# The Doctrine of Discovery & the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

## What is the Doctrine of Discovery?

The Doctrine of Discovery is a legal and theological concept rooted in 15th-century papal bulls issued by the Catholic Church. These decrees gave European Christian nations the divine right to "discover" and claim ownership over non-Christian lands and peoples.

In the United States, this doctrine became part of federal law through the landmark Supreme Court case \*\*Johnson v. M’Intosh (1823)\*\*, which held that Indigenous peoples could not hold legal title to land because they were "discovered" by European Christians.

This doctrine underlies much of the U.S. legal framework for Indian law and continues to influence property rights, jurisdiction, and sovereignty.

\*\*Key Documents:\*\*  
- \*Dum Diversas\* (1452)  
- \*Romanus Pontifex\* (1455)  
- \*Inter Caetera\* (1493)

## Impact on Indigenous Peoples

The Doctrine of Discovery led directly to the global disenfranchisement, genocide, and displacement of Indigenous peoples. It legitimized colonialism and erased Indigenous legal systems, land rights, and spiritual authority.

Despite its moral and legal flaws, the doctrine still influences court decisions in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and other former colonial powers.

## UNDRIP: A Global Response to Colonial Injustice

In response to centuries of injustice, the United Nations adopted the \*\*Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)\*\* in \*\*2007\*\*. It affirms the rights of Indigenous nations to self-determination, land, culture, language, and governance.

\*\*Key Articles:\*\*  
- \*\*Article 3\*\*: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination.  
- \*\*Article 10\*\*: No forced removal from lands or territories.  
- \*\*Article 26\*\*: Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, and control lands they have traditionally occupied.  
- \*\*Article 32\*\*: States must obtain free, prior, and informed consent before any development affecting Indigenous lands.

Although the United States endorsed UNDRIP in 2010, it remains a non-binding declaration unless codified into domestic law.

## Ordo Luporum’s Position

We at Ordo Luporum stand firmly against the Doctrine of Discovery and any legal framework rooted in spiritual or racial supremacy.

We affirm the \*\*UNDRIP\*\* as a foundational instrument in the global movement to reclaim Indigenous dignity, land, and law. We call for full implementation of its principles into U.S. and Texas law and encourage Indigenous peoples to use its language as a shield and a sword in both courtrooms and spiritual forums.

\*\*We do not require permission to exist. We stand in Divine Law and ancestral right.\*\*