



Sixth Session of Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Item 6: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation
Speaker : Catherine Kim

Mr. Chairman:

Vietnam was amongst a majority of countries who supported the adoption of UNDRIP in 2007. While we were encouraged by this move, we are now particularly concerned with the lack of progress towards the recognition of its indigenous peoples. It is almost six years and yet very few Khmer-Krom people know the existence of UNDRIP. Information regarding UNDRIP stops here at the UN and is not allowed to distribute to the peoples in Vietnam.

We also would like to applaud Vietnam to announce its candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the term 2014-2016 on February 25, 2013. But with the latest news regarding to the religious oppression that Vietnamese authority just committed against the Khmer-Krom Buddhist monk made us very concerns about the statement that the Vietnamese Foreign Minister made in his announcement: *“committed to active, constructive and responsible participation in the work of the Council.”*

On behalf of the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation and the voiceless Khmer-Krom in Vietnam, I would like to suggest the following recommendations to the forum to:

- We request to the government of Vietnam to implement Article 12 of the UNDRIP to allow the Khmer-Krom to freely practice their religion. The Khmer-Krom people should be allowed to form their independence religious organization without interference. Lastly, Khmer-Krom people who are practicing their Theravada Buddhism live in a FEAR condition. Also the Theravada Buddhism is not just a religion, but it is part of our people’s unique cultural identity. Unfortunately, our people who are practicing our religion are under threatening. Vietnamese government forces our Buddhist monks to join the Patriotic United Buddhist Association (PUBA) which is an association established by the government to control the way we practice our religion.
- We demand to the government of Vietnam apply article 14 of the UNDRIP to find a remedy of the lack of education. Even though we have cases where this article is still not respected : “Venerable Ly Chanh Da, tried to open a Khmer language class in his temple.” and after that he had been unfairly arrested, detained and defrocked publicly.
- We would like to recommend that the Vietnam implement Article 16 of the UNDRIP to allow the Khmer-Krom to open independent media so they have a full freedom of expression. Also we have a case where this article 16 of the UNDRIP is not respected. The Vietnamese authority accused Venerable Thach Thuol, for contacting the Khmer-Krom media and Khmer Krom living abroad to provide information about human rights violations against the Khmer-Krom. Venerable Lieu Ny.

And this case is a proof that the rights of full freedom of expression is not respected.

- We claim for article 25 of UNDRIP to be implemented by the government of Vietnam for indigenous Khmer-krom peoples, as their nowadays human rights are violated regarding their confiscated farmlands.
- We urge the government of Vietnam to apply the article 27 of the UNDRIP to the Khmer-krom

peoples, as it says that state have to recognize the Indigenous Peoples in its country. We call for the Vietnam government to permit us to ask for having our district and provinces name in our own mother tongue. In that way peoples would be aware of our existences in theses areas.

- In Vietnamese, the term Indigenous is different with Minority. The Indigenous in Vietnamese as "bản địa" and Minority is "thiểu số". They know the real definition of what the Indigenous means. We hope they will use the proper term in the future.

We strongly believe that the implementation of UNDRIP can only be fully achieved if all indigenous peoples are recognized by their governments.

Thank You