

2019-07-16

Joint Statement under agenda item 6: Country engagement

Delivered by Per-Olof Nutti on behalf of the Sámi Parliament in Sweden and The Sámi Council

Thank you Chair,

My name is Per-Olof Nutti and I am making this statement in my capacity as the President of that Sámi Parliament in Sweden and also on behalf of the Sámi Council – I am taking the floor to express the support and solidarity of our respective institutions towards the Yaqui people in their request of EMRIP to carry out a country engagement with Sweden. The request aims for a country mission to be undertaken to help the Yaqui Nation return their sacred cultural item Maaso Kova. An important ceremonial regalia in the wrongful possession of the Swedish Museums of World Culture.

We have experienced firsthand the challenges of repatriation in Sweden. During an archeological excavation in the 1950's Sámi human remains were removed from their burial place in Lycksele - Liksjoe. In 2013 they were discovered in the archives of the historical museums outside Stockholm. In three weeks, on the 9th of August 2019, - the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples these human remains will finally – 60 years later - be returned to their original resting grounds.

With this in mind we believe the requested country engagement could set a positive precedent towards the recognition and implementation of indigenous peoples' right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains. We encourage EMRIP and the Swedish Government to accept this country engagement on finding a solution to this longstanding issue that respects the rights of the Yaqui people and their sacred objects.