



FLORIDA INDIGENOUS ALLIANCE, INC.

State Office

8790 53rd Way N. Pinellas Park, FL 33782

(813) 428-0781 Fax (727) 491-5508

Email FLIndigealliance@gmail.com



City of Tampa
306 East Jackson Street
Tampa, FL 33602

Thursday, August 25, 2022

Greetings:

The Florida Indigenous Alliance, Inc. (FIA) is a statewide organization of Indigenous and concerned individual's working on issues of Indigenous peoples human, civil, treaty, and sovereignty rights. The American Indian Movement of Florida, Inc. (Florida AIM) is the statewide chapter of the international Indigenous peoples civil, human, treaty, and sovereignty rights movement founded in Minneapolis, MN in 1968 and currently maintains Non-Governmental Consultative Status in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples

The FIA calls upon the City of Tampa to join the four states and dozens of cities from Los Angeles, CA to Portland, ME which have abolished Columbus Day to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day instead. FIA further demands the City of Tampa remove the statue of Christopher Columbus which sits on municipally owned property. Florida AIM first asked, then Mayor Sandy Freedman and council to remove the statue in October 1991 and then Florida AIM Chairman David Goyette spoke before council. In the ensuing three decades there have been consistent unwavering calls for the removal of the genocidal glorification statue with no response.

There is no question that Christopher Columbus embarked on a genocidal campaign against the Indigenous peoples of what is now called the Caribbean. The Arawak and Caribe Indigenous Nations populations were methodically decimated by the turn of the 15th to 16th century as a result, taking centuries to recover. His own words in his own diary condemn him, "....They willingly traded everything they owned ... They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features. They would make fine servants. With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want." Dominican Friar Bartolome De Las Casas recorded that Columbus hung Native people in rows of thirteen (13) to honor the Christ and his disciples, further that Columbus had his men feed Native infants to dogs. This horrific inhumane treatment of Indigenous Peoples has endured today as the Brazilian military murders Native people defending the Amazon rain forest and thousands of Native women are murdered near so-called Man camps fracking the tar sands in the United States and Canada. Thousands of Native children are being discovered in mass graves in the United States and Canada as they were brutalized and killed in concentration camps called Residential Boarding from the mid 1800's until the late 1970s. The celebration of Columbus's invasion of Caribe, Arawak, and Taino lands is a celebration of the subjugation of Indigenous Peoples and the theft of Indigenous lands. Continuing the celebrate that kind of event impairs reconciliation and understanding. For that simple reason states such as South Dakota and colleges from Utah to Minnesota have abolished Columbus Day for Indigenous Peoples Day. Given the City of Saint Petersburg's claim to be forward thinking on ending ecocide and encouraging a harmonious relationship with the planet, it would be the logical next step to acknowledge celebrating genocide is wrong and instead celebrate the original peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, FIA anticipates the City of Tampa will eagerly change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day.



Florida Indigenous Alliance, Inc
State Office

8790 53rd Way N Pinellas Park, FL 33782

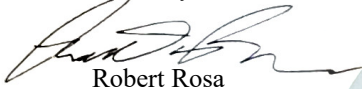
(813) 428-0781 Fax (727) 491-5508



Part and parcel of ending celebrating genocide is removing monuments to the subjugation and genocide of Indigenous Peoples. While Tampa has a statue of Columbus it has no statue to Indigenous hero's from Aripeka, Osceola, Micanopy, Wildcat, Techumseh or Hatuey. Nor is a statue in Tampa to the heroes of Rosewood such as Sylvester Carrier-even though many Rosewood massacre survivors fled to the bay area. So it's clear these statues are not about history but about celebrating and commemorating the genocide and subjugation of Native peoples. Therefore, the Statue of Columbus must go. No other nation celebrates its genocide, attempted or otherwise of another people. There is no statue or monument to the Third Reich in Germany no monument to Pol Pott or the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, nothing glorifying the genocide by the Hutu in Rwanda-yet Columbus statues abound. The time has come to celebrate humanity and the Original Peoples of Turtle Island not our genocide and subjugation

The FIA and Florida AIM prefer the dialogue of cooperation to the rhetoric of confrontation. However, after thirty years of politely, patiently, and respectfully asking for the removal of a statue celebrating genocide. As you are aware statues to Columbus have been removed by the people throughout the America's as their patience was exhausted. One way, or another the statue of Columbus must and will be removed. We again, in the spirit of cooperation and dialogue call upon the City of Tampa to do the right thing.

Sincerely,



Robert Rosa
Chairman



Sheridan Murphy
Executive Director

XC: American Indian Movement National Office
Red Nation

