

Indigenous people's right to land – the Sámi people in Finland and the Veddha people in Sri Lanka as examples

Aune Rummukainen

FINLAND



Facts

Sámi people in Finland

- Only indigenous people within the European Union area
- Total Sámi population over 75 000, about 9000 in Finland and 3000 of them in their homeland in the northern part of Finland
- Three different written Lappish languages
- Constitutional self-government in the Sámi homelands in terms of language and culture
- Self-government is managed by the Sámi Parliament and there is a full-time president



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Facts

Veddha people

- Total Veddha population about 2000 people
- Homeland in the eastern part of Sri Lanka
- Unwritten Veddha language
- Chieftain as a leader – good personal relationships with the Sri Lankan leadership and the media



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Livelihoods – Sámi people



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Livelihoods – Veddha people



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Rights to land

Sámi people (1)

- live and cultivate their own real estates
- Special rights to use State-owned areas freely are given to owners of some type of real estates
- Reindeer-herding in privately and State-owned areas is free for all reindeer owners
- jointly owned water areas and special fishing rights as a usufruct
- fishing and hunting freely in State-owned area in Sámi homelands



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Rights to land

Sámi people (2)

- Everyman's right: berries, mushrooms and flowers may be picked freely but gathering natural products can be reserved for locals in Sámi homelands
- Reindeer-herding, fishing, hunting and gathering natural products is allowed even in the National Parks in Sámi homelands



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Rights to land

Veddha people

- Have a permit to live and cultivate State-owned area
- Hunting and gathering natural products is free in 700 hectares homeland
- Fishing is free



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Threats- Sámi people

- Increasing mining
- Logging forest in State-owned areas
- Diminishing supplies of lichen
- Climate change
- Tourism, traffic



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Threats - Veddha people

- Plan to open the National park overlapping the Veddha homelands to the public
- Extreme restrictions on uses of the National Park
- Confined space of the Veddha homeland
- Illegal use of Veddha area
- Climate change
- Tourism ?



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Conclusions

- Finland and Sri Lanka have to some extent taken care of their indigenous people's rights to land
- Neither of these States has ratified the ILO Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention No. 169

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Rights to land - entitled groups

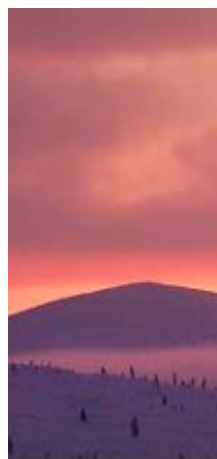
Sámi homelands – entitled groups

- Some real estate owners, locals, inhabitants of municipalities, reindeer-owners, everyman
- No group "Sámi people" in Finland in terms of rights to land

Veddha homelands – entitled groups

- Veddha people, all Sri Lankan, nobody

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Thank you for
your interest!

Contact:
Aunem.Rummukainen@nls.fi



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