

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 11th Session  
Item 3: Country engagement  
Khmers-Kampuchea Krom Federation  
Speaker: Licia Tran

Dear Madame/Monsieur Chairperson and Distinguished Colleagues,

On behalf of the millions of voiceless Khmer Krom people living in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to be present and to participate in the 11th session of EMRIP.

As stated in the Council resolution 33/25, the Expert Mechanism should, upon request, assist Member States and/or Indigenous Peoples in providing technical advice regarding the development of domestic legislation and policies related to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Concerning this, since 2014 Vietnam has not shown any results in protecting and promoting the fundamental rights for the Khmer-Krom people, such as the right to preserve Khmer-Krom's identity, language and culture; right to freedom of speech, religion and belief; right to equal education and right to health. As the Indigenous people of the Mekong Delta, the Khmer-Krom people have lived on their ancestral lands for thousand years, yet the current government of Vietnam keeps denying these rights.

Since the adoption of the UNDRIP, once more we must strongly recommend that countries affirm to the UNDRIP and implement measures that promote the rights and protections of IPs.

Despite IPs right to self-determination and autonomy, we need to identify why member states have yet to recognize the IPs in their regions. Member states in the Asia region claim to support "the spirit" of the UNDRIP, only to recognize IPs in the member states of other regions. This enables member states to distance themselves from being a part of the active participation with IPs. Thus, open dialogue is unlikely between member states and IPs. The relationship should be on the principles of engagement with good faith, cooperation, and partnership. When member states constantly frame human rights defenders and IPOs as false labels with an insidious/political agenda, it increases misunderstanding and highlights the arduous struggle that unrecognized IPs have yet to overcome.

We encourage these member states to look at member states that have already recognized their IPs and seek them as examples of how partnership can truly be realized, as unrecognized IPs have looked for guidance of our Indigenous brothers and sisters recognized.

Thank you, Madame/Monsieur Chairperson