

ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS STATEMENT

EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
SIXTH SESSION, 8-12 JULY 2012
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

AGENDA ITEM 7:

Proposals to be submitted to the Human Rights Council for its consideration and approval

Delivered by:
Chaoba Takhenchangdan
in behalf of the Asia Caucus

In Asia, indigenous peoples' rights to a life of peace and security, free from violence are increasingly threatened by the escalation of human rights violations due to corporate operations especially by extractive industries coupled more often than not with militarization of indigenous communities. This is exacerbated by the criminalization of indigenous leaders and indigenous peoples human rights defenders when asserting their rights to their lands, territories and resources.

Moreover, many governments in Asia have some form of National Security Laws and launched anti-insurgency operation plans that have impacted heavily on the peace and security of indigenous peoples. In recent years, many indigenous communities and their leaders have been subject to attacks, harassments and extrajudicial killings as a result of these operation plans. Indigenous peoples who assert their rights over their lands, territories and resources are either vilified or attacked for their opposition or are also tagged as supporters of armed groups fighting their governments.

In addition, remote areas where indigenous peoples in Asia reside are usually affected by armed conflicts between government forces and armed groups. The result of massive military operations and campaigns of the government forces often result to massive evacuations of indigenous communities for long periods of time, disrupting the communities' socio-economic practices leaving them with scarce sources of food and shelter, and general insecurity. Also, efforts in peace-building between governments and armed groups often exclude indigenous peoples.

We therefore call on the Expert Mechanism and the Human Rights Council to take on peace and security for its next study due to its importance and in relation to the escalation of serious human rights violations happening in Asia and in other parts of the world where indigenous peoples are.

We, again reiterate our observation on the weak participation in this session of governments from Asia. This demonstrates the lack of sincere interest from our governments to hear the voices of its indigenous peoples. We therefore implore these governments to start showing serious effort in building relationships with its indigenous peoples and start listening to and understanding our issues and concerns.