



THE COUNCIL OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
IN TODAY'S VIETNAM

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STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN TODAY'S VIETNAM
AT THE 6th SESSION OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of 30 indigenous peoples in present day Vietnam. We all greatly appreciate the opportunity granted to our delegation at this 6th Session of EMRIP. But as we speak, some of these 30 nations have been dropped out of the ethnic minority list published by the Vietnam Government. Those nations are still there, just smaller in number day by day due the governmental policy of marginalization. They are on the verge of disappearing.

At the 3rd Session of EMRIP in July 2010, the representative of the Vietnam Government blatantly denied our existence by declaring that “No indigenous peoples in Vietnam, but minorities”. That same representative even managed to remove my name off the speaker’s list. But at the end, I was allowed to speak thanks to the decision of the 3rd Session of EMRIP panel. That is not all, during the periodic review of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on 20th February 2012, the Head of the Vietnam Delegation was asked on the reason behind the choice of words used by the Vietnam delegation: “minority” instead of “indigenous peoples”. The Head of the Delegation claimed he had no knowledge of the terminology “indigenous peoples” since the word ‘minority’ is always employed to identify those are not Vietnamese. Due to no clear definitions from the UN, he asked the CERD to allow him to consult with his country’s linguistic scholar before making the choice – probably in the next CERD review in 2014. This instance suggested that Vietnam has put the implementation of the UN Declaration on hold since then. It is clear also that the endorsement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 by Vietnam has no impact on our peoples. Up to now there are no translations of the document into Vietnamese and indigenous peoples languages, or any publication related to the Declaration.

Now, we are elated upon hearing that the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples will take place in September 2014. By that time, we hope the Government of Vietnam would have clear definition of the terminology and will join the world to recognize us as the country’s indigenous peoples. Historically, we, the 30 indigenous peoples, were once united in 1961 and now again have united and formed an organization named the Council of Indigenous Peoples in Today’s Vietnam, and has issued the following Joint Statement:

JOINT STATEMENT

We, Khmers-Krom, represented by the Supreme National Council of Kampuchea-Krom (SNC-KK); Chams, by the Council for Social and Cultural Development of Champa (CSCD-Champa); and the Montagnards*, by the People's Congress of "Pays Montagnards du Sud"(PMS)** met and unanimously adopted a political measure based on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This measure is intended to urgently find solutions to save our nations from the danger of total assimilation of our races which is being carried out by the present Vietnamese government. As a result, a multiracial leadership organization was founded and named the "Council of Indigenous Peoples in Today's Vietnam" (CIP-TVN) with the specific **mission**, but not limited to, as follows:

"The Council endorses and advocates for helping implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as mandated, in the colonized homelands of the Council's members. The Council not only recognizes and supports the political visions and aspirations of its members, but also champions its members to obtain the rights to self-determination and self-government for them as well. The Council equally honors the Khmer-Krom, and Montagnard people's visions for sovereign nation states as their ultimate goals: Kampuchea-Krom (former French Cochinchina) for the Khmer-Krom people; and former French "Pays Montagnards du Sud" for the Montagnard people. Historically, these territories have been colonized by Vietnamese colonial authorities: on Champa since 1832, Cochinchina 1949, and PMS 1954. With its mission, the Council has been empowered to:

1. Unite and mobilize all 30 indigenous peoples of the Council members within the colonized territories included in present day Vietnam, to do the following:
 - a. Follow up with the United Nations on progress made in relation to the request submitted to the United Nations on July 13, 2010 in Geneva by the delegations of Khmer-Krom, Cham and the Montagnards during the 3rd Session of the UN Experts Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
 - b. Combine all resources and efforts in order to bring awareness to the world about "injustices" and ethnic cleansing being imposed on our people by the present Government of Vietnam;
 - c. Educate our people about their rights as set forth in the UN Declaration;
 - d. Redeem our rights to self-determination and self-government as set forth;
 - e. Reclaim the rightful ownership of our ancestral lands in order to save our nations from the present neo-colonialist Vietnamese, who nefariously plan to exterminate our races as well as our cultures, traditions, and languages (Article 8)
2. Require the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by:
 - a. Recognizing us as "indigenous peoples" and start to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in full as mandated;
 - b. Withdrawing all its colonial military installations out of our ancestral homelands

Kampuchea-Krom; Champa; and "Pays Montagnards du Sud" (Central Highlands), as specified in Article 30;

c. Stop mining our mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, bauxite as specified in Article 32;

d. Stop deforesting our homelands, destroying our environment and wildlife (Article 29);

e. Stop making illegal Vietnamese population transfer into our occupied homelands with malicious intentions to assimilate and/or exterminate our races (Article 8);

f. Stop concocting accusations, false prosecutions, wrongful imprisonment, and terrorizing of our people.

3. Again, earnestly request the United Nations and the international community to save our races from the verge of extinction and consider placing our colonized homelands in the list of the "decolonization territories" so that we each may live as free nations in this civilized human world.

4. Urgently implore all justice- and peace-loving people in the world to help save our races from the planned extinction while there is still time.

Greensboro, North Carolina, U.S.A. 23 September 2012

(signed)

Tan Dara Thach

President, SNC-KK

(signed)

Andrew Tu

President, SCD-Champa

(signed)

Rong Nay

President, PC-PMS

*The Montagnards consist of 28 nations: Bahnar, Bru, Chrao, Chru, Cua, Gar, Halang, Hre, Hroi, Jarai, Jarai Hadrung, Jarai Puan, Jeh, Katu, Kayong, Koho, Ma, Mnong, Monom, Pakoh, Phuong, Rglai, Rhade, Rolom, Rongao, Sedang, Stieng, Tau-Oi.

**Pays Montagnards du Sud (PMS) literally means the Country of Mountaineers (Anak Cu Chiang) of South (Indochina)