

The Sámi Parliament in Sweden Cannot Accept the Exploitation Sápmi

The following statement by the Sámi Parliament in Sweden was read in Gállok on August 28, 2013. It had been adopted unanimously in a plenary session the day before. Translated by G.K. from the Swedish version publish on www.samitinget.se

In connection with the ongoing exploitation of Sápmi by mining enterprises – including the test drilling in Gállok neat Jáhkâmáhkke and the plans for a mine in Raavrhjohke near Dearná, which are obvious breaches of the Sámi's human rights as well as their rights as indigenous people to control their own culture, land and environment – the Sámi Parliament in Sweden demands...

- that the Swedish state stops all prospecting and test drilling and does not issue mining concessions, until it is ensured that Sweden respects the international agreements on the rights of indigenous people, especially the principles of “Free, Prior and Informed Consent” which need to guide all decisions that effect the Sámi people.
- That the Sámi Parliament is granted actual power over Sámi land.
- That legislation will be charged in a way that prioritizes the Sámi's need to access unpolluted land and water over the profit interests of foreign venture capitalists.
- The national interests are reevaluated in ways that prioritize long-term interests over short-term profits.
- That sustainable environments are of the highest priority, enabling current and future generations to maintain their culture, ensure physical and mental health and practice traditional livelihoods.
- That the environment necessary for the Sámi livelihoods such as reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, duodji, tourism and others to flourish must not be threatened by short-sighted exploitation and that the right to reindeer protected in the Constitution is respected.
- That cultural and psycho-social consequences must be considered in all political decisions concerning Sápmi.

According to the Swedish Constitution, the Sámi are an indigenous people with internationally recognized rights. In the United Nations, countries work together to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples covenant an Civil and Political Rights of 1966, the peoples of the world are granted the right to self-determination. This has since been emphasized in international agreements on indigenous rights. Conventions have been added to strengthen the rights of children, woman, workers and other vulnerable social groups. The rights of indigenous people to their land and culture as well as social development have been laid out in the 1989 International Labour Organisation Convention 169 and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as in the Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in 1992 and various other international conventions, declarations and resolutions.

We find it deplorable that the state's mineral strategy and its review of mineral law contradicts the government's promise to protect the traditional livelihoods of the Arctic. The mineral policy that Sweden is practicing today stands for a continued colonization of Sápmi and the Sámi people.

The Sámi Parliament cannot accept the ongoing exploitation of Sápmi. The Sápmi Parliament will continue to work for sustainable forms of development that guarantee all the Sámi the possibility and work in Sápmi.