

# KHMER-KROM YOUTH MAGAZINE

August 2014 Volume 11



**Khmer-Krom Youths at 5th World Youth Conference**



*Indigenous Khmer-Krom Demonstrate in Washington DC to demand Vietnam to stop Human Right abuse and Vietnamese diplomat's recognition of 'true history' of Kampuchea Krom*



# T A B L E O F C O N T E N T

**FOREWORD** (Page 4)

## **COVER STORIES:**

Washington State Youth Conference by Samon Thach & Brenda Son.....	(Page 5)
My Journey through the Thailand Refugee Camps by Sivutha Seun .....	(Page 7)
UN Charter Annual Meeting by Virginia Thach and Serey Chau.....	(Page 8)
Studying Civil Resistance online, Case study on Vietnam and Cambodia.....	(Page 10)

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

UNPFII Item 3: Special theme: "Principles of good governance consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Articles 3 to 6 and 46" .....	(Page 13)
UNPFII Item 4: Human Rights (a) Implementation of the UNDRP .....	(Page 14)
UNPFII Item 4: Human Rights (b) Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples .....	(Page 15)
UNPFII Item 5: Half-day discussion on the Asian region.....	(Page 16)
UNPFII Item 7(a) Ongoing priorities and themes and follow-up: Indigenous Children.....	(Page 17)
UNPFII: Item 8: Comprehensive Dialogue with United Nations Agencies and funds.....	(Page 18)
UNPFII: Item 9: Future work on Indigenous Peoples.....	(Page 19)
EMRIP Item 3: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.....	(Page 20)
EMRIP Item 5: Study on access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.....	(Page 21)
EMRIP Item 6: Study on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in natural disaster risk reduction and prevention and preparedness initiatives.....	(Page 22)
Commonly used Human Rights Acronyms by Ricky Tran.....	(Page 23)

## **OUR HOMELAND**

Nhi's Journey to a better life through education by Mai Mothana .....	(Page 25)
Photo Essay - Keeping our culture and traditions alive .....	(Page 26)

## **YOUTH VOICES & REFLECTIONS**

Virginia Thach Reflection.....	(Page 28)
Khemara Dinh Reflection .....	(Page 28)
Audrey Pham Reflection.....	(Page 29)
Vichea Om Reflection .....	(Page 30)
Thida Chau Reflection .....	(Page 30)
Reflections of Seattle by Kyle Kien.....	(Page 31)
Participating a Peaceful Demonstration in Washington DC by Jackie Tran.....	(Page 32)

## **KHMER ARTS & CULTURE**

Opening a Khmer school by Michelle Ly .....	(Page 34)
---	-----------

**Special Thanks from KKFYC** ..... (Page 35)

## FOREWORD

**W**e are excited to bring you the latest edition of our KKFYC magazine with many exciting perspectives from across the world including Kampuchea-Krom.

Firstly, we would like to congratulate former KKFYC President, Mr. Chau Serey who have been promoted to the position of Second Vice President to the KKF; a well-deserved promotion! We would like to also welcome Mrs. Sothy Kien into the new role as the KKF Youth Director and Global KKFYC President. We would like to congratulate Mr. Khoun Toma on being elected as the new KKFYC Europe President, Miss. Kim KeoMony, Treasurer and Miss. Kim Thivanada Julie, Secretary.

This year has been a very productive year for our KKFYC members. In January, we saw KKFYC and KKF at the US State Department bringing up issues relating to religious freedom and education. Our KKFYC President, Mrs. Kien was also featured on the Radio Free Asia Khmer television with Mr. Mannrinh Tran, KKF Planner.

In February, KKFYC worked together with Dr. Joshua Cooper to complete an online course called Civil Resistance offered by the United States Institute of Peace, exploring peaceful methods in which people could organize to make change happen. We had the biggest turn up of youths to attend and celebrate our 10th Year at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues during May 12-23rd. Our 8th World Youth Conference was not only well organized and inspiring but it brought together many Khmer and Khmer-Krom youths sharing the same passion of wanting to help our voiceless Khmer-Krom people.

During the commemoration of the loss of Kampuchea-Krom, KKFYC members created a picture on Facebook and made a global movement asking all those who love and care about Khmer-Krom to change their profile picture on June 4th 2014. On June 28th, Virginia Thach, Audrey Pham and Chau Serey participated in the Annual Human Rights event in San Francisco speaking about the Four Freedoms and Kampuchea-Krom.

On July 11th 2014, Julie Kim and Catherine Kim gave speeches at the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland. On July 19th, KKFYC West Coast President Mr. Samon Thach worked with the local KKF Chapter in Washington State to host the Washington State Youth Conference in which Mr. To Kim Thong, former KKF Chairman, Mr. Chau Serey and Mrs. Kien was invited as special guest speakers to talk about how youths can ignite change by becoming a Khmer-Krom human rights activist.

Also in the month of July, KKFYC Members from Australia, Canada and USA joined in a global demonstration to ask Vietnam Embassy Spokeperson, Tran Van Thong to apologize for making a false statement saying Kampuchea-Krom was part of Vietnam long before the French came along.

The next five months will be just as exciting with the upcoming Khmer-Krom Festival in Montreal, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations as well as several international conferences in Geneva in November. We would like to say thank you to everyone who has contribute to this magazine and we look forward to working with many of you in the near future for the promotion and protection of human rights and indigenous rights on behalf of our voiceless Khmer-Krom!

-KKFYC Team

## Washington State Youth Conference

By Samon Thach and Brenda Son

**O**n Saturday July 19th, 2014, the Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Federation Youth Committee (KKFYC) hosted its first youth conference in Tacoma, Washington. The theme of the conference was “Igniting change by becoming a Khmer-Krom human rights activist”. The conference was held at the Main Tacoma Public Library where both the young and old came together eager to learn and listen. Especially, with appearances from keynote speakers coming from Toronto, Canada, Orlando, Florida and San Jose, California.

Mr. Samon Thach, representative of the KKFYC, from the west coast along with his members and KKF Chapter of Washington planned and organized the conference. During the opening of the conference Mr. Sami Thach led the audience in saluting the Khmer-Krom anthem. Following the salute was a moment of silence to past heroes who have fought to preserve the Khmer-Krom culture and ways of living. President Lach Tang, part of the KKF Chapter of Washington welcomed all of the special guests and all members of the audience to the short and important conference.

As the host of the conference, Mr. Samon Thach started the morning on how he got involved with the Khmer-Krom activities when he was only a junior in high school as a member of the KKF Chapter of WA. He went on talking on how he struggled to learn about himself and the Khmer-Krom issues. Samon made an important comparison regarding the Civil Rights movement to the Khmer-Krom movement. In the comparison he pointed out that during the sit in protest organized by the Civil Rights movement, there were a few good White Americans who participated with the Black Americans because it was the righteous thing to do. In that situation, seeing the connection, he encouraged the audience who had friends and family of Vietnamese descent to not feel awkward or distant in speaking the truth. Furthermore, he asked the audience to look deep inside themselves to find that passion and time to support our Khmer-Krom Peoples.

Mr. Samon Thach warmed up the audience with the opening and purposes of the conference in an amazing twelve minute video that was produced by Miss Sothy



Kien. The video had captured accomplishments and activities made during the last ten years by the KKF and KKFYC from all around the world.

Mr. To Kim Thong, KKF Senior Advisor, continued to talk about the important role of youth involvement with the Khmer-Krom movement. Mr. Thong shared some of his memory of how he got involved with Khmer-Krom movement back in 1985. The part that moved Mr. Thong to tears was when he and five other Khmer-Krom leaders from the U.S. and Canada met in a basement to discuss how to bring Khmer-Krom issues to the world. Finally, through endless struggles, KKF was formed during the Fifth World Conference on April 4, 1996. The most empowering statement that Mr. Thong shared was that the Khmer-Krom movement has yet to discover a powerful figure like that of the Dalai Lama of the Tibetan people, “one of you could be the Dalai Lama of the Khmer-Krom people”.

Mr. Serey Chau, KKF 2nd Vice President, gave a tactical presentation to members of the audience. Mr. Chau pointed out that the work of the KKFYC is solely focused on documentation. Majority of our elders are not fluent in the English language therefore they lack the skills to write effectively. Mr. Chau mentioned that the job titles as being president, vice president, and etc. are not important within the KKF and KKFYC structure, although it is very important to outside organizations such as the US State Department, Australian Parliament, European Parliament, and so forth and so on. Most importantly, the roles of the youths play a very vital component to both the KKF and KKFYC because they are the next genera-

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Washington State Youth Conference

(Continued from page 5)

tion that will continue the work of the Khmer-Krom movement to self-determination.

Mrs. Sothy Kien, KKFYC President, presented a very detailed role of how the youths can get involved. First, the youths need to know that they are Human Rights Activists and not politicians. The objectives of the Khmer-Krom human rights activists are: 1) Raise awareness of the human rights situation in Kampuchea-Krom and promote the indigenous rights of the Khmer-krom people living in Vietnam, 2) Educate and empower Khmer-Krom people of their human rights, 3) Protect our Khmer identity through the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Mrs. Kien went on and explained the details of activities that any youth in the KKFYC can be a part of no matter where they reside. Activities such as gathering information about the Khmer-Krom situations, making press releases to inform the international community, and to participate in peaceful and meaningful demonstrations. A great and effective way would also be to educate the general public and international community about the Khmer-Krom issues. Taking the time to research, writing recommendations, and present speeches on Khmer-Krom issues at international conferences. Participate and learn about international human rights mechanisms and indigenous conferences: EMRIP, UNPFII, UPR, CEDAW, CRC, and UN Human Rights Council. The youths can participate in local events such as dragon boat racing, dance groups, and ceremonies at the temple.

The benefits of being in the KKFYC are as follows: 1) It has a greater impact with a couple of hours of work per week or day, 2) rediscover your roots, identity, and place in the world, 3) make new friends with the same passion and network with international experts, politicians, and indigenous peoples, 4) become a leader by gaining life skills and advancement in your career, and the most fun of all is you can travel the world in the pursuit of human and indigenous rights for the Khmer-Krom peoples.

Lastly, according to Brenda Son, member of the youth audience and first time attending the UNPFII 2014, "I was pleased to see that many members of the board of



KKFYC had flown in from out of the state to join us at the conference here in Washington".

Together, all the presenters spoke about how the youths is the answer to keeping the Khmer Krom culture alive. We learned about how our people back at home are slowly losing their culture due to the lack of basic human rights. With how the Vietnamese government is run, many of our Khmer Krom people are voiceless. This is where the KKFYC comes in and plays a major role. The speakers did an excellent job on addressing how the KKFYC are like family and friends that come together and volunteer on their own time and make efforts in support of one goal. The message to the audience was that if we all pitch in just a little of our time and effort in any way possible, we can raise awareness of the issues that our people have back home so that they can have their basic human rights back. It doesn't matter how old you are or what you do with your life, just as long as you are involved in keeping the Khmer Krom culture alive in one way or another. You can make a difference.

## MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE THAILAND REFUGEE CAMPS

BY SIVUTHA SEUN

### Brief History about Myself

**M**y name is Seun Sivutha, I was born in 1994 in Prey Chaak Village, Dai-ynong commune, Andong Tik District in the province of Khleang, Kampuchea-Krom.

I grew up in Takeo, Cambodia with my mother and father, Hav Savang and Seun Saavang. Now I am living in Holland, in my third year of study at Albeda College. I work at a shop and takes volunteering position at the VOKK radio.

### Life In Cambodia:

I was three months when I emigrated with my mother and father from my birthplace in Khleang to our then new home in Takeo, Cambodia.

From the year 2000 – 2007, I went to Trey Tanlob Primary School in Takeo Province, Cambodia. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007, my family left for Thailand as refugees.

### A Refugee in Thailand:

My family stayed in Thailand from May 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 to June 12<sup>th</sup> 2009. We were detained for 3 months as political refugees in Thailand - from June to September 2009.

### Why I like to work for VOKK

I work for Voice of Kampuchea Krom (VOKK) Radio because as a Khmer-Krom person, I want the Khmer-Krom stories to be heard and known through the news media. Moreover, I also wanted to contribute to the Khmer-Krom fight for our voice and aspirations to be heard so that the Vietnamese government will respect the rights of Khmer-Krom people, who are indigenous owner of the Kampuchea-Krom land.

### Why I volunteer for VOKK and join the KKFYC

I volunteered for VOKK and joined the KKFYC because I wanted to take part in the peaceful and

non-violent fight for Khmer-Krom rights - so we can get freedom for the Khmer-Krom people living in Kampuchea-Krom who are being oppressed and have had their human rights violated every day by the communist government of Vietnam.

My family were separated from our homeland, when we emigrated from Kampuchea-Krom to Cambodia, and from Thailand, where we were eventually resettled in Holland – this was all because we were fleeing away from the oppression by the Vietnamese government. So the determination I made to work for VOKK and KKFYC comes from my hope that I can contribute in helping to deter and stopping the violation of human rights by Vietnam committed against the Khmer-Krom peoples in Kampuchea-Krom. I don't want to see other families to have to flee from their own birthplace again.



"I work for VOKK radio because I want the Khmer-Krom stories to be heard and known."

## UN Charter Annual Meeting

By Virginia Thach and Serey Chau

### The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference - United Nations Charter

On June 28, 2014, the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF), and Hawaii Institute for Human Rights, International Bill of Rights, Amnesty International USA, United Nations Association USA, United States Human Rights Network, and Four Freedoms Forum sponsored a conference to commemorate the United Nations Charter at the International Bill of Rights headquarters in San Francisco.

This is the 9<sup>th</sup> annual conference that KKF has worked closely with Dr. Joshua Cooper, Directory of Hawaii Institute for Human Rights, to organize this conference to honor the history of San Francisco as the host city for the creation of the United Nations. The United Nations Charter was signed on June 26, 1945, in this City.

The theme of the conference for this year is “Creating a People Centered Approach to the Universal Periodic Review Consultation Preparation Phase: Community Coordinated Stakeholders Report Writing and Rights Realizing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle”.

With the Internet and new technology that we have nowadays,



some speakers who live in other states used Skype to deliver their talks. Google Hangout was used to live the conference for participants who couldn't physically attend. Most part of the conference was recorded and published on YouTube for people to watch.

Most of the panels talk about the works of the activists in the United States trying to gather recommendations for the Second Universal Periodic Review of the United States. Dr. Kirk Boyd gave a talk about “A World Court of Human Rights Rooted in an International Bill of Rights: The Evolution for Equality from Our Current Regional Rights Mechanisms & Rights Treaty Committees”. The latest version of the Internal Bill of Rights, version 10<sup>th</sup> just completed right before Dr. Kirk delivered his talk. KKF will help translating this version to Khmer and Vietnamese. KKF has urged the Khmer-Krom

around the world go to: <http://internationalbillofrights.org/> to sign this Bill to show their support and showing that the Khmer-Krom want to live peacefully and their rights to be respected as enshrined in this Bill.

The human rights documentary film, *Koch Brothers Exposed: 2014 Edition* was shown during the lunch time. This film can now be found on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgrvbeFWzN4>

Dr. Cooper and I talked in a panel about “The Role of the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Procedures: The Eyes and Ears of Challenges Facing Humanity in Quest for Freedoms & Equality”. The audiences were surprised to see how much works that KKF has done to help raising the Khmer-Krom issues with the Special Procedures who visited Vi-

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

etnam. Some of the participants do not know about the UN Special Procedures, so I gave them this link so they can learn about it: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx>

Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, visited Vietnam from 19 to 28 October 1998. After he came back from Vietnam and wrote a report about religious violations committed by the Vietnamese government, (this is his report: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G98/053/71/PDF/G9805371.pdf>), the Vietnamese government had not allowed any Special Procedures visiting Vietnam since 1998 until 2009.

In 2009, during its first Universal Periodic Review, Vietnam was questioned why it does not allow the Special Procedures to visit its country. Under pressure and want to polish its human rights record, Vietnam started allowing the Special Procedures visiting its country.

Before the Special Procedure visiting Vietnam, KKF sends reports regarding to the issues of the Khmer-Krom are facing to the Special Procedures. It helps the Special Procedure to aware so they know the issues before arriving Vietnam. When they came back, they did write a report about it. These are the Special Procedures who visited Vietnam since 2009:

Ms. Gay McDougall, Independent Expert on minority issues, visited Vietnam from 5 to 15 July 2010.

Final Report: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A-HRC-16-45-Add2.pdf>

Ms. Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, Independent Expert on human rights and extreme poverty, visited Vietnam from 23 to 31 August 2010.

Final Report: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G11/131/12/PDF/G1113112.pdf>

Mr. Anand Grover, Special Rapporteur on the right to health, visited Viet Nam from 24 November to 5 December 2011.

Final Report: [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session20/A-HRC-20-15-Add2\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session20/A-HRC-20-15-Add2_en.pdf)

Ms. Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Visited Vietnam from 18 - 29 November, 2013

No final Report yet, but there is a Press Release about her trip: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14035&LangID=E>

Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, will visit Vietnam from 21 – 31 July, 2014. Before his trip, KKF President, Mr. Thach N. Thach and Dr. Cooper met with the Special Rapporteur and his assistants to raise the concerns and also gave them the reports of religious oppression against the Khmer-Krom in Mekong Delta.

At this conference, Virginia Thach, KKFYC representative from San Jose, and I also talked in a Panel about “*State of Four Freedoms Around the World: Freedom of Speech and Worship; Freedom from Fear and Want*”. Virginia had done a great job to tell the audiences about the fundamental freedoms that the Khmer-Krom are facing. Some participants even offered to invite KKF representatives to talk at their meetings so the members of their organizations aware about the human rights violations against the voiceless Khmer-Krom in Vietnam.

## Studying Civil Resistance online, Case Study on Vietnam and Cambodia

Over the past eight months, USIP's Academy has launched 8 self-paced, online courses, registering more than 3,000 people in more than 134 countries. The work, however, is not solely a numbers game. Peacebuilders, activists and educators working in conflict zones must be able to take the knowledge, skills and perspectives that USIP offers online and adapt them for their own specific needs in the field. A case of young Khmer activists in Vietnam and Cambodia and another involving students in Hawaii interested in peacemaking illustrate the need.

Joshua Cooper, a lecturer at the University of Hawaii and director of the [Hawaii Institute for Human Rights](#) used USIP's online course, [Civil Resistance and Dynamics of Nonviolent Conflict](#), with a group of indigenous Khmer youth in Vietnam and Cambodia who are organizing for rights and justice with the help of supporters around the world, and separately with a group of his students in Hawaii. The goal of the course is to enhance nonviolent strategies and empower more people to understand the dynamics of nonviolent civic mobilization.

The idea in each case was to integrate the online course with on-site work. Cooper saw the online course as valuable not only for individuals wanting to learn on their own but also for groups that want to learn together.

Cooper works with the Khmer youths and spiritual leaders as an adviser to a United Nations program. The activists include members of the organization [Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation](#). During the period when they used the Civil Resistance coursework, they met every Sunday, joining together via Google hangout from all over the planet – from Hawaii to Phnom Penh to Vietnam's Mekong Delta to Seattle and Florida.

They started each of their meetings with a short overview outlining the session's relevance to cur-

rent campaigns for human rights in Southeast Asia. Throughout the week, they would post their insights along with links to specific podcasts and videos from that week's session onto social media sites. That enabled the participants to share what they were learning with other youth leaders in their networks who are regular participants at the United Nations, in the international arena and in the [ASEAN People's Forum](#), a conference held each year prior to the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The use of the online course allowed a global group of front-line activists and community leaders to establish an agreed instructional pace appropriate for their needs, ask immediate questions of one another, share common ideas and foster informal discussions, online and offline. They also took the knowledge, skills and perspectives that were shared and presented during the online course and applied them to current struggles in Cambodia, such as the ongoing protests that followed the general elections in July 2013, partly over Vietnamese influence in Cambodia and over low wages for garment workers.

### Political science course

Separately at the University of Hawaii – West Oahu, Cooper's students agreed the online course would be a good addition to the readings in their Introduction to Political Science course. Each week, they would review one of the sessions online, listen to the podcasts together in class, and then debrief and discuss them as a group.

They applied the various methods for analyzing nonviolent conflict to current campaigns for justice in Hawaii and around the world. During the current events portion of the semester, the students connected lessons introduced in the online course to the youth-led movements in Venezuela and Tai-

*(Continued on page 11)*

(Continued from page 10)

wan. One student's final paper was a review of Taiwan's Sunflower Revolution, based on these analytical tools. They also discussed on how nonviolent resistance could have changed the current situation in Ukraine.

The students found particular inspiration in the "On the Ground" interviews featured in the online course. These are short video conversations with activists and organizers who have had direct experience in nonviolent action. So Cooper assigned the students to conduct their own "On the Ground" interviews with activists in Hawaii.

With both of these groups – activists and students – the online course helped foster deep discussions about current strategies and tactics being incorporated in movements around the world, Cooper said. It also encouraged in-depth analysis of alternative direct actions that could challenge oppressive power structures and build broader nonviolent movements, he explained.

In follow up conversations, he told me he intends to use the online course as a model for community campaigns and college courses to further inspire nonviolent struggles for human rights. Next year, he will be integrating another USIP online course, [Global Religious Engagement](#), into his work with faith-based communities. That course is currently in beta mode and being offered at no charge for a limited time.

*Daryn Cambridge is a senior program officer in USIP's Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, where he leads curriculum development and educational design for Academy Online. For complete details of our online courses, see our [web site](#). You can view a TedX talk by Cambridge entitled "[Bridging the Distance: Teaching and Learning Peace Online](#)".*

Source of Original Article: <http://www.usip.org/publications/studying-civil-resistance-online-case-study-cambodia-and-vietnam>.





# HUMAN RIGHTS

**Item 3: Special theme: “Principles of good governance consistent with the  
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Articles 3 to 6 and 46”**  
Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple  
Speaker: Melanie Ly

Madame Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Forum:

As a young woman representing our voiceless Indigenous Khmer-Krom Peoples from Mekong Delta of Vietnam, we believe that good governance starts with the recognition that indigenous peoples do exist within their borders. We are particularly concerned with the fact that Vietnam continues to deny our existence and continues to label us as “Ethnic Minority”. In the Vietnamese language, the term Indigenous is different with Minority. The Indigenous in Vietnamese means “bản địa” and Minority means “thiểu số”.

Mr. Chairperson, for 10 years we have asked Vietnam to recognize us as indigenous peoples and yet we stand today still unrecognized by Vietnam. In fact during the EMDRIP session last year, Vietnam stated that “although there are no indigenous peoples in Vietnam, they supported the UNDRIP.” Until such recognition occurs, our Khmer Krom people continue to miss out on their right to freely determine our political status and pursue our economic, social and cultural development as stated in Article 3 of UNDRIP.

While we are encouraged that Vietnam is trying to demonstrate its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights by becoming an official member of the Human Rights Council for the term of 2014-2016 and supporting the adoption of the UNDRIP in 2007, it is time Vietnam takes the lead in recognizing the indigenous peoples living within its borders.

We would like to recommend the following recommendations:

- Request Vietnam to refer to us, the Khmer-Krom people as Indigenous Peoples, Khmer-Krom or “bản địa” in Vietnam in respect to our right as traditional owners of the land.
- Ask that Vietnam begin the process of recognizing the Khmer-Krom people as the indigenous peoples of the Mekong Delta and our rights to self-determination as enshrined in Article 3 of UNDRIP by establishing a national institution for Indigenous Affairs.
- Remind Vietnam that “self-determination” associated with “indigenous peoples” is not a threat or a means for our people to demand for power sharing or claiming back the lost control of lands and natural resource. Just like our Indigenous brothers and sisters around the world, the Khmer-Krom Peoples want to have the right to “self-determination” as enshrined in Article 3 of the UNDRIP.
- Ask that Vietnam allows and promotes the formation of independent indigenous associations, communities and religious institution in recognition of our right to maintain and strengthen our Khmer culture and language and gives us a choice to choose if we want to participate in the political or social status of the State.
- In respect to the traditional owners of the land, we ask that Vietnam to revert all Vietnamese names of our provinces to its original indigenous names. For example, Tra Vinh should be called Preah Trapeang and Soc Trang be called Khleang.
- Ask that Vietnam take a more active role in promoting UNDRIP and its importance to indigenous peoples like the Khmer-Krom by distributing translated UNDRIP in Khmer and Vietnamese to our people on ground. Vietnam should allow the International Development Agencies to open workshops to train the Indigenous Peoples about UNDRIP on ground in Vietnam.
- Request that Vietnam help facilitate open dialogue between the government and the representatives of Indigenous Peoples. This way, the Indigenous Peoples will have an opportunity to freely raise their concerns without fear.
- Urge Vietnam to ratify Convention Against Torture (CAT) to show that Vietnam has a willingness to respect human rights, especially the rights of the indigenous people without using torture as a means to resolve issues with indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairman, will it be another 10 years before Vietnam recognises our Khmer-Krom as the indigenous peoples of the Mekong Delta or will it takes a lead and recognize us today? Good governance will only be successful if all Indigenous Peoples are recognized by their own government.

Thank You

**Item 4: Human Rights (a) Implementation of the UNDRIP**

Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple

Speaker: Brenda Son

Madame Chairperson and Distinguished Members of the Forum:

The implementation of UNDRIP for the Indigenous Khmer-Krom Peoples living along the Mekong Delta and its surrounding areas remains a major challenge because Vietnam does not recognize the Indigenous Peoples within its borders.

During the Half Day discussion on Asia, Vietnam continues to deny our existence as IPs.

The implementation of UNDRIP is only successful if all governments including Vietnam establishes a legal system to begin the recognition of its indigenous peoples. While we are encouraged that Vietnam supported the adoption of UNDRIP seven years ago, it is time that Vietnam takes concrete legal steps to recognize the Khmer-Krom people as the indigenous peoples of the Mekong Delta and that the promotion UNDRIP is important for our Khmer-Krom people to survive and live freely as peoples.

In reaffirming the words of Dr. Devasish Roy, Permanent Member we would like to urge Vietnam to replace the term “Ethnic Minority” with “indigenous peoples” in respect to who we are.

On behalf of the voiceless Khmer-Krom in Vietnam, we would like to suggest the following recommendations to the forum:

- Request the Permanent Forum members to identify which Member States have not recognized its indigenous peoples and have a round table discussion on how and when such recognition will occur. We encourage the coordination of an expert workshop amongst impacted indigenous peoples and states still challenging the current consensus.
- Urge Vietnam to invite the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, to meet the Indigenous Peoples, especially our Khmer-Krom in Mekong Delta.
- Request Vietnam to create an Independent Human Rights Institution to establish a legal process to start recognizing the Khmer-Krom people as the Indigenous Peoples of our ancestral land, Kampuchea-Krom.
- Collaborate and coordinate together a popular social media campaign to raise awareness about the UN DRIP through various techniques such as UNDRIP video with IPs reading the 46 articles and also community radio programming teaching the rights enshrined in the UN DRIP
- Urge Vietnam to allow the UNDRIP to be freely distributed in Vietnam. In 2009, the United Nations Development Fund for Women provided funding to help translating UNDRIP. But as of today, this important translated document just exists on the Website of the Vietnam National Assembly ([http://www.na.gov.vn/nnsvn/upload/images/Attach/Quyenn\\_cua\\_nguoi\\_thieu\\_so%20va%20ban%20dia.pdf](http://www.na.gov.vn/nnsvn/upload/images/Attach/Quyenn_cua_nguoi_thieu_so%20va%20ban%20dia.pdf)). Most of the Indigenous Peoples in Vietnam do not know the existence of this important document.
- Urge Vietnam to implement Article 16 of the UNDRIP to allow the Khmer-Krom to freely establish its own media without discrimination so that they can promote the important rights that are enshrined in UNDRIP to their own people.
- Request that Vietnam create human rights training programs not only for its government officials but open workshops to educate the local indigenous Khmer-Krom people about their human and indigenous rights.
- Urge Vietnam to implement Article 13 to recognize Khmer as being the mother tongue language of our Indigenous Khmer-Krom peoples. Ask Vietnam to recognize Khmer as an official language and have both languages on official documents in the Mekong Delta. In helping to protect our indigenous identity, we ask Vietnam to change the names of the Khmer provinces and other historically significant places to its original native names. For example, instead of Tra Vinh, it should be called Preah Trapeang.
- In respect to Article 12 of UNDRIP, we ask Vietnam to release Venerable Thach Thuol, Venerable Lieu Ny, Mr. Thach Phum Rich, Mr. Thach Tha, Mrs. Lam Thi Xuan Lan, Mrs. Ly Thi Danh, Mrs. Ly Thi Sa Bon who were simply exercising their basic rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Urge Vietnam to allow Khmer-Krom to form an independent Indigenous Khmer-Krom Association so they can send the Indigenous Khmer-Krom representatives from the Mekong Delta to represent themselves at this conference and other UN mechanisms and allow them to see firsthand, the global work of indigenous community in promoting UNDRIP.

Madame Chair, we applaud Vietnam on becoming an official member of Human Rights Council for the term 2014-2016. It is time for Vietnam to show its commitment as the member of the Human Rights Council by recognizing the Indigenous Peoples in Vietnam so the UNDRIP can be fully implemented.

Thank You

**Item 4: Human Rights (b) Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple

Speaker: Virginia Thach

Madame Chairperson,

We would like to congratulate Madame Victoria Tauli-Corpuz for being elected the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and we look forward to having your visit to ancestral lands in Kampuchea-Krom in the near future.

Unrecognized by the government of Vietnam, our Khmer-Krom people continue to remain in the dark about the importance of UNDRIP in protecting their culture, identity, language and livelihood.

Our basic indigenous right to culture and identity continue to be oppressed. Around this time last year, several of our spiritual leaders including Venerable Ly Chanh Da, Abbot of Prey Chop temple was beaten and defrocked twice without ceremony for wanting to start Khmer classes within his temple. Four of his supporters who were beating drums to alert villagers of the defrocking were sentenced to 10 months to 1 year imprisonment. They remain in prison today.

Another our spiritual leader, Venerable Thach Thuol is currently serving 6 years prison sentence for wanting to start Khmer language classes. Venerable Lieu Ny, Abbot of Tra Set temple is serving 4 years prison for refusing to allow Vietnam to use our sacred Theravada Buddhism as a political tool to silence of our biggest defenders of our Khmer-Krom identity and religion, our Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks.

We would like recommend the following:

1. Ask a member of the Human Rights Council, we ask Vietnam to extend an invitation of UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to visit Kampuchea-Krom within the next 6 months.
2. Request Vietnam respect our right as an indigenous organization representing our voiceless Khmer-Krom people. It is important to allow us to self identify and include us as Indigenous Peoples and not Ethnic Minority.
3. Seek the help of UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples to ask that all governments, especially Vietnam to create an Indigenous Peoples Institution that is ran by indigenous Khmer-Krom people so that they could fully participate in all decision making processes affecting their culture, social and economic status without fear or discrimination.
4. Ask that Vietnam establishes a national human rights institution in Kampuchea-Krom in partnership and cooperation with KKF, a peaceful organization that has been actively promoting the human rights of its indigenous peoples for over a decade.
5. Ask Vietnam to immediate release all eight Khmer-Krom human rights defenders from prison and recognize that they were simply exercising the right to preserve their culture and identity.
6. Reaffirm to Vietnam that the recognition of Khmer-Krom as the indigenous peoples within its border is crucial to the successful implementation of UNDRIP.
7. As a newly elected member of the Human Rights Council, it is our sincere hope that Vietnam not only respects the human rights of all peoples living in Vietnam but realize that only through an open and peaceful dialogue can we can start the process of reconciliation and recognition of our right as indigenous people of the Mekong Delta and its surround areas. Only through such recognition will Vietnam be truly respected by our Khmer-Krom people and the international community. On the occasion of our 10th anniversary here at UNPFII, will Vietnam accept the hand of peace and partnership with KKF so we can begin the recognition of Khmer-Krom as the ancestral owners of Kampuchea-Krom?

**Item 5: Half-day discussion on the Asian region**  
 Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation  
 and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple  
 Speaker: Michelle Ly

Madame Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Forum:

As one of the indigenous peoples from Asia, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Permanent Forum for giving us the right to speak, a right that is largely absent in Asian countries.

According to the Asia Indigenous People's Pact Foundation, two-thirds of self-identified indigenous peoples are living in Asia. They are the poorest people in the region and their fundamental rights continue to be violated, such as the right to be recognized as Indigenous Peoples on their ancestral land and our right to self-determination as enshrined in Article Three of the UNDRIP.

The lack of recognition and right to form independent associations as Indigenous Peoples means that they cannot fully participate at meetings such as the UNPFII and are unable to exercise or enjoy their human and indigenous rights. There are very few Indigenous Peoples Organizations from Asia that are allowed or could afford to participate at this forum to raise their issues. In Vietnam, the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation are the sole voice on behalf of the indigenous Khmer-Krom peoples living in Vietnam.

As the Indigenous Peoples of the Mekong Delta in Southeast Asia, the Indigenous Khmer-Krom people have been living in FEAR since the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. Vietnam is now an official member state of the Human Rights Council, but human rights defenders such as Venerable Thach Thuol and Venerable Lieu Ny are still in prison for up to six years for exercising their basic right to Freedom of Expression. On behalf of the voiceless Khmer-Krom in Vietnam, I would like to suggest the following recommendations to the forum:

- Request the help of the Permanent Forum in creating a side event that identifies countries that do not currently recognize its indigenous peoples.
- Urge ASEAN member states that do not recognize the indigenous peoples in its country, such as Vietnam, to create a legal framework to start recognizing the indigenous peoples instead of labeling them as ethnic minorities.
- Urge member states in Asia, especially Vietnam, to invite the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, to visit Kampuchea-Krom.
- Urge UNDP to help create workshops to train the Indigenous Human Rights Defenders in Southeast Asia about their rights under the UNDRIP.
- Urge Vietnam to allow the UNDRIP to be freely distributed. It has been more than seven years since Vietnam signed the UNDRIP, but the Indigenous Peoples in Vietnam are still not allowed to freely read the UNDRIP or learn about their rights.
- Urge Vietnam to allow the Indigenous Peoples to freely form their association. Even as a member of the Human Rights Council, Vietnam still does not allow anyone in their country to officially and freely form any independent association. There are some associations in Vietnam, however, these organizations are working for the government to show that Vietnam does have that freedom.
- Urge Vietnam to allow member organizations of the Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders Network to freely and safely work to protect and promote Human Rights in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government should not criminalize or arrest human rights defenders such as the case of Venerable Thach Thuol and Venerable Lieu Ny. Our spiritual leaders were practicing nonviolence and compassion as they were speaking up for our people's rights to freely practice our religion and language. They have been arrested, defrocked and imprisoned since May 2013.
- Urge the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) to allow Civil Society Organizations to submit human rights violation reports and to further intervene and investigate these reports. The AICHR should have a systematic way in dealing with these offences in order to promote due process.
- Urge AICHR to have open and constructive dialogue with indigenous leaders and representatives of associations that have concerns regarding human rights violations of indigenous peoples in their region.
- Urge the ASEAN member states to inform the Indigenous Peoples and allow them to participate in decision making processes in regards to any developments on their ancestral lands.
- Urge U.S. Embassies in Asia to help issue Visas for Indigenous Peoples who need to travel abroad in order to advocate for their Indigenous Peoples.

Madam Chairman, there are many Indigenous Peoples in Asia who do not have a chance to come to this forum in order to raise their issues. We hope that the representatives of the member states from Asia who are present in this room, take our recommendations back to their countries and start implementing them. Hopefully by next year, the indigenous peoples in Asia, especially in Vietnam, will be allowed and can afford to attend this forum in order to freely express their issues of concern and recommend appropriate solutions to improve and protect their human rights as enshrined in the UNDRIP.

Thank You

**Item 7(a) Ongoing priorities and themes and follow-up:  
Indigenous Children  
Speaker: Samon Thach**

Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Permanent Forum, we would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak about the ongoing struggle regarding our indigenous children in Kampuchea-Krom. September 13, 2007 was the year in which the UN adopted the UNDRIP. Chairperson, that is almost 7 years and counting that Vietnam also recognized the UNDRIP, however there is no difference in our homeland plus the condition of our indigenous children is deteriorating.

We would like to bring your attention to the current situation in the province of Vinh Long also refer to as Long Ho by the indigenous Khmer-Krom. We have received information that indigenous children as young as 3-4 year old, who barely knows how to speak their native tongue are being forced to attend a half day early childhood education program conducted in Vietnamese. Indigenous children ages 5-6 has to attend an all day education program also conducted in Vietnamese, which goes against Article 8, 13, and 14 of the UNDRIP.

A full day education program would start from 7am-10am, break for 4hrs, and would start again from 2pm-4pm. In between the break hrs, lunch is not provided to the children at school. Children have to walk as far as a mile back to their home in the farm or their parents have to bring lunch for them to eat at school. The school doesn't take any responsibility for them during the long break hours. On the contrary, students grade 6th - 12th only studies half day.

Chairperson, we recognized that early childhood education is very important for every child. We feel that the new education policy is taking our indigenous children away from the home and forced them to adopt the Vietnamese language first and make their native language less of a priority. In a more disturbing news, our newborn children name has to have a Vietnamese tone or connotation in order for the government to issue their birth certificate. Those children that don't will not receive one.

Therefore, we respectfully put forth the following recommendations:

- 1) We ask Vietnam to implement a system to have both the teaching of the indigenous languages in school at every level of education, especially in early childhood.
- 2) We ask Vietnam to have the option for parents to allow their 3-4 year old children to attend school or not without fear harassment and intimidation.
- 3) We ask Vietnam to eliminate the long hours break in between the course of the day to allow our indigenous children time in the afternoon to attend indigenous languages classes in their respective pagoda.
- 4) We ask Vietnam to stop forcing our children to take on a Vietnamese name.

Thank you Chairperson and Members of the Permanent Forum.

**Item 8: Comprehensive Dialogue with United Nations Agencies and funds**

Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple

Speaker: Virginia Thach

Madam Chair and Distinguished Members of the Forum:

On behalf of our voiceless Khmer-Krom people from the Mekong Delta, we are very happy to see that there are over 18 United Nations Agencies currently operating within Vietnam to improve the lives of those who live there. We are however, very concerned that many of the programs do not have a strong focus on helping the indigenous peoples, especially the indigenous Khmer-Krom peoples in the Mekong Delta who face marginalization and discrimination.

One of Vietnam's biggest export is rice which is produced on the ancestral lands of the Khmer-Krom people, and yet, our people remain amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged in the region because we are not included in the decision making process and are not well represented within the UN agencies working in Vietnam.

We would like to recommend the following recommendations:

- Urge UN Agencies operating in Vietnam to extend their projects to help the Indigenous Khmer-Krom Peoples and also to consider hiring indigenous Khmer-Krom representatives as a priority within their organization in recognition of their rights as indigenous peoples. There are many Khmer-Krom youths who know Khmer, Vietnamese and English who are fully qualified if they are aware that such opportunities exist.
- Seek the help of UNESCO to work in partnership with KKF to help create effective human rights and UNDRIP education programs in areas where indigenous Khmer-Krom people live so that they are aware of their rights and are able to exercise without fear of being prosecuted.
- Instead of creating more schools, we urge Vietnam to build on existing cultural systems of education already embedded at our local Khmer-Krom temples so our Khmer students can learn their own language starting from Kindergarten.
- Ask that UNESCO include the indigenous Khmer culture in its two years Heritage Education program to promote cultural diversity and inclusion amongst the indigenous peoples in Vietnam.
- Seek the help of UNESCO to create workshops in Mekong Delta where majority of indigenous Khmer-Krom live so they can learn more about how they can preserve their ancestral heritage such as the Sambuor Rainsey temple in Preah Trapeang (renamed Tra Vinh) and the "Derm Chor Teal (Khmer-Krom Tree of Life)" that was planted by Governor Son Kuy and represents our people's struggle to keep our Khmer tradition, culture and language alive.
- In its efforts of Poverty Reduction of Urban areas, in particular Prey Nokor (renamed Ho Chi Minh), we would like to ask UNDP and IMO working with the Vietnamese government to allocate specific funds to help provide adequate housing and financial aid to Khmer-Krom youths who have migrated to already crowded cities due to lack of job opportunities at the provincial levels.
- Seek the help of UNDP to create workshops within Kampuchea-Krom aimed at empowering Indigenous Khmer-Krom women to be aware of their rights such as CEDAW as well as allowing them to become leaders within their own communities and internationally.
- Ask UNDP to look at the land rights issue of the Khmer-Krom people, whose claim to their ancestral lands like the case of Mr. Huynh Ba, was met with a two year prison sentence and his land claim unresolved.
- Seek the help of UNICEF to consider the issues relating to indigenous Khmer-Krom children in their "Children Friendship in Ho Chi Minh City" project. Khmer-Krom children living in Prey Nokor are losing their Khmer identity and are no longer speaking their native tongue language of Khmer because there is inadequate Khmer school nor association to promote and protect their culture and identity.

Madame Chair, we would like to encourage UN Agencies to work not only with Member States but closely in partnership with indigenous representatives so that we have a clear voice within programs and projects that directly affects our people.

**Item 9: Future Work on Indigenous Peoples**  
Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation  
and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple  
Speaker: Vichea Om

Som kurup Lok athipadei, Madam Chair.

We echo the engagement standard expressed so far by Bolivia, South Africa and other permanent members for an inclusive, equal and full participation of indigenous people.

The Khmer-Krom people are not an issue, we are indigenous people, therefore we support the call for the name change of the UNPFII to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Rights by Chief Wilton Little Child.

The KKF supports the upcoming World Conference of Indigenous People, and we hope the government of Vietnam make the positive move to replace the term “ethnic minority” with “indigenous peoples” in respect of who we are leading up to and during the WCIP.

The KKF would like to make following recommendations for future work:

1. Recommends that states undertake actions to incorporate culturally appropriate material in education to ensure that indigenous people can safeguard their culture, transmit their history and preserve their identity. We thank Republic of South Africa for sharing those practices and urging other member states to do the same. We like to specifically urge Vietnam to adopt these practices.
2. To achieve an inclusive and effective equal participation of indigenous people in the matters that concerns them, we ask for Vietnam to help fund and implement capacity building projects in indigenous community, including the contribution of voluntary funds to the UNPFII so that indigenous people from the region can come and participate - the most basic capacity starts with knowing that one has RIGHTS to begin with.
3. Request the Permanent Forum members to identify which Members States have not recognized its indigenous peoples and have a round table discussion on how and when will such recognition occur. We encourage the coordination of an expert workshop among all impacted indigenous peoples and the states still challenging the current consensus.
4. Consensus from states to create an indigenous affairs institution accessible to indigenous people at local level. The institution will help promote dialogue between indigenous people and the state to help promote and protect indigenous rights.
5. We emphasize right to free, prior informed consent to development and projects that takes place in our community. To avoid suffering of the separation and uproot of our people from our homes and further complicate our social and economic situations. Thank You.

**7th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples****Item 3: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

Speaker: Catherine Kim

Mr. Chairman

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate here at the Expert Mechanism and to be a voice for our voiceless Khmer-Krom people who continue in fear and in dark about their basic human and indigenous rights.

Despite being unrecognized, we are encouraged by talks of practical recommendations and implementation of UN-DRIP. We hope that such talks and concrete national action plans will drive the WCIP and its outcome.

We continue to reiterate the necessity for full participation of indigenous people at local, national and global level. As a voice representing our Indigenous brothers and sisters from Kampuchea-Krom, we are pleased to support WCIP. On behalf of our Khmer-Krom people, we have the following recommendations:

First, Seek the help of EMRIP to conduct a study that identifies which States have legally recognized their indigenous peoples within the borders and which have not.

- That the EMRIP recommends that the Alta outcome document continue to be used as the basis for the drafting of the final outcome document of the high level plenary meeting.
- Secondly, for States that has not recognize its indigenous peoples, like Vietnam, we seek the help of EMRIP in establishing a parallel session to promote dialogue with States and Indigenous Peoples representatives to determine a timeline to allow this important recognition to occur.
- That the EMRIP recommends that the Alta outcome document be annexed to the final outcome document of the high level plenary meeting.
- Then, Ask Vietnam to establish a national strategy to begin the process of legally recognizing their indigenous people.
- That the EMRIP recommends that the themes identified in the Alta outcome document be the themes adopted for the high level plenary meeting.
- We also recommend Consensus from states, to create an indigenous affairs institution accessible to indigenous people at local level. The institution will help promote dialogue between indigenous people and the state to help promote and protect indigenous rights.
- That the EMRIP recommends that indigenous peoples continue to have full, direct and equal participation in the drafting of the outcome document and, that the EMRIP also strongly encourages all member states to engage in the inclusive and informal consultations being organized by the President of the General Assembly in order to achieve a consensus outcome document for the high level plenary meeting.
- Ask Vietnam to Implement awareness program through the use of social media, websites, television programs and workshops to let indigenous peoples know about their rights.
- Reiterate the necessity for States, such as Vietnam to conduct a study to ensure that the UNDRIP is reflected within their national constitution and laws.
- Ask that the WCIP outcome have concrete national avenue for IP access to justice
- we also recommend for States to contribute to funds of IP mechanisms, at UN and national level as necessity programs in commitment to IP people & their development.

Finally, leading up to WCIP, it is our sincere hope that Vietnam will recognize the importance of UN DRIP in safeguarding our Khmer-Krom identity, culture and language by referring to us as Indigenous Peoples rather than ethnic minority.

Thank you

Sixth Session of Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Item 5: Study on access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples**

Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

Speaker: Thivanada Julie Kim

Dear Mr. Chair,

The Khmer Krom support the focus on women, youth and disabilities in the continuation of the study on access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Khmer-Krom people desire access to justice. However, we currently live in poverty and fear. We are treated as second-class citizens in Vietnam on a daily basis. When Khmer Krom people attempt to access justice through requests and peaceful actions we are met with indifference and too often imprisonment.

In order to ensure access to justice highlighted in the follow-up study presented by the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I would like to make the following requests:

- We request the Government of Vietnam to create a mechanism which will help the Indigenous peoples to have an access to justice and to be allow to implement the UNDRIP in our daily lives. However to permit this mechanism to works with the both parties ( State and the indigenous peoples ) we would like that a representative of indigenous peoples be included so UNDRIP will be exercised according to established standards in the international law rules. We propose a national human rights institution including indigenous representation.
- We urge the Government of Vietnam to create an institution guaranteeing access to justice which will promote the roles of the language and the culture into indigenous identity, especially indigenous women and children. The indigenous Khmers krom peoples are the most affected from this non-existence of this organism.
- We suggest for the indigenous Khmer Krom children we would like that the laws on the rights of education are translated into the indigenous Khmer language. Because the major part of transmission of our native culture is by oral emission, if the government of Vietnam does not create adequate resource to help the Khmer children to learn their mother tongue , then the perpetuation of teaching the culture and the oral traditions will disappear.
- We recommend to the government of Vietnam to find a solution against the discrimination against our monks denying access to justice toward the main persons who can teach our culture and worldview. When we talk about the culture we are looking to the state to allow them to operate in teaching our culture and transmitting our language to future generations. However, the justice link is with the role of the monk in our community, because its our monks who teach us the rights tools that we have; they involve us into the way to learn how to protect ourselves.
- We note that a rights-based approach is necessary to ensure access to justice. While we believe the current denial of basic justice must be addressed to protect specific civil and political rights. We do aim to create in partnership with elected officials a truth and reconciliation commission to address the historical harms that have faced Khmer Krom people and to build foundation for a better future.
- We also echo the statements made by our indigenous brothers and sisters for the inclusion of indigenous spirituality in the current EMRIP study and future studies. Our spiritual leaders play a prominent role in our communities. Unfortunately, on last May, three Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks were arrested for attempting to realize the rights enshrined in the UN DRIP.

We conclude with an example of the current challenges regarding the content of the access to justice study. The only crime our monk committed was teaching our indigenous language to the children at Prey Chop temple, Lai Hoa commune, Vinh Chau district, Soc Trang province. For this, Ven. Chanh Da Ly was arrested, defrocked, detained and brutally tortured on 16 May. After such a denial of justice, the following day, Venerable Chanh Da Ly was forced to confess alleged crimes on Vietnamese television in plain clothes. Such humiliation and human rights violations are examples of denial of access to justice today built on decades of denial of fundamental freedoms recognized in the UN DRIP and EMRIP's most recent study. Our monk are today's youth taking on a large burden for our entire indigenous civilization.

Seventh Session of Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
**Item 6: Study on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples  
 in natural disaster risk reduction and prevention and preparedness initiatives**

Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

Speaker: Catherine KIM

Mr. Chairman:

The Khmer-Krom people are the Indigenous Peoples of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. Having lived on the Mekong Delta region for centuries, our people love harvesting our growing rice fields. We have lived in harmony with our rich land and natural resources. With the current challenges of climate change, we are adapting with our indigenous knowledge. Yet, it requires resources to prepare for disaster risk reduction. It is also important to note the core challenge is that Vietnam armed with no knowledge or respect of the land has over the decades created canals which have destroyed our lands, channeling salt and changing the fundamental landscape of our land.

With the impact of climate change, 20 percent of the rich fertile lands of the Mekong Delta will be submerged if there is a 75 cm rise in sea levels. Not only will rich fertile lands disappear but millions of Khmer-Krom people will be potentially displaced and deeper entrenched in poverty. There must be policies and practices to save the farmlands that provide nutrition and livelihood.

Our homeland is the core of our human rights promotion and protection. Climate change drastically changes our living conditions and our ability to survive in the face of rising seas due to no actions of our own.

We are witnessing an ever increasing impact on our right to health. However, if policy and practices continue we will surely be struggling to exercise our right of self-determination as our homeland will be submerged. How can one inhabit a homeland that is underwater? Where will our people live? How can we leave our lands that our ancestors have inhabited since time immemorial? We request concerted actions. On top of the natural disaster, the path of development by Vietnam since its colonizing of our ancestral lands has damaged the environment as never before. We have a moral, collective duty to restore the natural state of nature in our homeland, Kampuchea-Krom.

On behalf of the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation and the voiceless Khmer-Krom in Vietnam, I would like to suggest the following recommendations to:

- Urge the EMRIP to help initiate a consultation process on climate change between the Khmer-Krom people and Vietnam to ensure indigenous peoples take an active role in policy development and dialogue.
- Request Vietnam to allocate the funding that Vietnam has received to hire the indigenous Khmer-Krom peoples who have experiences in preventing the climate changes to work on the sustainable land management projects to protect the livelihoods such as: planting mangroves and building dykes to control the follow of saltwater to avoid large amount of damages to the farmland, properties and food supplies.

Urge EMRIP to work with FAO and IFAD in their new initiative of the Forum to collaborate creatively to ensure our right to food is recognized and respected. Khmer Krom desire to participate in the FAO and IFAD Forum to represent needs of indigenous peoples in Vietnam related to preventing destruction of food crops during natural disasters and to respond immediately to restore the land.

- Seek the help of UNESCO to create a publication relating to the impacts of climate changes in our own indigenous language as a teaching tool for our Khmer-Krom to learn because they are living on the edge of the rising sea.
- Seek the help of UNICEF help initiate projects which will help to distributing climate change information and awareness, such as: posters, leaflets, magazines, in the Khmer language to the Khmer-Krom, especially the Khmer-Krom children, living in the area near the ocean. Climate education holds the key for prevention and preparation for this terrifying phenomenon.
- Seek the help of UNHABITAT to develop an effective system of providing aid to those who are in need when experiencing losses through the effect of climate change such as floods and typhoons.
- Ask that Vietnam stop demanding that Khmer Krom blindly follow all their rules, regulations and policies without a feedback process or an opportunity for Khmer-Krom farmers to participate in a constructive dialogue on sustainable development.

Since Vietnam has received millions of dollars in combating the impact of the climate changes affecting Mekong Delta, it is time for Vietnam to partner with the indigenous Khmer-Krom peoples who have been living thousand years in Mekong Delta to minimize the impacting of climate changes to the livelihoods of the peoples this area.. We have a lot of indigenous knowledge to contribute for natural disaster risk reduction and prevention and preparedness initiatives in our homeland.

Thank You for your listening

## Commonly used Human Rights Acronyms

By Ricky Tran

UNPFII - United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNDP - United Nations Development Program

FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization

IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

ILO - International Labor a Organization

IMF - International Monetary Fund

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO - World Health Organization

GA - General Assembly

WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization

ECOSOC - United Nations Economic and Social Council

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNEP - United Nations Environment Program

UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund

WFP - World Food Program

UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlement Program

IPO - Indigenous Peoples Organization

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ICERD - International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR - International Covenant on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CAT - Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ICMW - International Covenant on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families

CPED - International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

UNDRIP - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

វត្តសេរីមង្គលជ្រុងខ្មែរ - ខេត្តទឹកខ្មៅ កម្ពុជាក្រោម  
Wat Serey Mungkul Jrung Khmer - Tirk Kmao Province Kampuchea Krom



**OUR HOMELAND**

## Nhi's Journey to a better life through education

by Mai Mothana



**Y**ou may know that it is very hard for poor students to finish each school-year. But there are also a few students who can overcome all challenges in their lives to make their study run smoothly and even can become very good students at school. Thach Thi Nhi is one of those students that I would like all of you to be know about.

Nhi lives in Andong Preah hamlet, Dermchhrey commune, Mot Samuth district, Preah Trapeang province (Vietnamese calls âp Bôn Thanh, xã Ngũ Lạc, huyện Duyên Hải, tỉnh Trà Vinh). The living condition of her family is really difficult. Unfortunately her father passed away when she was 12 years old. She had to live with her mother and 4 older brothers. All of her brothers could not finish high school because their parents were too poor to let them continue their studies. As the result, all her brothers were forced to work in Preynokor city to earn money to support the family. Her family has a very small amount of land. Her mother works mostly on the fields doing work for other farmers to get money and support the family. Nhi also helps her mother whenever she has free time from school. She goes to pick red peppers or pick peanuts in order to buy books, notebooks, pens and school supplies or to buy food for her family's daily life. Those are some challenges that Nhi faces every day.

Although her family always faces a lot of challenges in life, all those things cannot affect the result of her study. She is never absent from her classes except when she is extremely sick. She is quite keen on studying. She is good at every subject, especially when studying the Khmer language. In her class, she is the best at the Khmer language. Besides learning Khmer at school, she takes her little free time to attend the Khmer class at the temple near her house during her 3 month vacation. Thanks to learning her mother language, she knows much about Khmer's culture. Nhi is very proud of being Khmer. While wearing the Khmer traditional clothes in an occasion of attending Khmer Buddhist ceremony, she said "I really love you and thank you so much for teaching me Khmer and helping me understand a lot about our culture, I am really proud of being a Khmer girl " to Ven. Thach Koung, the abbot of homeland temple.

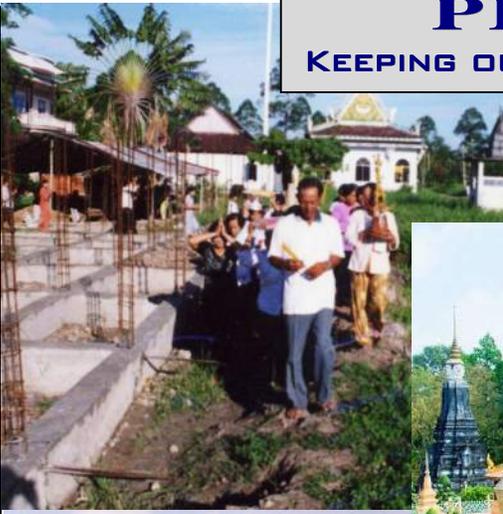


In summary, Nhi's hardwork and dedication is highly commendable. She always struggles due to the challenges in her life but she still became a good student and has very high spirits in maintaining the Khmer culture. All Khmer generations should follow her ability to overcome her hardships and follow her meaningful way of thinking to contribute in promoting the Khmer community and culture.

# PHOTO ESSAY

KEEPING OUR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS ALIVE

## KAMPUCHEA KROM កម្ពុជាក្រោម





# YOUTH VOICES AND ACTIVITIES

## YOUTH VOICES AND REFLECTION

## Virgina Thach



**F**or one of my many memorable experiences in my life, I really felt like this was one I would cherish and remember the most. Who knew that attending the Youth conference and the Permanent Forum would have changed my life? Growing up my father, Toan

Thach, always taught me a lot about being Khmer Krom, the struggles our people had, and keeping our traditions alive. Being exposed to issues of not just Khmer Krom people, but indigenous peoples all around the world was a great eye opener. Attending the Permanent Forum and hearing all the speeches, attending side events, and the youth caucus was a great way to get involved and get educated on current issues that many indigenous peoples face everyday.

One thing I didn't know is how many youths around the world are involved and passionate about what our Khmer Krom People face. As youths, we have adapted to the American traditions although we have been following our Cambodian traditions before we can even talk. Because of this, we can take advantage of the education we receive and utilize it to help spread the issues our Khmer Krom People face in Vietnam. There were many young intelligent individuals that I was glad to become close with and to be able to share this experience with. There is a saying that "age is nothing, but a number" and in this case it is true. No matter how young we are, we have the same passion, thrive, and perseverance as our fathers, mothers, aunts, and uncles do.

As the Khmer Krom Federation Youth Committee, we have progressed and have become our father and mother's only hope to carry on the Khmer Krom name for the future generations. With a short amount of time, I can see so much progress and success within the members of the KKFYC and I gladly will say that I will help contribute no matter what it takes.

## Khemeran Dinh



**B**efore the KKFYC, I had lost trust in Khmer people. I didn't care to become part of a community that didn't help each other and that had leaders without integrity. My journey to Philadelphia and

to the UN in New York City gave me a passion to want a better existence for Khmer people. More importantly this experience gave me a sense of unity that I had been missing with Khmer people. I was in a situation where I am an American born and didn't have any other Khmer friends to fill in the cultural void that I had because of the broken community in which I'm from. It was nice to be surrounded by people who are so genuinely passionate for a common goal. I know this is something I want to continue because the Khmer culture is a beautiful one that needs to be protected and shared and the only way to keep it going is to defend its people from today's oppression.

## Audrey Nhu Pham

**B**efore attending the conference and the UNPFII I had no idea what to expect and what I was in for. My grandma used to tell me stories about our homeland and the struggles the Khmer-Krom people had to go through but to be honest, I never really understood. Unfortunately, growing up I was exposed to the stereotype version of what Khmer people are known to be and of course I was influenced and began to believe in this idea. But soon enough I realized not to judge a book by its cover, and to do so I had to pick up that book and read. (a metaphor)

Since it was my first year attending, my knowledge was very limited despite taking a course in international relations and acting out a mock trial of the UN. Of course, pretending is different than the actual thing. I could recall, during each of the General Assembly meetings there were particular topics set out for each day where delegates, NGOs, and indigenous groups wrote speeches pertaining to them. They discussed indigenous issues within the mandate of the Council related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. There were moments when I felt confused and embarrassed for not understanding the terminology. This made paying attention fairly difficult and to be honest there were times where I dozed off. I felt like it was partly my fault as well, I knew this event was important yet I didn't fully equip myself for it. To add on to that, knowledge of my culture, heritage, history and current events lacked.

Upon arriving at the temple on Sunday morning, I remember being extremely anxious. Unsure of who I was going to meet and whether or not we'll get along with one another but surprisingly in the end we made long lasting friendship. It was so inspiring to meet other youth from around the country and from other countries like Canada. We were all so different yet we had a common goal and that's what brought us together. Just when I began to lose hope for the next generation and the influence of westernization, it was because of these ambitious youth that gave me hope and more passion. I was drawn by this environment that inspired me to want to make a difference and educate not just others but myself about the Khmer-Krom



struggles.

I discovered that wanting to change the world doesn't happen overnight. I was very fortunate to have worked with an amazing team this year. They've taught me that in order to succeed, it takes hard work, long hours, sleepless nights and determination. I remember one day instead of going out for lunch, we decided to stay and continue collaborating and brainstorming ideas to write speeches. We were all tired and hungry but that didn't stop us because we had each other. That following night, the whole team stayed up, sitting around the dinner table to collaborate and edit a speech that needed to be submitted the next day. We had this grouping system which made things efficient. Some of us would run errands such as making copies of speeches while the others would attend youth caucus meetings. This allowed us to split out the agenda evenly between the general assembly meeting, youth caucus meeting, Asian caucus meetings, and side events. This is why we worked together so well.

It's amazing how your life is one way and in an instant, it becomes something else. I never thought I would have such an opportunity to attend an event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This brought a realization and appreciation to my culture and identity. After all these years, I finally understand the backbone of Khmer-Krom history and who I am as an indigenous person. It's such an honor to know that I'm a part of a bigger cause and that I've only just begun my journey.

## Vichea Om



**H**i, my name is Vichea. This year, I attended the UNPFII and for the first time the youth conference.

At first, I found it difficult for myself to open up to everybody, as English is my third language and I found it was a barrier to fully communicate with the other youths. I could express myself, but not completely. Then, I realized how much easier it would be if I could communicate with everyone in Khmer. My khmer is not flawless, but I can \*handle it\*. I remember hearing one of the monks talk about the importance of our language. Reality is, we are losing it bit by bit. I am not saying this to be negative, but to open our community's eyes, like the monk did. It was a subject that caught my attention the most during the conference. Losing our language is losing a part of our identity. I wish that our future grandchildren could get the chance to hear their grandparents speak khmer with their entourage like we did. All the joy and happiness circulating around. The khmer karaoke we heard at every party surrounded by the prahok smell. I want that memory to be passed onto generation after generation. My concern is what can we do to practice our language? To be more fluent? ...to be more Khmer?

A part from that, I really enjoyed the youth conference, because I got to meet a bunch of Khmer-Krom people from all around America. I got to hear all the youths open up about themselves and felt connected. We all have a story to share and the youth conference gave us that opportunity.

During the UNPFII, I learned the most during side events. The subject that interested me most was technology and its uses. It's a modern way to transmit knowledge around the community, it cuts down the loneliness and gives higher self-esteem when one shares a story and another can feel assimilated. It brings people to work in team even oceans away. We

just need to teach more about our culture and language as long as our community is young. Its important to keep fighting and use media to reflect our identity.

---

## Thida Y. Chau

**F**or my first 8th World Youth Conference, I really enjoyed my time there and making new friends. I was also happy to meet people who were interested in the same ideas of fighting back for our country and people. I not only made new friends but felt like I gained a committed and strong family that will stand together for our voices to be heard from all over the world to conquer and fight for justice for our people and country back in Kampuchea Krom. At the conference, I learned some new things that my grandfather had not taught me yet. I learn a lot from my grandfather about Kampuchea-Krom, Cambodian history, people and land. My grandfather would always say (translated from khmer to english), "We must fight for what was ours. Kampuchea-Krom, Cambodia and Khmer Surin belongs to our ancestors. Cambodia was a big country before it was split and we must fight to take our provinces back to regain our country." I would like to thank my dad, Dejkun Koeun Thach and other Khmer-Krom monks that I have know these past years, for encouraging me to attend the youth conference because if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have been able to break out of my shy shell to share my thoughts with others and support Kampuchea-Krom.



Thida Chau

## Reflection on Seattle, WA Trip

By Kyle Kien

A reporter once asked Prime Minister Winston Churchill who led Britain during the dark moment of the Second World War: “What was the greatest weapon his country possessed against the regime of Nazi Hitler?” Without pausing for a moment, Churchill said “It is England greatest weapon always has been: “Hope”. We Khmer Krom people might have lost our land that was handed over to the Vietnamese government by France without our consent; however, let me remind you that we have not lost our hope. Hope is the most powerful and energizing word in the English language. It is something that gives us the power to keep going in the toughest time. Its power energizes us with excitement and anticipation as we look forward to the future. It’s been said that a person can live 40 days without food, 4 days without water, 4 minutes without air, but only 4 seconds without hope.

After coming back from the Philadelphia conference in June 2014, I realized the momentum of our Khmer Krom self-determination movement has ignited within me and my hope for Khmer Krom people back in our ancestral land has grown stronger. This was the reason why I decided to go to Seattle, WA, to join the conference and contribute with whatever I can in a positive way. Upon arriving in Seattle, I was delighted to be greeted by so many Khmer Krom families, and learn that there is a very big Khmer Krom community in Seattle, and Tacoma, WA.

During the day event that was hosted in the Tacoma public library, we were able to discuss current issues that are affecting our Khmer Krom community, and educate our youths about our cause and movement. Most of the people in attendance were local youths, and I was very happy to see that there were enthusiastic and wanted to learn about Khmer Krom. The special guest speakers were: Mr. To- Kim Tong, KKF special advisor from Toronto Canada; Mr. Serey Chau, KKF Vice President from San Jose, CA; and Ms. Sothy Kien, KKYC President from Florida. One poignant moment for me was when Mr. To Kim Tong was shedding tears as he speak to the youth and encourage them to participate and be active in our community to support our cause. Afterward, we have special Q & A session for the youths to the special guests. I remember one youth, Hien, was very vocal and asked “How come we are not focusing on the Dragon boat racing and making it as priority because it is a great way to unite the people.” Mr. To Kim-Tong responded, which I agreed: “We have more urgent issue to worry about such as our monks are being defrocked and imprisoned.”

I was honored and humbled to play the role as co-MC, English portion, with Ms. Somalin Thach, Cambodian portion, for the night fundraising event. For those of you that don’t know, Ms. Somalin Thach and her husband, Samon Thach, they were the two main people that organized the whole event. They are the most humble and down to earth Khmer Krom couple I have ever met. I felt privilege to be able to get to know and stayed at their house for one night. I considered them as role models in the community. From my opinion, and heard what the locals had to say: the fundraising event was very successful, and received many words of encouragement for all guests from afar to come back next year to support. From the experience of this trip, it has deepened my perspective, and understanding of the Khmer Krom culture, and see the potential of what we can accomplish together if we are united and work together as one.

Buddha once said: “Better than a hundred years of mischief is one day spent in contemplation. Better than a hundred years of idleness is one day spent in determination. Better to live one day wondering.”

## Participating a peaceful demonstration in Washington DC

by Jackie Tran

**K**hmer-Krom, when many of us hear these words we think of either Cambodia or Vietnam almost automatically. In the reality of things, this isn't the true history behind the name. For many years Khmer-Krom (aka Kampuchea- Krom) was originally a part of Cambodia's royal kingdom territory. Although there were numerous other additional incidences that had led up to the splitting of Khmer-Krom from its mainland, there were a few of the major conflicts such as the "Vinh Te" canal, the French colonization, and Elysee Agreement signing. The main topic that was addressed on Friday's protest referred mainly to the agreement because **WITHOUT** the proper consultation of the Khmer king, the Elysee agreement was signed by exiled emperor of Vietnam, Bao Dai on June 4th, 1949. By doing so, Bao Dai had signed for France to allow greater independence as a protectorate, to keep its forces in Vietnam after WWII and keep all of what we know as Khmer-Krom; it forever marked the day where the history and presence of Khmer-Krom was essentially annihilated to the public eye.

With such a mistake having been done, everyone was forced to undergo a major identity change by making their last names sound more Vietnamese in order to do basic living activities like get a job and have their farmland lost for political power. Soon enough the people in "South Vietnam" were forced to give up their home and land and were only taught Vietnamese in schools and for those who didn't learn the language, they suffered immensely unless their families had money to send their child to Cambodia for almost any form of education.

Fast forwarding a few decades to 1970's when the Khmer Rouge era struck, the Vietnamese government ordered the dissolution of the Khmer-Krom Theravada Buddhist Association which means the leaders of all the Khmer-Krom Buddhist Associations, the leaders of the local Khmer-Krom temples, and thousands of the Khmer-Krom people (soldiers, police, government workers, translators, etc...) who worked for the old regime (Republic of Vietnam) were sent to prisons called "Re-education Camps". Hundreds of them died in the prisons because of torture, starvation, sickness, etc... In addition to this, the government has also forced these people to live in almost uninhabitable areas with no basic living supplies such as food or clothing, irrigation systems and education, showing practically very slow genocide. Also, Vietnam supposedly accused the attack of a village on the Khmer rouge as a way to cover up a revenge plot against those who did not support the NFL during the Vietnam war and to invade Cambodia. By doing so Vietnam has shown its ethics and deceitful intent towards the Khmer population; though oppression and depriving the people with no basic needs.

ក្រុមសិល្បកម្មប្រពៃណីខ្មែរ-ក្រុង

វត្តមេមង្គី ភូមិមេមង្គី ឃុំចាំញ្ញាហ្លួង ស្រុកផ្លោងច់ ខេត្តត្រាវិញ

Facebook photo courtesy of Boros Lakkoun



# KHMER-KROM ARTS & CULTURE

# Opening a Khmer School

By Michelle Ly



The Inauguration ceremony of Khmer school in Worcester Massachusetts 2014

**O**n June 29, 2014, the Buddhak Rangsey temple of Worcester Massachusetts held an opening ceremony for a Khmer school for children of all ages. Being constantly surrounded by English speaking folks in America can definitely leave a Cambodian-American child behind when it comes to speaking their own native language. The --- temple has worked hard for the opening of the new school by countless construction projects to organizing everything in accordance to the Khmer-Krom community in Worcester.

The place, which once was a garage, has now been newly renovated into a two story classroom by the hard-working Khmer-Krom men. This project was completed in hopes that more Cambodian-American children will have a spark of motivation to learn how to speak the language of their parents.

With that being said, the folks of Buddhak Rangsey temple in Worcester and other Khmer speaking classes around the country would like to urge the young generation to give it a try. When you learn how to speak your own language, you find a part of yourself.





**O**n behalf of the KKFYC I would like to say thank you to everyone who has made our 2 week event so special. Without your contributions, it would not be as special or inspiring as it was!

Thank you to Melanie Ly, Michelle Ly and Somborithiny D. Lam for your leadership role at the UN. Thank you to Ricky Tran training and sharing your knowledge with our youths on the mechanisms of UN.

Thanks to Captain James Văn Thạch for embarking on the journey with us, learning about our peaceful movement and empowering the youths to become involved.

Thank you to Audrey Nhu Pham, Sophanarith, Dany Annie Bobanny and Tahirih Thach for opening up the issues of being able to identify as Khmer and opening your hearts to embrace our Khmer-Krom group. Thank you Khmertaemouy Thach, Thanary Thach, Thai Thach, Retty Danh, Brenda Son, Khemaran Dinh, Sovandany, Virginia Thach, Justin Thach and Lyka Son for spending the time at the United Nations to learn more about our issues.

Thank you to Samon Thach, Somalin Thach and baby Okeo for being wonderful role model of how the whole family can get involved in our movement.

Congratulations and thank you to Vichea Om for speaking on our behalf at the United Nations. Special thanks to Joshua Cooper for guiding us through our speeches and ensuring we are effective at the UN always.

Thank you to Pu Giap Tran, Pu Thach N Thach, Pu TO Kim-Thong, Serey Chau, Pu Mannrinh Tran, Om Reap

Chau, Mea Vuong, Lenny Tang and the KKF team in New Jersey and Philadelphia for hosting our KKFYC youths. Without your support and inspiration, it would not be as successful as it can be!

Thank you to Sonny Thach for providing the first week's accommodation to our youths and Pu Billy and Paul for opening his apartment and kitchen once again this year.

Thank you to Jenny Kim for sponsoring our pens and Sarath Thach for the lunch at NYC!

Lastly our Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks who blessed and reminded us the important of speaking our language and standing up for rights and culture, Venerable Danh Tol, Venerable Kim Mouen, Venerable Dara Yuong and Venerable Tranthach Dung. Extra special thank you to Venerable Koeun P. Thach for capturing the event on VOKK.

Thank you to countless others who purchased our t-shirts or donation (announcement coming soon) for providing the financial aid to drive our movement forward.

I am honored to meet each and every one of you. A million thank you for being the inspiration, opening your hearts and embracing who we are and embarking on the journey with us on how we can make a difference to the lives of our people back in Kampuchea-Krom. It is the start of a great journey and I look forward to working with all of you in the near future!



AS AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF KAMPUCHEA KROM  
(SOUTHERN VIETNAM), WE WANT THE RIGHTS TO OUR  
CULTURE IDENTITY PRESERVED AND PROTECTED

