

Land-grabbing in Asia displaces indigenous peoples and destroys environment, says UN rights expert

GENEVA (8 September 2020) - Indigenous peoples in Asia are facing massive displacement, the destruction of their environment and rising poverty due to land-grabbing, says a UN human rights expert.

“Large-scale development projects including dams, mining, monocrop plantations and logging are increasing in the region and causing serious human rights violations as indigenous peoples lose their traditional lands and resources,” said the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Francisco Cali-Tzay, referring to a [regional consultation](#) organised by his predecessor in Bangkok. It will be presented to the Human Rights Council in September.

“States must take measures to prevent violence and the criminalisation of indigenous peoples arising from the exercise of their rights and the defence of their lands and territories. Strengthening the regulation of private companies is essential.”

Indigenous peoples lack legal recognition of their status and there is widespread failure to protect their lands and respect their rights to participate and to be consulted in decisions affecting them.

Across the region, indigenous peoples, in particular women and persons with disabilities, continue to be discriminated against and marginalised. For States to put into action their development pledge of leaving no one behind, the obligations towards indigenous peoples must be at the forefront and reflected in policy measures and in the allocation of resources.

“The promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples and their traditional practices, are key to achieve sustainable development, combat climate change and the conservation of biodiversity,” the Special Rapporteur said.

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View report on regional consultation [here](#).

Mr. José Francisco CALÍ TZAY (Guatemala) is the [Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples](#). He is Maya Kaqchikel from Guatemala, with experience in defending the rights of indigenous peoples, both in Guatemala and at the level of the United Nations and the OAS. Mr. Calí Tzay was the founder and member of a different indigenous organizations in Guatemala and the Ambassador of Guatemala to the Federal Republic of Germany. He was Director of Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala; member of the Presidential Commission against Discrimination and Racism against Indigenous Peoples in

Guatemala (CODISRA) and President of the National Reparation Program for Victims of the Internal Armed Conflict. Mr. Cali Tzay was President of the Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, a treaty body from which he was elected for four consecutive periods of 4 years each.

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