

UNPFII Twenty-first session 25 April - 6 May 2022

Item 3 Discussion on the theme “Indigenous peoples, business, autonomy and the human rights principles of due diligence, including free, prior and informed consent”

Tuesday, 26 April 9–11 a.m. (hybrid meeting)

Speaker: Priscilla Kim Ong

Thank you Mr. Chair,

My ancestors, family, and millions of indigenous Khmer-Krom people continue to be denied their basic rights and freedom as well as recognition in the legal system as Indigenous Peoples of the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The lack of access coupled with lack of awareness has created a perfect storm of systemic oppression and discrimination that has and continues to impact the business and livelihoods of our people.

We ask that Vietnam not only supports the adoption of the UNDRIP but in the true spirit of partnership and reconciliation, help create multiple national action plans in specific legal fields of Business & Human Right NAPs and the UN DRIP NAP national plan that implements and recognizes the Khmer Krom people as IPs in its constitution and national policies.

Vietnam is one of the biggest exporters of rice and yet our rice farmers, in which the rice is being grown and harvested are left behind because of discriminatory price controls that benefit the State and offer little left to the farmers themselves.

We ask that Vietnam reassess its price controls on farming, specifically rice production, to create more equitable regulations to improve the livelihoods of farmers to achieve target 8.1 and 8.3.

Ask Vietnam to implement the five action areas to achieve the goals outlined in the UN Food System Summit and seek the help of FAO to create a special focus within their ongoing sustainable agriculture and food security projects on Khmer-Krom farmers who contribute to the Mekong Delta’s rice production that makes up 90% of Vietnam’s rice exports.

Urge Vietnam to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to protect our Khmer-Krom from human rights abuses imposed by businesses that are controlled or supported by the State and hold them accountable.

On top of all the rights violations above, those that seek to farm on their ancestral lands have been physically harassed, threatened, and imprisoned for seeking the return of their confiscated farmlands. There is little to no free prior and informed consent involving indigenous land rights, disregarding the lives of the Khmer-Krom whose lands are seized by the government. We are also concerned by the absence of FPIC among the Khmer-Krom living on the shores in Vung Tau province where crude oil is extracted.

Ask that Vietnam respect Article 8 of UNDRIP and immediately release the 3 Khmer-Krom farmers who were wrongly imprisoned for defending their indigenous farms, Huynh Dep, Tien Dam, and Tien Nam.

We ask for the restitution of Indigenous lands to Khmer-Krom peoples and urge Vietnam to implement the CCPR to respect the rights of our people to defend their land as well as reform land laws to grant Indigenous peoples the right to their land.

Ask that UNDP prioritize engagement and direct collaboration with local IPs in their Roadmap to Business and Human Rights in Vietnam to ensure there is free prior and informed consent from all stakeholders.