

**АССОЦИАЦИЯ КОРЕННЫХ  
МАЛОЧИСЛЕННЫХ НАРОДОВ СЕВЕРА,  
СИБИРИ И ДАЛЬНЕГО ВОСТОКА  
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

**RUSSIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
OF THE NORTH  
(RAIPON)**



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Специальный консультативный статус  
при Экономическом и Социальном  
Совете ООН

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NGO in Special Consultative Status with  
the Economic and Social Council  
of the United Nations

Постоянный участник  
Арктического Совета

Permanent Participant  
of the Arctic Council

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**An open appeal of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North,  
Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (RAIPON) to the UN  
subsidiary bodies on Indigenous issues**

The Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (RAIPON) was established in 1990 and represents the interests of 40 peoples living in 28 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

The Association includes 34 regional public organizations of Indigenous peoples, which unite dozens of municipal organizations, communities and groups of Indigenous small-numbered peoples. The leaders and governing bodies of the Association are elected by the nationwide congresses of Indigenous peoples and are guided by the provisions of the Charter.

The Association represents the interests of its members in relations with the State authorities of the Russian Federation, the authorities of the constituent entities, local self-governmenty, non-profit and commercial organizations. Representatives of the Association are members of the advisory bodies in the regions, working groups at the State Duma, the Federation Council, Ministries and Departments. It has a special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and one of the Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council.

Recently, the Association has succeeded in achieving the positive changes in legislation concerning Indigenous peoples in the areas of traditional natural resource management, protection and preservation of the traditional way of life and traditional habitat, social insurance, education, language policy, etc.

The achievement of such results requires the high level of expertise of the Association's representatives and the ability to find compromises based on mutual respect.

Organizations of the UN system, in accordance with their statutory instruments, also commit to holding activities that provide an inclusive and respectful environment, which implies the integrity and transparency of their participants' status.

Nowadays the Association faces the violation of these principles. We see an increase in the abuse of the openness of the UN platforms by narrow groups of people living outside their country and not recognized by legitimate communities of Indigenous peoples of Russia. Having lost all ties with their historical lands and their communities, they politicize the international negotiation process in the field of Indigenous peoples' rights and increasingly promote someone else's agenda to the detriment of indigenous peoples' interests they claim to protect.

At the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, this problem was marked as an increasing trend and cited by representatives of Russia, regions of Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

As illustrated by the Russian context, we see that the reasons why such people have left their country are largely related to mercantile interests, disguised as fictitious political persecutions. At the same time, the flight of such "human rights activists" as Pavel Sulyandziga and Dmitry Berezhkov is related to the fear of responsibility for the financial fraud committed over the years at the helm of Indigenous peoples' associations.

These people create fake "indigenous peoples' organizations" under various names with a membership of several persons. These include the "Batani" international solidarity fund (Pavel Sulyandziga), the "Arctic Consult" consulting

company (Dmitry Berezhkov, Pavel Sulyandziga), the International Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of Russia (Pavel Sulyandziga, Dmitry Berezhkov, Andrey Danilov), etc.

Abusing the openness of the UN platforms, they call on Indigenous peoples to confront and condemn their state, call for the exclusion of Russian Associations of Indigenous peoples from the UN system.

In this regard, we **declare** that Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East within the Russian state have maintained their numbers, self-government institutions, traditional way of life, culture, languages, ties with the land, life support and settlement systems. This can be an example for many regions of the world that have experienced Western colonization, segregation, assimilation, where the number of dispossessed Indigenous peoples has been decimated.

With this in mind, despite domestic and foreign political situations, we remain committed, continue to love and respect our country!

We **reaffirm** our right to express a free civil position in support of our state and our President, adopted by the Association in accordance with its own procedures on March 1, 2022.

The information spread on the UN platforms that the Association called for military actions is disinformation; the Association expressed its support for the protection of the rights of the residents of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and the unacceptability of the revival of Nazi ideology. More than 27 million citizens of the USSR died in the Second World War against Nazism! The Indigenous peoples of Russia volunteered for frontline to defend their homeland.

We note with bitterness the obvious fact that the “civilized” world has ignored the massive and systemic violations of the fundamental rights of millions of Russian-speaking residents in these territories on ethnic grounds since 2014, including the rights to self-determination, mother tongue, non-discrimination, personal security and life.

In view of the above, neo-Nazism will always be a “red line” for Russians who have not lost their historical memory, their respect and gratitude for their ancestors!

The mandate of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to inform and advise the UN system requires access to full and unbiased information on the state of affairs. In this regard, we **support** the unprecedented openness of the Forum, ensuring the participation of the smallest and most informal groups of Indigenous peoples.

At the same time, the abuse of the Permanent Forum’s openness and the growth of misinformation and unsubstantiated claims by fake organizations leads to the formation of negative stereotypes related to ensuring the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Particular concern and dismay is caused by “stealing our voices” under the pretext of the principle of openness in the work of the Permanent Forum. Fake organizations are speaking out on behalf of Indigenous communities they are neither affiliated to, nor recognized by. Their speeches are often aimed at discrediting the approaches and projects of the Associations.

The 21<sup>st</sup> session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues included a number of side events dedicated to Russian issues and the interaction of the indigenous peoples of Taimyr with industrial companies. A number of high-ranking officials of the UN system were invited to attend, while key speakers were representatives of fake organizations unrelated to Taimyr, uniting several people living outside of Russia.

Their attention to Taimyr is based on a selfish desire to impose their consulting services on industrial companies. For this, they form an artificial problem range and a negative image of local associations of indigenous peoples as “non-independent and ineffective”. The approaches developed with Indigenous peoples participation in implementing corporate business policies, plans to promote

the sustainable development of Indigenous small-numbered peoples, procedures for free prior and informed consent, etc. are discredited.

This approach outraged dozens of associations and communities of Indigenous peoples of Taimyr, who prepared a collective appeal to the experts of the Permanent Forum about the inadmissibility of discussing issues of their life without their participation (Appendix 1).

In this regard, we note the fact that people who have completely lost connection with their native land and not recognized by the associations of Indigenous peoples living on the land have no future and no moral right to speak on behalf of our peoples or express our opinion at international platforms. This is the domain of authorized representatives of such peoples, who have complete and reliable information on the state of affairs and take part in the development of decisions.

There are 47 Indigenous small-numbered peoples living in Russia, differing significantly from each other, but they do not allow themselves simplified assessments of the situation in relation to the Indigenous peoples of other countries and to each other.

Taking into account the above, on behalf of the Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of Russia, we note:

1. The danger of politicizing international cooperation on Indigenous issues, as well as attempts to discriminate against its participants on the basis of unilateral approaches, incomplete and unreliable information on issues not related to the mandate of the relevant UN subsidiary bodies.
2. The need to improve the ethical and professional standards of participation in the international negotiation process on Indigenous issues in order to create a favorable and respectful environment, prevent its politicization, and to provide the UN system with complete, unbiased and reliable information.

3. The need to strengthen the status of participants in the international negotiation process on Indigenous peoples' issues, elected and identified as legitimate representatives of Indigenous peoples on the basis of a transparent expression of the will of their broad associations and accountable to them.

The Coordinating Council of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of Russian Federation (RAIPON)