

Fifteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Item 5: Indigenous People: Conflict, Peace and Resolution  
Joint Statement of Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation and Khmer Kampuchea Krom Temple  
Speaker: Dany Son

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving us a voice to address this topic.

Our people have endured but also survived acts of violence. We have survived wars and genocide. We have been targeted by the government, as they have punished our people. However, we are still alive and active for a better life to improve the well-being of all people in our homeland, the nation and around the world. Our spiritual learning is rooted in peace, cooperation and tolerance. Our religion provides spiritual guidance for how people can live compassionate life toward one another. Unfortunately, our monks' fundamental freedoms are violated with impunity. However, we remain committed to nonviolence.

An open dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and member states requires recognition of Indigenous peoples with respect to the UNDRIP. Khmer Krom identity is not recognized and thus respected. In our situation, the Khmer Krom people are denied the right to self-determination; which is the denial of access to mechanisms towards conflict resolution.

We ask the help of the Permanent Forum to set a timeline for member states, such as Vietnam, to begin the process of legally recognizing all Indigenous Peoples within their borders. Without such recognition, indigenous peoples like our Khmer Krom people continue to be left behind, unable to fully participate in, enjoy or exercise UNDRIP.

We seek the help of the UN agencies like UNESCO to fund the translation and distribution of UNDRIP into Indigenous languages so that the people are aware and armed with the knowledge of their rights. Such rights could be promoted online through social networks and offline workshops located within indigenous communities.

We ask that the role of indigenous women is promoted in all conflict-resolution discussions and request UNDP and other UN agencies to make specific efforts at accommodating and reaching out to indigenous women through their workshops and empowerment programs

We are thankful for the amazing work of everyone here at the United Nations for helping to promote and protect the rights of our indigenous brothers and sisters. Human rights defenders continue to put their lives on the line to protect indigenous peoples - specifically for the Khmer Krom people, two of our spiritual leaders, Venerable Thach Thuol and Venerable Lieu Ny, who remain in prison for defending their right to preserve our culture, language and religion.

Thank you