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Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Federation at the Third Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on the Indigenous Issues

Item 4 (d): Human Rights
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Speaker: Sereivuth Prak

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Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Delegations:

My name is Sereivuth Prak. I am honored and grateful to the United Nations for giving me this opportunity to speak about the human rights violation of the Khmer Krom people in Kampuchea-Krom.

In order to solve the problems of human rights violations of the Khmer Krom people by the Vietnamese government, the Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF), which is representing all Khmer Kroms worldwide, would like to make the following recommendations to the United Nations:

1. To place a team under the auspices of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in Kampuchea Krom to verify and report on these violations of the human rights of the Khmer Krom.
2. To grant Kampuchea Krom as a non-self governing territory, in accordance with the Charters of the United Nations.
3. To send a special rapporteur to review the human rights situation and possibly to create a special rapporteur to focus on Vietnam and the spiraling conditions of human rights.
4. To send a team of doctors, scientists and human rights defenders to study and investigate the etiology of the blind and deadly diseases facing the Khmer Krom people in Bac Lieu Province.

The Vietnamese government is in direct violation of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Some of these chronological violations include:

1. During the dynasty of King Gia Long of Vietnam (1802-1819), thousands of Khmer Kroms were forced to dig a canal named Vinh Te. When the project was near completion, the Vietnamese opened the canal floodgate without advanced warning. As a result, thousands of Khmer Kroms were drown.
2. When other Khmer Kroms protested against this oppressive policy, these protesters were arrested and buried alive up to their necks in groups of three or four in a triangular or rectangular formation. Later, their heads were used as stove stands for boiling water in order to make tea and pleased their Vietnamese masters.
3. During the Japanese occupation of Indochina toward the end of World War II in 1945, after ordering thousands of Khmer Kroms to attend the conventions inside the

warehouses which were used by French at the time as rice stockpile, the Vietnamese locked the doors and burned those people alive.

4. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, thousands of Khmer Krom Buddhist monks and ordinary citizens were falsely accused by Hanoi of opposing the Communist regime. As a result, some were tortured and eventually executed without any legal trial. Then, others were forced to move away from their villages near the Mekong River Delta to the new economic zones in the remote and inhospitable areas to clear the jungles which were full of land mines, malaria, diseases, and leeches without adequate foods, medicines, or tool supplies.
5. On July 20, 2002, Venerable Lam Khen, who was the master of the Buddhist temple of Can Tho Province, was beheaded in cold blood without any reason.
6. On April 29, 2004 in Soc Trang province during the celebration of the 29th Anniversary of the Communist victory over South Vietnam, many Khmer Kroms were forced against their will to rebel their traditional boat race which normally held in mid-November. As a result, two of them were accidentally killed during the races.
7. Today, over thousands of Khmer Krom people are still suffering from blindness in my hometown as a result onion plantation.
8. The Vietnamese delegate spoke yesterday to the UN and they stated that they are respecting the indigenous people's fundamental freedoms, but obviously, from all of the examples which have been stated, it is blatantly obvious that these claims are false. For instance, on March 2004 in the Tra Vinh province, three days before the commencement of the Buddhist monastery grand opening celebration, hundreds of Buddhist biblical texts/documents and traditional outfits were prohibited from importing into Vietnam from Cambodia.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your undivided attention.