Violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing

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The European Parliament adopted by 534 votes to 71, with 73 abstentions, a resolution on violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing.

The total population of indigenous peoples is estimated to be **over 370 million people living in over 70 countries** worldwide, representing around 5 % of the total world population. There are at least 5 000 distinct indigenous peoples, who, despite their geographical dispersion, face similar threats and challenges.

These people are victims of violence as well as racism, discrimination, forced evictions, destructive settlement, and illegal expropriation of their ancestral lands or lack of access to their resources, livelihoods and traditional knowledge.

Parliament called upon the Union and Member States to:

- adopt all necessary measures for the **full recognition, protection and promotion** of the rights of indigenous peoples, including to their lands, territories and resources;
- make sure that all its development, investment and trade policies **respect the human rights of indigenous peoples** as enshrined in human rights treaties and conventions;
- follow all the necessary steps to effectively comply with the provisions contained in **International Labour Organisation Convention** No 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples;
- create conditions for the fulfilment of the objectives set out in the **UN Declaration** on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and to encourage its international partners to adopt and implement it fully;

Rights of indigenous peoples: the EU was called upon to support the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and legally recognise the territorial autonomy and **self-determination** of indigenous people, which implies their right to own, use, develop and control their lands, territories, waters and costal seas, and other resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership.

The resolution stressed the importance of:

- ensuring universal access for indigenous peoples to their national population registers;
- conducting mandatory human rights **impact assessments** of any new activity in the mining and oil and gas extraction sectors prior to the commencement of these activities;
- **including indigenous peoples** and rural communities in the decision-making process with regard to strategies for tackling climate change, and consulting them in all deliberations on issues that could affect them;
- ensuring physical integrity and legal assistance for indigenous, environmental, intellectual property and land rights defenders, and fully respect the rights of indigenous peoples and rural communities;
- support indigenous peoples' requests for international **repatriation** and the establishment of an international mechanism to fight the sale of indigenous artefacts taken from them illegally, including through financial assistance under the EIDHR.

Parliament called for the **withdrawal of private security** and military forces deployed in the territories of indigenous peoples in violation of their rights.

Land grabbing: Members remained concerned about the situation of land grabbing as a result of corrupt practices by corporations, foreign investors, national and international state actors, officials and authorities. They called on the EU to:

- place greater emphasis on the issue of land grabbing;
- request **disclosure of land acquisitions** involving EU-based corporations and actors or EU-funded development projects in order to increase the transparency and accountability of those acquisitions;
- adopt the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests and support their implementation.

Business and human rights: Parliament called for the EU to :

- ensure that the **UN Guiding Principles** for Business and Human Rights are fully integrated into the national programmes of Member States and incorporated into the practices and operations of transnational corporations and business enterprises with European ties;
- engage in constructive negotiations on a **UN treaty** on transnational corporations that guarantees respect for the human rights of indigenous peoples, and of women and girls in particular;
- develop a European regional **action plan for business and human rights**, guided by the principles enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- hold multinational corporations and international financial institutions to account for their impact on indigenous communities' human and environmental rights ;
- establish an effective administrative **complaint mechanism** for victims of human rights violations and other harmful impacts induced by official development assistance-funded activities with a view to initiating investigation and reconciliation processes.

Sustainable and economic development: highlighting the essential role of indigenous peoples in protecting the environment, Parliament called on the EU to include indigenous peoples, and especially indigenous women and rural communities, in their strategies for tackling climate change and in the design of efficient climate strategies relating to adaptation and mitigation. It requested that the issue of climate-induced displacement be taken seriously.

Given that **80 % of forests worldwide** constitute traditional lands and territories of indigenous peoples, Members stressed the vital role of indigenous peoples for sustainable management of natural resources and **conservation of biodiversity**. They recalled that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) calls upon its states parties to respect the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples.

In addition they noted that between 200 and 500 million people worldwide practise pastoralism. Parliament stressed the need to foster **sustainable pastoralism** and, more broadly, to recognise pastoralists' and indigenous peoples' rights related to communal ownership of ancestral land, their right to freely dispose of their natural resources and their rights to culture and religion.

It called on all states to commit to ensuring that indigenous peoples have genuine access to health, education, employment and economic opportunities.

Lastly, Parliament recommended that greater prominence be given to the situation of indigenous people in the **EU's foreign policy**, that a mechanism be established to carry out independent impact assessment studies prior to the conclusion of trade and cooperation agreements in order to prevent their deleterious effects on the rights of indigenous and that the EU strengthen support for indigenous peoples as part of its development cooperation programmes.