

**Khmer Krom Federation at the Third Session of the United Nations  
Permanent Forum on the Indigenous Issues May 10-21, 2004 in New York City**



**Item 4 (a): Economic and Social Development**

**Date: May 18, 2004**

**Speaker: Moni Mau**

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the UN Permanent Forum:

My name is Moni Mau. I am honored to speak today on behalf of the Khmers-Kampuchea Krom Federation and millions of Khmer Krom people who are suffering under the colonization of the Vietnamese government in Kampuchea Krom.

The Khmers Kampuchea Krom Federation's objectives are to preserve the Khmer Krom culture, tradition and secure the fundamental rights for Khmer Krom, and at the same time to maintain peace, political stability in Vietnam and the region.

I would like to ask the United Nations member states who are current investors or will be potential investors in Vietnam to consider the following matters:

1. To consider seriously the indigenous rights of the Khmer Krom people in Vietnam according to the international laws.
2. To take inputs not only from the Vietnamese government or Vietnamese companies, but also work in collaborations with the Khmers Kampuchea Krom Federation to ensure that Khmer Krom rights are being considered.

I also would like to recommend the economic and social solutions to the United Nations that our people desperately need help with:

1. The Vietnamese government must stop taking farmlands from the Khmer Krom.
2. The Vietnamese government must provide opportunities for the Khmer Krom to earn a living. We need them to open the factories in the areas where the Khmer Krom live and allow the Khmer Krom to work there. We need them to open the vocational schools and help the Khmer Krom learn the technologies and skills required to work the jobs in the factories.
3. The Vietnamese government must stop lowering the rice price in the harvest season and forcing our people to sell their rice below the market price.
4. Economic aid from foreigners must be monitored by the international community to insure that it equitably shared with the Khmer Krom.
5. The Vietnamese government must allow Khmer Krom to organize and participate in social activities without interference or monitoring.
6. The Vietnamese government must stop organizing Khmer Krom social activities for their public relation propaganda to lure economic aid from foreigners or to misrepresent to the world that the Khmer Krom have the same rights as the Vietnamese.
7. Placement of "watch dog" groups such as Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International in each of our provinces.

The following are reasons to justify the above requests and recommended solutions:

1. The Vietnamese government gains billions of US dollars every year from Oil and Natural Gas extraction in our homeland and our sea. Hundred of millions US dollars more earned from tourism conducted on historic sites of the Khmer Krom people.
2. Many international companies are now investing in Vietnam and have ignored completely the indigenous rights of the Khmer Krom over those natural and cultural resources. Khmer Krom have been victims rather than beneficiary.
3. Most of the Khmer Krom are farmers. The farmland is our people's heart. But under the colonization of the Vietnamese Communists, most of our farmland was taken away. Our farmlands were used to build roads and irrigation systems or were given to Vietnamese farmers. The Vietnamese government has never paid our people for taking away their lands. Instead they have forced our people to become slave farm workers for the Vietnamese and have condemned our people to a life of poverty.
4. The Vietnamese government does not have any economic development plans to improve the lives of the Khmer Krom people. Most of these economic development plans are in the big cities, not in the countryside where the majority of the Khmer Krom people live.
5. The Vietnamese government has received millions of dollars in economic aid from foreign countries, but the Khmer Krom people do not receive a penny of those benefits.
6. The Vietnamese government does not allow the Khmer Krom to have any social activities without their approval. The few social activities that are allowed are not organized by the Khmer Krom people because our people are so poor and they must struggle just to earn their food.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum,

It is time that the United Nations and the world scrutinize the situation of the indigenous people in Vietnam. Many rosy pictures have been painted over the suffering of my people, but the world has been misled and the Khmer Krom people are suffering terribly as I am speaking here today. On their behalf, I appeal to the United Nations and the world to pay close attention to the critical economic and social issues facing the Khmer Krom and to take action to help resolve their suffering.

Thank you very much.

Moni Mau