

# Indian Law Resource Center

## Indigenous Peoples' Rights

### <https://indianlaw.org/story/indian-law-resource-center-chairwoman-appointed-top-un-body-indigenous-issues>

## Campaign and Advocacy

Terri Henry, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Secretary of State and chairwoman of the Indian Law Resource Center board of directors, is one of 16 experts tapped to serve on the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She will begin her three-year term on January 1, 2017.

Terri is an excellent choice to serve in this important role, said Robert T. Coulter, executive director of the Center. She has dedicated her career and life to advancing the human rights of indigenous peoples and to achieving justice for indigenous women at every level domestically, regionally, and internationally.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is an advisory body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The 16-member Forum provides expert advice and information on indigenous issues concerning economic and social development, human rights, culture, the environment, education, and health.

With more than 25 years of legal and practical experience in the fields of indigenous affairs and human rights, Ms. Henry is a recognized leader among her colleagues and peers.

Ms. Henry was elected to three consecutive terms on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council, including a two-year term as Chairwoman, making her the first woman to ever sit on the Tri-Council of the Cherokee Nations. She was honored by the United South and Eastern Tribes for her work to pass the historic tribal criminal jurisdiction provisions in the Violence Against Women Act of 2013. Ms. Henry has served on the Board of Directors of the Indian Law Resource Center for seven years.

Ms. Henry is an internationally recognized expert on combating violence against indigenous women. In 2011, she was part of the Permanent Forums Expert Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women, and was instrumental in bringing the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women to the Qualla Boundary, the territory of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. As a result of the visit, the Rapporteurs report makes concrete recommendations regarding the necessity of local indigenous juridical systems in combating violence against indigenous women that continue to be referenced and cited by indigenous advocates and UN independent experts.

Ms. Henry serves as the Co-chair of the National Congress of American Indians Task Force on Violence against Women. In that role, she has helped submit a number of joint written statements to the UN Human Rights Council and its special procedures, including the Special Rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples and on violence against women, the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice, and the Universal Periodic Review of the United States, as well as the Commission on the Status of Women. Ms. Henry also participated as a delegate to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014.

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