

UNREPRESENTED NATIONS AND PEOPLES ORGANIZATION

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China's Rapid Growth and the Rise of Human Rights Violations in Southern Mongolia

1 December 2017

China is one of the world's fastest growing economies. As of 2016, the country has been ranked the second largest trading nation in the world, boasting a rapidly growing consumer market. The impressive economic growth has immensely increased China's clout within the international community. However, these economic superlatives cannot obscure the fact that, since its rise in global power, the Chinese state has failed to address international criticism regarding its systematic use of human rights violations within the country's borders.

Southern Mongolia, officially named the "Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region", is a province of China whose people continue to suffer under state-sponsored violence, while Beijing ruthlessly plunders the region's resources. Since the inception of the Mongol dynasty in the 13th century, Southern Mongolia has faced many challenges in maintaining its right to self-determination. When, in 1921, Outer Mongolia proclaimed its independence as the People's Republic of Mongolia, Inner Mongolia remained under Chinese rule. While the southernmost part of Mongolia then had a brief success in enforcing its independence in 1933, this attempt was rather short-lived as, in 1945, Chinese forces took back control of Southern Mongolia.

In the years following the Second World War, China implemented vicious assimilation policies to increase the control of its territories and rewrite its history to be that of a homogeneous population. These policies dealt a heavy blow to all of China's non-Han segments of the population, also including Tibetans and the Uyghurs of East Turkestan, but affected Southern Mongolia in particular, putting brutal constraints on religious freedoms, language rights and the Mongolians' pastoralist livelihood systems. Since 1949, hundreds of temples in the region have been destroyed and the practice of Buddhism is now practically extinct. Meanwhile, teaching of the Mongolian language has been suppressed and education in Mandarin enforced. In addition, the Chinese government forced settlement upon Mongolian pastoral herders, leaving thousands homeless, landless and jobless. Demographic manipulations and the resettlement of millions of Han Chinese farmers to the Mongolian region further demoted Mongolians to a minority within their own region, thwarting their agro-pastoralist livelihood system. Large-scale farming destroyed rich grasslands and turned them into deserts, while the ruthless exploitation of natural resources continues to introduce hazardous industrial and chemical wastes to the region.

Over the years, Southern Mongolians have organised numerous protests and employed other forms of peaceful civil resistance in an attempt to bring attention to their urgent situation. China, in all cases, responded with a heavy hand, "punishing" activists with excessive violence, unlawful arrests, torture, imprisonment and killings of herders and their livestock.

In light of the persistent human right violations in this and other regions of China, UNPO urges the European Parliament and the international community to hold the country accountable for its dismal human rights record. Most recently, UNPO, with the support of Csaba Sógor MEP and in partnership with the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, hosted a conference on the case of Southern Mongolia, entitled "False Autonomy: China's Rule of Southern Mongolia." UNPO continues to stand with the people of Southern Mongolia and, with this and similar future events, will continue to help have Southern Mongolians heard in Brussels and beyond.

SOMALILAND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

10-15 November 2017

On 13 November 2017, Somaliland held its third presidential election whose electoral procedures were observed by an international election observation mission. The international observers, including two representatives of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, applauded the overall successful electoral process while, at the same time, noting minor concerns to consider for future elections. The former president, Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud, had not sought re-election, clearing the way for one of three candidates to assume his post. Muse Bihi Abdi of the Kulmiye Party was declared the winner of the election. Read more about the EOM [here](#). To read the EOM's press release in reaction to violent post-election riots in which 7 people have tragically lost their lives click [here](#).

1ST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF IRANIAN DEMOCRATS, COLOGNE

18 November 2017

UNPO representatives had the honour of speaking in support of the launch of the Council of Iranian Democrats, taking place in Cologne, Germany. The event was a unique and historical moment where ten political parties representing different Iranian national communities joined together with the ambition of creating a comprehensive, united coalition. The newly-founded Council seeks to work towards guaranteeing national minorities' rights, while maintaining territorial integrity. Read more [here](#).

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING: TERRAS BRASILEIRAS/ BRAZILIAN LANDS, BRUSSELS

20 November 2017

UNPO, with the generous support of the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation and in collaboration with MEP Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL) and MEP Francisco Assis (S&D), organised a screening of the documentary "Terras Brasileiras" at the European Parliament. The event raised awareness of the indigenous Guarani-Kaiowá communities in Mato Grosso do Sul (Brazil), who continue to wait for the demarcation of their ancestral lands and for their human and minority rights to be respected. Read more about the documentary [here](#).

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LAUNCH OF FRIENDSHIP GROUP ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF LATIN AMERICA, BRUSSELS

22 November 2017

UNPO, in collaboration with MEP Francisco Assis (S&D) and with the support of the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, organised a conference on the occasion of the launch of a friendship group on the indigenous peoples of Latin America. The conference was the fruit of the ongoing collaboration between UNPO and several Members of the European Parliament and focused on Brazil and the hardships suffered by the Guarani-Kaiowá. Attended by academics, researchers, activists, journalists and members of the public, the event looked at ways in which the European Union can aid in promoting respect for indigenous rights in Brazil. Read more [here](#).

PARTICIPATION IN DROI DISCUSSION ON RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

22 November 2017

The European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) held an Exchange of Views on the rights of [Indigenous Peoples, notably in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Brazil and Chile](#). The focus of the discussion was on the right to consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in public policies and legislation and also the right of access to justice in order to claim their human rights and seek redress for violations. UNPO Programme Manager Fernando Burgés gave the opening speech on the right to consultation and participation of indigenous peoples of Brazil and Chile. Read more [here](#).

ADVOCACY TRAINING AT THE BELGIAN-ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, BRUSSELS

24 November 2017

UNPO representatives participated as trainers in a workshop for students of the International Master in European Studies (IMES), taking place at the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Brussels. The UNPO trainers introduced the participants to advocacy work in European fora, focusing in particular on the European Parliament.

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RFI INTERVIEW ON SITUATION OF HMONG IN NORTHERN LAOS

27 November 2017

A UNPO representative and James Her (Congress of World Hmong People) were interviewed for a radio segment on the situation of the Hmong in Northern Laos by international broadcaster Radio France Internationale. The piece focused in particular on the fate of the Hmong ChaoFa who, to this day, suffer under the Laotian government's punitive war of extermination. You can listen to the interview [here](#).

CONFERENCE ON SOUTHERN MONGOLIA, BRUSSELS

28 November 2017

UNPO, in collaboration with MEP Csaba Sógor (EPP) and the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, organised a conference entitled, "False Autonomy: China's Rule Over Southern Mongolia" to raise awareness among European policy-makers of the oppression of Mongols within China and to provide a comprehensive introduction to the human rights abuses they are subjected to. Read more [here](#).

SOUTHERN MONGOLIA ADVOCACY MEETINGS, BRUSSELS

27-29 November 2017

UNPO organised advocacy meetings for representatives of the Southern Mongolian Human Rights information Center (SMHRIC) to raise awareness of ongoing human rights violations against the peoples in the autonomous region of Southern Mongolia. This round of meetings focused specifically on informing Members of the European Parliament of the detrimental impacts of linguistic discrimination, environmental degradation and the illegal detention of activists pursued by the Chinese state.

ILHAM TOHTI ALDE 'PRIZE FOR FREEDOM' CEREMONY, THE HAGUE

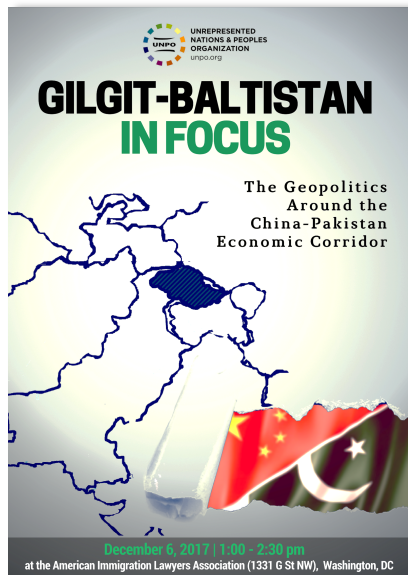
29 November 2017

On behalf of Prof Ilham Tohti, the Ilham Tohti Initiative and UNPO accepted the Prize for Freedom that is awarded annually by Liberal International (ALDE) to honour an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the advancement of human rights and political freedoms. Read more [here](#).

UN MINORITY FORUM EVENT: "PAVING THE WAY FOR INCLUSIVITY FOR MINORITY YOUTH", GENEVA

1 December 2017

On the occasion of the 10th session of the United Nations Minority Forum, UNPO will host a side-event entitled "Paving the Way for Inclusivity for Minority Youth". The conference will offer a platform for representatives of unrepresented peoples to discuss the detrimental impact that national assimilation policies have on minority youth and put together an action plan to make strides towards a more sustainable future. Read more [here](#).



CONFERENCE ON GILGIT-BALTISTAN AND CPEC, WASHINGTON DC

6 December 2017

Building on a series of events on human rights in Gilgit-Baltistan organised by UNPO in Europe, UNPO will organise a conference entitled "Gilgit-Baltistan in Focus: The Geopolitics Around the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" in Washington, DC. The event will provide a platform for a critical discussion on the human rights and geopolitical situation in Gilgit-Baltistan and includes talks by Aliya Iftikhar (Committee to Protect Journalists), Jonathan Hillman (Center for Strategic and International Studies, CSIS) and Seth Oldmixon (Liberty South Asia). Find more information on the event [here](#).



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20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHT PEACE ACCORDS

4-8 December 2017

UNPO will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the unimplemented Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord with a social media campaign and press release, both of which will raise awareness of the shortcomings of the accord. Signed 20 years ago, many promises granted to the minorities of the region continue to go unrecognised to this day.

KHMER KROM GATHERING, ORLANDO (US)

9 December 2017

UNPO representatives will participate in the 2017 year-end meeting of the Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF), taking place in Orlando, Florida. Participants will discuss the persistent human right violations facing the Khmer Krom and work on a strategy for the coming year. Find more information on the event [here](#).

CONFERENCE ON ABKHAZIA, BRUSSELS

13 December 2017

UNPO, serving as the Abkhazia Chamber of Commerce for Belgium, looks forward to hosting a conference in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Abkhazia. The event will introduce the fruitful trade and tourist opportunities available in the Abkhazia region. The aim of this conference is to raise awareness of Abkhazia's independence and establish the nation's credibility as a trade partner to the EU.

CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FREEDOMS IN EAST TURKESTAN, WASHINGTON DC

January 2018

UNPO, in collaboration with the Uyghur Human Rights Project, will organise a conference entitled "Uyghur Religious Freedom and Cultural Values Under Siege". Taking place in Washington DC in early 2018, the conference will bring together US policymakers, academics, human rights experts and members of the Uyghur diaspora to discuss the current situation in East Turkestan as regards religious and cultural rights and what concrete steps must be taken to resolve the issue.

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Upcoming Events:

- 1 December: UN Side-Event on Minority Youth, Geneva
- 6 December: Conference on Gilgit-Baltistan and CPEC, Washington DC
- 9 December: KKF Annual Meeting, Orlando
- 13 December: Conference on Abkhazia, Brussels
- January 2018: Conference on Uyghur Religious and Cultural Freedoms, Washington DC



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We rely on financial support from our Members and friends to continue our work each year. Such donations are crucial to ensure the continued full participation and engagement of a great number of unrepresented communities, indigenous peoples, minorities and occupied or unrecognized territories. The 2015-17 General Secretary's Activity Report provides an overview of the activities we have been working on over the past years with the help of our [partners](#). Please do also spread the word about UNPO or invite your friends to like our [Facebook](#) page or follow us on [Twitter](#).