



INTERVENTION

Fourth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Guaranteeing the rights of minority women

Thank you Madame Chair for this great opportunity.

My name is Sirada Khemanitthathai from People's Empowerment Foundation based in Thailand.

Due to violent incidents in the Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand¹ conducted by insurgents to ask for their right to self-determination and the government's provisions of special laws², Malayu-Muslim women in this area are experiencing threats according to increasing number of deaths, wounded and, widowed women and those whose husbands are arrested and accused. It is welcomed to have relief action centers and compensation measures³ done by the government, but there are many problems of access to healthcare and justice, as well as sustainability in practice and the lack of women's participation in policy making.

Madame Chair,

Stateless women in Northern Thailand are particularly at risk of human trafficking, especially for sexual exploitation. They also face difficulties accessing public services, like health and education, because of obstacles to obtaining a legal status. Although there is the 2008 Nationality Act, naturalization of these groups is not progressive.

According the Draft Recommendations, recommendation number 14 (*access to justice and access to remedies*), 23 (*close collaboration with local and minority institutions and existing administrative structures*) and 88 (*ensuring health services*), we are in full support. However, the mentioned recommendations must follow in regard to religious sensitivity in the Southern Border Provinces and there should be a local reformative administrative body. Regarding stateless women, recommendation number 27 (*legitimate right to citizenship*), 28 (*elimination of trafficking*) and 89 (*prevent discriminatory practices in health-care providers*) should be adopted and concretely implemented by the government, as well as media's role on the recommendation number 47 (*avoid perpetuating existing misconception and stereotypes*).

Madame Chair,

¹ The Three Southern Border Provinces are Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat (previously included Satun province and 4 districts in Songkla). This area is historically known as Pattani City State or Patani Darus Salam.

² The special laws include Martial Law, the Emergency Decree of 2004 and Internal Security Act of 2008.

³ Conducted under the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC).

On behalf of "Shan" women, an ethnic group in Myanmar (Burma), I would like to draw attention to violent situations faced by Shan women.

Despite the recent election in Myanmar (Burma), minority women's lives are still being threatened in all ethnic areas. In Shan states, systematic rape by the military toward women and girls is consistently reported.⁴ Many of them are also tortured, killed or endure forced labor and have no access to justice as a result of the army's complete impunity.

The Draft Recommendation number 14 (*access to justice*), 26 (*accountability of those guilty*), 28 (*eliminate all form of trafficking*) and 29 (*eradication of slavery and other forms*) must be urgently implemented, as well as a ceasefire and legal equality of all ethnic groups. The International community cannot concentrate only on Myanmar's political change while ignoring the context of ethnic conflict.

Madame Chair,

Minority women's participation in all public areas and decision making must be supported. But we must take note of the special case of minority women in conflict are vulnerable in their very fundamental right, a right to life, which should be prioritized to fully guarantee their enjoyment of other rights.

Thank you

⁴ Rape cases in Shan State are periodically documented by Shan Human Rights Foundation and Shan Women's Action Network.