

10th Session of Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
Item 7: IP participation in UN Systems  
Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation  
Speaker: Conduct Hang

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for the informative panel on Tuesday as it was a very crucial dialogue because we have no NHRI in our homelands and the ASEAN mechanism is quite young and still forming. Specially, Somia from the OHCHR stated, "the challenge we see in our work is the case where states do not recognized indigenous status of indigenous peoples in their country."

It is great to discuss the potential of a Paris principle based National Human Rights Institution. We believe it would be helpful for Vietnam to work with IPOs and larger civil society organizations dedicated to human rights and the new UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Let us provide one example of how a NHRI in our homeland could assist with conflicts and protect human rights. Religion is central to our existence as Indigenous Peoples. Our monks are our spiritual leaders and are consistently targeted for only practicing their right to religion. We believe a NHRI could be a valuable tool to ensure our voice and values are respected.

As an IPO, we work our immediate families in the Mekong Delta. In our continuous struggle to be recognized as IPs, the most recent case of a human rights violation that we were notified of is that Venerable Lieu Ny from Wat Traset had requested to the Vietnamese local authority to be re-ordained as a monk July 3, 2017. The local police then threatened him from being re-ordained while at the temple. Our Khmer Krom communities have struggled with protecting our basic religious rights; however, continue to be seen as a threat with no rationale. The right to practice religion should not be a privilege granted by the government.

Many member states have yet to recognize their indigenous peoples, denying access to resources that would help mobilize indigenous peoples to partake in many decision-making roles. Thus, it is difficult also for indigenous people participating here at EMRIP to provide recommendations that are not adopted or implemented due to lack of indigenous recognition from member states.

We ask how mechanisms can be effective when member states do not promote the UNDRIP, thus do not support the new mandate of the EMRIP.

Here are the following recommendations:

- Request that the EMRIP conduct a study that identify which member states have legally recognize their indigenous peoples and which member states have not legally recognize their indigenous peoples

Thank you