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call for written submissions for cedaw day of general discussion on indigenous women and girlS (24 june 2021)

The Danish Institute for Human Rights welcomes the call for submissions communicated by email of 17 May 2021 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concerning the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) virtual day of general discussionthe rights of indigenous women and girls, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights is the national human rights institution of Denmark and Greenland and works closely with the Human Rights Council of Greenland regarding monitoring of the human rights situation in Greenland. By request of the Greenlandic parliament, Inatsisartut, and government, Naalakkersuisut, the Institute shall evaluate, promote and monitor the implementation of human rights in Greenland, including giving advice to public authorities on new legislation and by request. In cooperation with the Human Rights Council of Greenland, the Institute drafts parallel reporting to international bodies and compiles status reports on various human rights topics.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Institute would like to highlight the following recommendations by Human Rights Council of Greenland and the Institute regarding 1) Women and girls in Greenland and 2) Greenlandic women and girls in Denmark:

## 1 Equality and non-discrimination: Women and girls in Greenland

The level of violence in Greenland is significantly higher than the level in Denmark and the Faroe Islands, as 24.7 out of 1,000 citizens were exposed to violence in 2020, according to the reported incidents to the Greenland Police. The equivalent number was 1.3 for the Faroe Islands and 3.5 for Denmark.[[2]](#footnote-2) However, the figures from the Greenland Police are not disaggregated by gender.

According to a report from 2019, women in the age group 25-34 years represent the group of adults where the largest proportion has been exposed to violence during the last year (11 percent).[[3]](#footnote-3)

Reports also show that domestic violence against children and sexual abuse in the childhood is a substantial problem. According to reports, 28 percent of the youngest group of children have been exposed to domestic violence, and 24 percent of 15‐29‐year‐olds have experienced ‘forced or attempted forced sexual activity before they turned 18’.[[4]](#footnote-4)

According to Greenland Police, 13.3 out of 1,000 citizens were sexually assaulted in 2020. The equivalent number was 1.1 for the Faroe Islands and 1.1 for Denmark.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, the figures from the Greenland Police are not disaggregated by gender.

The Council for Human Rights of Greenland and the Danish Institute for Human Rights have recently made recommendations on the topic for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women(the CEDAW Committee)[[6]](#footnote-6) and in the NHRI Stakeholder report[[7]](#footnote-7) for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

The reports include the following recommendations regarding Greenland:

* Strengthen initiatives against violence and repercussions of violence and coordinate with initiatives against substance abuse;
* Take initiative to introduce legislative measures on a general protection against discrimination on all generally recognised grounds, including gender, race or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion, both within and outside the labour market, including by establishing an independent appeals board;
* Ensure data collection and analysis on violence against children and women in close relationships, including persons with disabilities.

In the CEDAW Concluding observations to Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands [[8]](#footnote-8), the CEDAW Committee made similar recommendations, and added these specific recommendations on legal frameworks:

* *“[…] introduce the consent-based definition of rape in Greenland and the Faroe Islands;”* [[9]](#footnote-9)
* *“Extend the application of the Istanbul Convention to Greenland and the Faroe Islands.”* [[10]](#footnote-10)

With reference to the “Concept Note for a General Recommendation on the Rights of Indigenous Women”and the programme of work, the Institute encourages the active inclusion of the Council for Human Rights of Greenland in the regional consultations in September/December 2021, so that the unique Greenlandic situation can be reflected in the concept note and the General Recommendation.

## 2 Equality and non-discrimination: Greenlandic women and girls in Denmark

With Danish citizenship, Greenlanders in Denmark enjoy the same rights as other Danish citizens. The number of Greenlanders living in Denmark amounts to approximately 16,780 persons.[[11]](#footnote-11)

However, Greenlanders in Denmark are met with prejudices. Surveys show that they feel discriminated against or stigmatized in their encounter with public authorities, the health care system, employers and the educational system. Women are over-represented in the group of Greenlanders in Denmark.[[12]](#footnote-12)

We recommend that Denmark:

• Support a stronger organisation and hereby representation of Greenlanders residing in Denmark; and

• Ensure the rights of Greenlanders in Denmark enjoyed under the ILO 169 Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent States; and

• Ensure that authorities secure equal treatment of Greenlanders in Denmark in practices and procedures.

The number of children in Denmark who are forcibly removed from their parents and placed in care is significantly higher for Greenlandic children in Denmark compared to Danish children. However, the most recent numbers are from 2011.[[13]](#footnote-13) The Danish Finance Act for 2021 allocates 1.2 million DKK in order to map the area and analyse the well-being of the children in question.

Yours sincerely,

Nadja Filskov

Adviser

1. Status reports are available in Danish and Greenlandic on e.g. the website of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, <https://menneskeret.dk/kalaallit-nunaat/saqqummersitat> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Greenland Police, Yearly Statistics 2020, p. 9, available in Danish at: <https://politi.gl/statistik-og-udgivelser/aarsstatistik> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Violence and sexual abuse in Greenland (mainly based on the Population study in Greenland 2005-10), p. 2, available in Danish at: <https://www.sdu.dk/da/sif/rapporter/2019/vold_og_seksuelle_overgreb_i_groenland> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Danish National Institute of Public Health, “The Greenlandic Population Survey 2018 – living standards, lifestyle and health” (“Befolkningsundersøgelsen i Grønland 2018 – levevilkår, livsstil og helbred”), 2018, p. 17-18, available in Danish at: https:// www.sdu.dk/da/sif/rapporter/2019/befolkningsundersoegelsen\_i\_groenland [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Greenland Police, Yearly Statistics 2020, p. 10, available in Danish at: <https://politi.gl/statistik-og-udgivelser/aarsstatistik> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Council for Human Rights of Greenland and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Parallel Report CEDAW (2021) 9th Examination of Denmark, Chapter 3, 2021. Available at: <https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/document/parallel%20cedaw_2021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Council for Human Rights of Greenland and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Annex I to NHRI Stakeholder report, Recommendations pertaining to Greenland submitted by the Human Rights Council of Greenland and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2020. Available at: <https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Anbefaling_GRM_UK.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. CEDAW/C/DNK/CO/9, available at: <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CEDAW/COC/DNK/44503&Lang=En> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. CEDAW/C/DNK/CO/9, p. 8, available at: <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CEDAW/COC/DNK/44503&Lang=En> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. CEDAW/C/DNK/CO/9, p. 8, available at: <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CEDAW/COC/DNK/44503&Lang=En> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Statistics Greenland, Greenland in Figures 2021, p. 8, available at: <https://stat.gl/publ/en/GF/2021/pdf/Greenland%20in%20Figures%202021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. SFI The Danish National Centre for Social Research, “Greenlanders in Denmark” (Grønlændere i Danmark), 2015, available in Danish at: <https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/5566/278073> and: The Danish Institute for Human Rights, “Equal Treatment of Greenlanders in Denmark” (Ligebehandling af grønlændere i Danmark), 2015, available in Danish at: <https://menneskeret.dk/udgivelser/ligebehandling-groenlaendere-danmark> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. SFI, The Danish National Centre for Social Research, “Greenlanders in Denmark” (”Grønlændere i Danmark”), 2015, available in Danish at: <https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/5566/278073> and article in Sermitsiaq.AG, ”Greenlandic children in Denmark are removed more often” (”Grønlandske børn i Danmark fjernes langt oftere”), 1 March 2021. Available in Danish at: <https://sermitsiaq.ag/groenlandske-boern-i-danmark-fjernes-langt-oftere?fbclid=IwAR3MrFsX_dmoiu33bgYXcjLp9__1Rd5NK3oiut7iVfHz7v8q4EJZjrPMDLw> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)