

COEXISTENCE BETWEEN CHILEANS AND THE MAPUCHE

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The result of the plebiscite of October 25, 2020, in which the '*apruebo*' option prevailed by a surprisingly wide margin, has led Chile into a democratic process that will lead to a new political constitution for the country.

In the demonstrations that led to this plebiscite, one of the most repeated demands was related to the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples. It is no coincidence that the Mapuche flag or the *Wünyelfe* - the Mapuche star - were among the most characteristic symbols of the unrest.

From that perspective, and at this historical juncture, in this debate we ask if it is possible for two nations to coexist, or if this can lead to a conflict like the one developed between Jewish people and Palestinians. Well, although we are aware that the relationship between the Mapuche people and the state of Chile has been complex - to the point of being an unresolved conflict of over 500 years - perhaps the new constitution is the ideal instance to legally acknowledge a problem that, after all, is a coexistence conflict.



Bandera Mapuche /
Mapuche Flag
Fuente / Source:
Agencia Uno

Chile, Plurinational and Intercultural State

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Chile is one of the most backward countries in terms of human rights for Indigenous Peoples. Today, in the face of the process of social and political change that began on October 18, 2019, and recently ratified on October 25, with the triumph of the 'aprovebo' in the plebiscite to change the constitution, the urgency of the debate on the plurinationality of the State is unavoidable for the indigenous agenda. Unfortunately, the Chilean Parliament still does not have mechanisms for indigenous participation in the new constitution and, throughout history, the state government has not recognized this right, on the contrary, in the case of Mapuche, their political decision-making capacity was suppressed through the military occupation of their territory via internal colonialism (González Casanova, 2006).

A plurinational state does not imply the creation of another state in the country, but rather the transformation of the monocultural and unitary state through a new mandate that redistributes wealth in equal social, political and parity rights; one that recognizes the collective rights of the nine original nations and the Afro-descendant people, which are: territory, language, culture and knowledge, identity, political rights to autonomy, self-determination, and indigenous consultation. Collective rights are not whimsical indigenous demands, they are international norms and instruments issued by the United Nations, including ILO Convention 169, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, OAS (2016) and the Plan of Action on the American Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (2017-2021). The latter commits the member States to the creation of an institutional mechanism that will monitor the implementation of the American Declaration and that is capable of responding to serious problems in matters of land and resources, environmental protection, and self-government of the people, including the health and safety of indigenous women and children (ECLAC, 2017).

The plurinational state must also be *intercultural* because the future constitution must embody the desire for coexistence and respect for indigenous peoples, violated by racism and discrimination from the hegemonic power and State violence and its genocidal and linguistic-genocidal policies. The intercultural aspect of the state will imply the knowledge and appreciation of the peoples in Chilean society and the establishment of dialogue policies – rather than repressive ones. This requires a permanent civic and public education that leads to knowing the peoples, knowing their languages, histories and philosophies, identifying their contributions to the

country. The intercultural condition of the state will give common and collective sense to multi-nationality, allowing diverse identities and the appreciation of the country's indigenous roots. In other words, the intercultural will favors the entire population by offering the possibility of developing skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge to live in interconnected worlds with so many languages and cultures, and thus, to be better equipped as citizens of the global and local world. Another great contribution will be to incorporate the value, respect for Mother Earth, and the recognition of non-human rights to water, air, mountains, and so on. All necessary measures to guarantee the life of the Earth and ourselves.

Plurinationality has been installed recently on the continent as a possibility in Bolivia and Ecuador; there are other forms such as territorial autonomy on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua with the Sumo, Rama, Miskito, and Garífuna peoples; administrative autonomy in the case of the Cuna people of Panama, and others. These are forms of indigenous government with various nuances. The Chilean experience will not be a copy of other constitutions, but a genuine form of mandate and government built by diverse actors that guarantee rights to all.

The original nations of Chile have not renounced their rights, they were forced to do so under pressure by the imposition of laws and deception. The Chilean State signed treaties with the Mapuche people and violated them, promised constitutional recognition through the Indigenous Law (1993), and did not comply. A plurinational and intercultural constitution is necessary to change history. The indigenous struggle – and Mapuche in particular – are paradigmatic examples of defense of life, of the land, of cultures, and of the beautiful brownness that makes up the country. **ARQ**

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