

## speaker of agenda item 7

The Yakut people (self-named – Sakha) are indigenous people on their territory of Far East Siberia which is a part of the Russian Federation as a constituent unit under the name of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

However it is known that in Russia only the rights of indigenous minorities (Chukchee, Evenks, etc.) are legally defended and taken into account. Thus the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples works too specifically on the territory of Russia.

In my short speech I would like to address two urgent, pressing issues of my Republic.

Nowadays on the territory of the Far East including the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) a federal law on so called «Far-Eastern hectare» №119 is enforced, which gives the right to any citizen of the Russian Federation to get 1 hectare of land for free to develop agricultural and other business projects. Besides the State Duma has already passed a bill according to which foreign citizens can also acquire the notorious hectare under the same conditions. Meanwhile in my opinion and according to numerous citizens of the Republic this law infringes on the constitutional rights of my people. There is a risk that these lands will be subsequently made into property and sold to foreign stakeholders. Further more in the near future the foreign citizens will get the right to acquire the said lands.

It should also be noted that my people are deprived of the same right to get land on the other territories of the Russian Federation, incl. actual Krasnodar, Kaliningrad, Moscow and Leningrad Regions not saying about land abroad.

With all this, such an important question as distribution of land owned by the people according to the Constitution was not put to a general referendum. The law was only formally under consideration at the local parliament, which, as it is known, due to the strong centralized system consists of the majority of its supporters. There were attempts on the part of the community to appeal through the court against the refusal to hold a referendum on the territory of the Republic, but the norm of the Federal law "On Referendum" which says that the issues resolved by Federal law can not be put to a regional referendum didn't allow the Yakut citizens to get a favorable judgment. For example my appeal to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation was left without consideration, stating that you have no right to make such a complaint. Thus there is such legislation, which by all means complicates citizens' access to justice, when it concerns the interests of the state.

The second problem is the access of the Yakuts to education in their native language. For example, in Yakutsk there are about 50 schools, of which only 5 are national and education takes place at a qualitative level and in an atmosphere of unique national traditions and culture. At the same time the ratio of Russians to Yakuts remains approximately 50 to 50 percent. Next there are changes in the law "On education", which obliges schools to accept students at the place of residence. And since a large share of the Yakuts wants their children to attend one of these 5 schools it causes the need for parents to buy fake registration next to the desired schools. In such purely Russian-speaking cities as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tver, etc. such problems certainly do not exist. At the same time, some Yakut schools are obliged to open Russian-language classes. Thereby, in Yakutia, where the level of urbanization is very high, parents are forced to give their children to Russian-language schools or to return to villages, because schools do not open Yakut classes if there are less than 25 Yakut-speaking children per class. In any case, even if the class opens the quality of education will be extremely low, because the administration of mixed or Russian-language schools are not interested in teaching the Yakut language due to certain key performance indicators of the schools which are tests conducted in Russian.

Besides the last stages of passing the changes into retirement legislation are currently taking place in the Russian Federation, according to the amendments the age of retirement is increased : for men from 60 to 65, for women from 55 to 60.

However, this law is premature and unjustified, due to the fact that it actually deprives the majority of citizens of the opportunity to get any pension provision at all, due to the fact that the retirement age is approximately equal to the average life expectancy of Russian citizens. It should be noted that in Yakutia life expectancy is less than the average one for Russia, due to the severity of living conditions, unfavorable climate, high cost of living, including the cost of products, the need to spend more money on warm clothes, it is also necessary to take into account increased spending on utilities, heat supply and so on.

In connection with the above I ask to appeal to the administration of Russia to reform current legislation on the issues addressed in my report, in particular:

1) to change the paragraphs on referendum concerning the restriction of holding a referendum if the issue is defined by the Federal law.

2) to ensure access of citizens to the Constitutional court of the Russian Federation with complaints against the Federal law not only about local issues related to their specific cases, but also about a general violation of their rights, as in the Federal law "on the far Eastern hectare".

3) to change the legislation on education, so that the place of residence would not influence the choice of a school in the subjects of the Russian Federation with different ethnic proportion, in this case Yakutia. A more differentiated and special approach is needed here, which would not lead to a diminution of the rights of citizens to study in their native language, provided by the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

4) to rescind the amendments in the pension legislation or to apply a differentiated approach taking into account unfavorable living conditions in the Yakut region and reduced life expectancy.

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