

Forest and Inari Sámi gathered for the Forest Sámi Summer Days in Peltovuoma, 8–9 July 2023

The theme of truth in the Sámi question ran throughout the program of the days. The truth is that one of the four Sámi groups in Finland is the Forest Sámi people and another of the four is the Inari Sámi people – *de jure*.

Another truth is that, according to international conventions and agreements, the Forest and Inari Sámi peoples are Indigenous peoples – *de jure*.

Many speeches brought attention to the denial of this truth. We are concerned that today history is being reinterpreted and rewritten. Both intangible and material culture, as well as artifacts, are being appropriated into the dominant Sámi culture, detaching Forest Sámi culture and its material heritage from their original context.

Discrimination will not end unless it is made visible. In a constitutional state, everyone must be equal citizens – that is, equal Sámi. Discrimination challenges and tramples on the equality of the Sámi. It destroys the entire Sámi society.

We condemn the decision of the Sámi Parliament's electoral committee to remove from the electoral roll those Sámi accepted by decision of the Supreme Administrative Court (KHO). This decision shows contempt for our legal system and violates the Constitution. It is an act of discrimination targeted against a segment of the Sámi people.

The Sámi Parliament does not represent all Sámi, nor does it have the competence to fulfill the responsibility defined in section 6 of the Sámi Parliament Act.

We do not accept the proposal in the Timonen Committee report to remove the definition of Sámi from the new Sámi Parliament Act. The removal would eliminate the so-called "Lapp criterion." It would constitute a human rights violation, targeting the identity and ethnicity of the Forest and Inari Sámi from the former Kemi Lapland area. We do not accept that the Sámi Parliament's electoral committee carries out racial determination.

In Finland, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is only a search for a partial truth. Forest and Inari Sámi, who have been subjected to injustices, have been excluded from the process.

We condemn the actions of Metsähallitus (Forestry Board) as racist, for removing information related to Forest Sámi and Forest Lapp culture from Pallas–Yllästunturi National Park. Metsähallitus has ignored the Forest Sámi and Forest Lapp people, who are members of the Indigenous people, as well as the cooperation organization of Finland's original Sámi, Parliament of Sámi villages in Finland, in the management and usage planning process of Pallas–Yllästunturi National Park.

We seek – no more, no less – full equality with all other Sámi.

Suomen alkuperäisten saamelaisten yhteistyöjärjestö ry – Parliament of Sámi villages in Finland

Peltjärven Lapinkylä yhdistys ry

Kuivasalmen Lapinkyläyhdistys ry

Sodankylän Lapinkylä yhdistys ry

Kuolajärven Lapinkylä ry

Kyrön Lapinkyläyhdistys ry