

Intervention by Mariana Francisco on behalf of Organización Maya Visión

Tenth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, May 16-27, 2011.

Dr. Mirna Cunningham

Chairperson of the Permanent Forum.

Distinguished Madam Chairperson, in the name of our Mayan communities, we congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson of the Tenth Session.

As an organization that supports the self-determination and ancestral rights of the Mayan people, we come to the Permanent Forum to call your attention to the following:

Guatemala, our country, despite having signed peace accords in 1996, has not had the political will to implement these accords, as evidenced by the insecurity and violence that our families are currently enduring. This concerns us because more people are dying today than did during the war. An example of this is the recent massacre that occurred in Finca Los Cocos, La Libertad, in Peten.

Although our country ratified ILO Convention 169, it has not shown signs of willingness to implement the agreement; we note in this case the government's refusal to recognize the consultations that our people have carried out with regard to the exploitation of natural resources on indigenous lands.

Despite its sponsorship of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, proclaimed at the UN in 2007, Guatemala has not taken the necessary steps for its implementation, and our peoples have not yet had the opportunity to become acquainted with this instrument, which outlines their rights as peoples.

As Mayan peoples, we find no consistency between the speeches and promises made by the government versus its administration at various levels.

Based on the above we make the following recommendations:

We recommend that the Permanent Forum prepare a report regarding the implementation of the signing of the Guatemala Peace Accords in order that we may be informed in the next session of the indicators demonstrating the impact on this country of ILO Convention 169 and of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum support Mayan people's access to the means necessary for the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to be informed about, and prepare a report on, the violence in Guatemalan society, specifically the violation of human rights against indigenous people, including, for example, the eviction of the Indigenous Kekchi in Polochic Coban Alta Verapaz.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum review the situation of our peoples, who continue to be forcibly displaced from their homes, resulting in the criminalization of families through both transit and destination countries.

In concluding this intervention, we reiterate our commitment to work for the Mayan people in unity with all Indigenous peoples of the world. Thank you.