

Thank you mister chair

Ladys and gentlemens.

Kven People are an indigenious minority group in Scandinavia.

Kvenland Association is founded in 1999 to promote cooperation between Kvens in the northern part of Sweden, Norway and Finland and defend the rights of Kvens,

The northern part of Scandinavia was up to the Middle Ages a country called Kvenland. Kvens are descendants of the people who once inhabited this land. The old Kvenland was already in the Middle Ages divided between Norway, Sweden and Finland and the Rights to land and water, were conferred of the States in these three countries to be state property. The governments of these countries have up to now not been willing to enter into a dialogue on how Kvens rights to land and water will be ensured in future.

Kvens have populated Northern part of Scandinavia at least 1000 years, but the states describe us as immigrants from southern Finland. Our governments avoid protecting our rights to land and water. From our point of view this is an injustice that fall under the Human Rights Council. For Kvens it's important to have the right to define ourselves and the right to write our own history.

Kvens are exposed to discrimination. In Norway it is not possibly for Kven People to have their own kindergartens, no primary and secondary schools and no possibility for higer education in their own language. We have small access to education, and from this reason we also have difficulty keeping up our Rights. In a modern society we need a number of people from its own group who are highly educated and can be advocates for the others. The children and youngsters of kven People are obligated to go through indoctrination in Norwegians school. Not only in the Norwegian language and culture but also in the Norwegians view of the Right of Kvens and history of Kvens as well.

We will express the hope that oppression of Kven history will someday end. We express the hope that Kvens would be given the oppportunity to have their own schools and the possibility of higher education and their own research.

Thank you for the chair and for your attention everyone.

Bjørnar Seppola

Kvenland Assosiation