroup of the Indo-Aryan language family.
- C. Kho culture emphasizes the important role of poetry, song and dance. Many Kho believe that our customs and language are much more rich, polite and sophisticated in comparison to others. Until as recently as the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Chitral was an independent princely state.
- D. Since time immemorial, Chitral has been a homeland and place of spiritual and cultural significance to the Kalash tribal people. This living landscape continues to nurture, strengthen, and sustain the Kalash, and the Kalash remain dependent on these public lands to maintain their traditional livelihoods and cultural practices, such as hunting, gathering, and ceremonial uses.
- E. For the last century, tribal nations and tribal members have endured forced removal from these ancestral homelands, and afterward, limited access to the land. Tribal nations and tribal members have also witnessed the looting of graves and sacred sites, and threats from more modern land uses such as off-road vehicle use and energy development.
- F. The International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations (or ICRIN) affirms that "Indigenous Nations have the right of self-determination, in accordance with international law, and by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development without external interference."
- G. Kalash tribal ratification of ICRIN will provide a legal framework to build autonomous local government, legal codes and courts with legal jurisdiction over our lands.
- H. The Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition was established after long discussions on how to protect Kalash culture. Our chosen destiny is for autonomous self-government to use our rightful authority under the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations to secure permanent protection for Chitral and other Kalash valleys under the traditional stewardship of the Kalash people.
- I. The Kalash people and Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition earnestly wish to:
 - a. Establish autonomous self-government with authority to negotiate with other nations;
 - b. Establish tribal courts;
 - c. Protect Kalash lands and cultural artifacts;
 - d. Protect Kalash natural resources including its rivers, forests and wildlife;
 - e. Educate our children in the ways of Kalash language, history and customs;
 - f. Encourage environmentally-friendly agriculture and fair labour practices; and
 - g. Work with other indigenous nations to establish international justice tribunals.
- J. The Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition expects that an autonomous Kalash government be managed under a path-breaking, comprehensive, and entirely workable regime.
- K. The Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Chitral Coalition has every opportunity to serve as a shining example of friendly government-to-government relationships and innovative, cutting-edge land management practices by indigenous tribes.

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition does hereby ratify and endorse the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations for the above mentioned reasons and pledges to implement its provisions as quickly and completely as possible.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Kalash Chitral Indigenous Tribal Coalition on 21 May 2021 of the Common Era.

[signed]