

Report submitted to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations
by
Leif DunfjeId, Nordic Sami Council

The Sami people in Scandinavia, organised in different sami organisations in Norway, Sweden and Finland, all united in the Nordic Sami Council in a common struggle to promote the rights of the Sami people to the traditional landareas, the Sami culture and Sami language, and since 1975 organised in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, declare to be strongly aware of the fact that we in regard of the established human rights standards are living within some of the most civilized states in the world.

The individual Sami is as an individual secured against personal encroachments and is also as an individual secured the same social rights as the rest of the population.

These facts establish a special obligation to us to appeal to the Working Group to receive and consider the reports and oral statements presented by our brother and sisters who still are threatened by genocide, serious encroachments and who are denied most of the fundamental human rights.

It is our conviction, however, that the Working Group so far has got the opportunity to meet only the strongest and best organised of the indigenous populations in the world.

The weakest and most anonymous among us and beyond own funds, have not had the possibility to meet. The Nordic Sami council therefor support any draft on a special fund, established to strengthen the future possibilities to those of our brothers and sisters to meet in the Working Group.

With the intention to contribute to the reviewing of the development and the evolution of the standards concerning the rights of the indigenous peoples, we will present some facts on the development in Scandinavia.

1. Referring to the extract of the report from the Norwegian government submitted to the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1984/2), the Norwegian Government appointed a Committee on the Legal Rights of the Sami people in October 1980.

This Committee presented its first report on June 15. this year.

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The report contents legal considerations on the rights of the Sami people in Norway according to international law and according to the Norwegian Constitution.

The report promote proposals on restricted Sami self-government in own affairs and granting of some rights in the Constitution.

The development of the Norwegian governing policy to the Samis is not fully described without mentioning that at the same time as the Sami landrights are examined, the Government still approves planning of large-scale industrial use of traditional Sami areas.

The Norwegian Government has never accepted Sami customary law in concern of landrights and land tenure. Nevertheless the Norwegian Government is preparing legislation to establish a special court to examine and fix the borders between state-owned and private land in two of the northern counties of Norway, where the Sami people has stayed since time immemorial.

2. The Swedish Governmental report to the Secretary-General is referred in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1984/2/Add.1.

The Swedish Government appointed a Committee on the legal Rights of the Sami people i Sweden in September 1982. This committee has not presented any report so far, but there is established som unofficial co-operations between this committee and the Norwegian committee, as with the special-committee of the Finnish Sami Delegation.

However we have to state the fact that at the same time as Sami landrights are examined, also the Swedish Government promotes large-scale industrial exploitation within the traditional Sami area.

The development will necessarily reduce the territory and the resources that have been the main sources to the livelihood and the culture of the Samis.

Even if the exploiting industries are proposed to finance state-subsidiaries to the Samis occupied in reindeer husbandry, the result still will cause displacement of a growing group of the Samis.

3. As in Norway and Sweden, the Finnish Government has carried into effect som special legal- and administrative efforts to examine some of the sami landrights.

The Finnish Parliament has passed a law that has established an advisory

body, elected by the Samis in Finland.

As the Samis in Norway and Sweden are the Samis in Finland looking forward to extended rights to self-determination in own affairs and to the traditional Samiareas and resources.