

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 # 165

Item #5

**UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
New York 2007**

**Dear Madam Chair:**

My name is Matthew McDaniel. Michu was not able to attend this year.

My first concern is a recommendation that the format and function of the Permanent Forum be changed to better meet the needs and hopes of the indigenous people. I have come here many years. I have asked the Thai government for an explanation as to why the Queen of Thailand is above the law and can take the land of the Akha people. They do not answer me, instead they block my website, instead they claim that the Akha gave their land to the Queen. This is not true. And since the first year I came here, the Queen has taken all of the land of many more Akha villages, including the land that belongs to my wife Michu and our children.

The Permanent Forum was established to support a dialogue between the indigenous and governments. So why isn't the Permanent Forum asking Thailand, "What have you done? What have you discussed? What have you offered?"

I was deported by the Thai government for standing up for the Akha people. For fighting for their lives and their children and their land.

I wrote to Hina Jilani, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights defenders. She did not answer.

How many years must we come here, when all of our land is gone, when all of our children have been taken by the American missionaries, before we will get help, before Thailand will fulfill its obligations under international law, and give us something. Each year I ask them, each year they promise, each year they defame me and give me nothing.

In this year's book IWGIA exclude my name from research that would not exist without me. I rose to defend the Akha woman and girls against rape by Norwegian Church Aid and Action Contre Le Faim staff. IWGIA tells about that investigation in this years book, but excludes that I even exist, and I have made that investigation along with Tomas Ryska, a UWIP representative of the Czech Republic.

I have asked this forum and UNICEF for an investigation into the removal of thousands of Akha children from their land by missionaries, which deprives these children for ever of their land. This robs them of their heritage and their future. Will this forum please ask UNICEF what action they have taken on this case.

Language is the story of all the land. I have written to UNESCO for two years, they deny that there is any non tangible heritage process in Thailand, they refuse to answer my emails, and then I discover that there is in deed a well established program regarding non tangible heritage and language at UNESCO in Bangkok, conducted by Mr. Shaeffer the Director of UNESCO Bangkok, and it is being done in conjunction with Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a missionary organization. So now UNESCO is working with the missionaries to decide what will be included in Akha non tangible heritage and language. But the missionaries themselves have been responsible for completely eliminating the oral transmission of Akha literature. UNESCO does not answer us about this violation of their own mandate.

I ask that this Forum pursue and follow up this case and require an explanation from UNESCO regarding their collaboration with mission organizations in a time when the mission organizations remove thousands of Akha children from their land. These mission organizations are the same organizations which sterilized hundreds if not thousands of Akha women.

I ask that Thailand establish a dialogue with this forum on progress points to returning the land of the Akha people that the Queen has illegally taken. Thank you Madam Chair.

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