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3rd Session of the United Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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Agenda Item No: 4D - Human Rights

Intervention by

South Asia Indigenous Women Forum

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Recommendations of Armed Conflicts, 3rd Session, UNPFII

Armed conflict in many parts of indigenous territories and the establishment of military detachments in our communities is affecting adversely our economic activities and health services. Education for our children is totally cut off. Forced displacement of indigenous peoples from our ancestral lands is a major cause of impoverishment and threatens our very survival as indigenous peoples. Indigenous women and children are the most seriously harmed. The military has facilitated the occupation of indigenous territories by non-indigenous settlers, a form of assimilation which breeds conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

Compounding militarization is the war on terror and the passage of national policies or laws restricting the exercise of democratic rights and freedoms of the indigenous women and communities. Our indigenous peoples' organizations are regarded by the state to be engaged in terrorist activities and therefore the indigenous activists are arrested, tortured and killed. Our leaders suffer persecution and our elders are criminalized for asserting customary practices in defence of our land and resources.

Military forces are perpetrating extreme violence against ethnic communities including forced labour, forced relocations, torture and murder. Indigenous women suffer from rapes and sexual violence, including the trafficking of women and forced prostitution. The worst being the forced recruiting of indigenous boys and girls in military forces. The laying of landmines in our territories is taking the life of so many indigenous children and peoples. Bombarding on our land is taking the lives of many indigenous peoples.

We do not see ourselves as simply victims, we are survivors of our struggles against militarization and for peace-building. We participate in peace-making

efforts, in conflict resolution and peace-building processes.

We would like to propose Permanent Forum for the following recommendations:

1. Regarding armed conflicts, we ask the Permanent Forum to recommend that the Special Rapporteurs and experts from the U.N. Human Rights Commission and all United Nations agencies and bodies involved in human rights issues to:

a. Condemns human rights violations against indigenous women and girls in situation of armed conflict and take the necessary measures to stop these violations:

b. Demand the immediate withdrawal of military troops and all armed forces from indigenous territories:

c. Insist on the investigation of acts of violence against indigenous women by armed forces and that those responsible be found and brought before the courts;

d. Take all measures to avoid the recruitment of indigenous boys and girls into armed conflict.

e. Ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples including indigenous women in peace processes and accords entered into by our people and communities,

2. Permanent Forum recommend relevant UN entities, to incorporate the needs and priorities of women and girls as ex-combatants in the design and implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs, and ensuring their full access to all resources and benefits provided in reintegration programmes, including income generation and skill development programmes,

3. Permanent Forum recommends that the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples take the issue of the impact of armed conflicts on indigenous issues of the impact of armed conflicts on indigenous women as the main topic of their 2005 Report,

4. Permanent Forum recommends that the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women takes the issues of the impact of armed conflicts on indigenous women and children,

5. Forced displacement of indigenous peoples from our ancestral lands is a major cause of impoverishment and threatens our very survival as indigenous peoples. Indigenous women and children are the worst victims.

We therefore recommends that Special Rapporteur on displacement to study the situation of internally displaced indigenous peoples.

6. We request Permanent Forum to recommend the full and effective implementation of the Convention on Landmines.

7. Recommend to UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, and other field-based agencies to collect data on the situation of indigenous women and children living in conflict areas.

8. To CEDAW and UNIFEM, to integrate indigenous women issues into its strategies on women, peace and security,

9. To organise Workshop on, "Indigenous Women, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building",

10. To ensure the implementation of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW), regarding indigenous owmen, and to integrate these instruments into the formulation of a coherent national public policy for indigenous women,

11. To widely dessiminate and educate the indigenous peoples, specially the indigenous women about the Security Councial Resolution 1325 which has provision for the security and peace for women.

Thank you,