

Joint Arctic Indigenous Peoples Statement
Second Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Statement delivered by Mr. Aqqaluk Lynge, on behalf of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) and the Saami Council

Item 4c: Human Rights

Thank you Mr. Chairman

At the first session of the Permanent Forum I reported about the Indigenous People of Thule, Northern Greenland and their case at the Danish Supreme Court on their forced relocation for 50 years ago to make way to a US military Air Force Base. The supreme court will make it's decision in November this year.

Even before the legal rights are fully established the US is asking to use the TAB to their Missile Defence project that could start the militarization of the space.

On top of this an environmental scandal broke out three weeks ago when a secret report was leaked, documenting the American military dumping of toxic materials in more than 50 areas in Greenland, contaminating the soil and the sea and therefore setting our health at risk.

These specific examples demonstrate that the human rights and the right to healthy environment of the Indigenous People of the Thule district and the people of Greenland in general, are not respected.

Mr. Chairman,

In the Saami traditional territory, the government of Norway has recently proposed a new land management act – the Finnmark Act. The Finnmark Act does not even attempt to address Norway's colonial past. Rather, the Act comes across as a remnant of the assimilation era, as it fails to distinguish between the rights of the indigenous Saami people and the non-Saami population.

Even though the Finnmark Act's alleged motive is to address the Saami people's right to land and resources, in effect the Finnmark Act confirms governmental control over the Saami people's traditional land and natural resources and preserves e.g. hunting and fishing rights to the non-Saami population in the Saami territory. The Finnmark Act violates international law and contradicts domestic jurisprudence.

Even though we focus today on the Finnmark Act, please bear in mind that Saami land rights are less protected on the side of the Saami territory that is today in Sweden, and

sufficiently less protected on the Finnish and Russian side. A briefing paper on the Finnmark Act will be made available to all participants interested.

Mr. Chairperson,

There is an urgent need for substantial progress in order to complete the adoption of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by 2004.

Such a Declaration should be based on the integrity of Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, including the right to self-determination; the right to lands, territories and resources, waters and treaty rights.

The Declaration should comply with the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and the absolute prohibition of racial discrimination and be consistent with international law.

The Arctic Region recommends that;

1. The Permanent Forum urge the immediate adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, before the end of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.
2. That the Permanent Forum recommends, if needed, the extension of the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights Working Group on the Draft Declaration by the end of the Decade, and urge to call for another International Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples.
3. That the Permanent Forum recommends that the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues - before the end of his mandate - conducts a survey on the forced relocations of the Indigenous Peoples from their lands and territories to make way for military bases, or for other reasons.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson for your kind attention.