



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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14 December 2018

Excellency,

I would like to inform you that in the course of its 97th Session, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered information received related to the use of Special Agricultural Business Leases (SABLs) in Papua New Guinea and its impact on indigenous peoples' lands. In this regard, the Committee would like to refer to its letters dated 11 March 2011 and 17 February 2016, to which the State party has regrettably not yet provided any response.

According to the information at its disposal, the Committee is concerned about the fact that the government authorizes the continuing use of SABL by foreign companies to occupy and use indigenous land in Papua New Guinea. The Committee is also concerned about the fact that the government have not taken any steps towards the implementation of recommendations of its own Commission of Inquiry on SABLs.

The Committee is further concerned about the current use of SABLs for logging and large-scale plantation on indigenous peoples land, despite the reported adverse impact on thousands of peoples, mostly living in remote rural communities, including the destruction of their traditional subsistence lifestyles and environmental degradation.

The Committee is concerned that, if the above allegations were corroborated, the maintenance and continuous use of SABLs would infringe indigenous peoples' rights protected under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Committee requests the State party to provide information on the measures taken to implement the recommendations contained in the previous and present letters the Committee addressed to the State party, under its Early Warning and Urgent Action procedure, on the use of SABLs.

His Excellency Max Hufanen Rai
Permanent Representative of the Independent State of Papua
New Guinea to the United Nations Office
Geneva
Email: pngun@pngmission.org



In accordance with Article 9 (1) of the Convention and article 65 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee would be grateful to receive a response to the above allegations before 8 April 2019.

Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Papua New Guinea, with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nouredine Amir". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Nouredine Amir
Chair

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination