INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - INVISIBLE PEOPLES
EARTH, EXPLOITATION AND SURVIVAL

CONFERENCE / PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION REPORT
September 2015
UNPO wishes to extend its thanks
to all who made the conference and exhibition possible,
in particular the Nando Peretti Foundation and Francisco Assis MEP.

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2 • FOREWORD

Indigenous peoples around the world share an integral association with their natural environments both economically and culturally. As such, any exploitation of natural resources on their lands poses a threat to their natural environment, culture and livelihoods. To explore contemporary challenges and opportunities various indigenous groups face today, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization convened a conference entitled “Indigenous Peoples – Invisible Peoples” on World Earth Day, co-hosted by Francisco Assis MEP (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrat) at the European Parliament on 22 April 2015. This was followed by an exhibition opening of the photography of Luca Catalano Gonzaga on 3 July 2015 at Mundo-b, the Brussels sustainable house, kindly supported by the Nando Peretti Foundation.

The conference and exhibition raised awareness about the myriad struggles and challenges encountered by invisible indigenous groups, including how to effectively preserve their collective indigenous identities, protect their land and natural environments, promote their linguistic and cultural heritage, and ensure the empowerment of women. Thanks to the great variety of perspectives presented by indigenous representatives, activists, academic experts and engaged politicians, the discussion created a platform for dialogue on indigenous methods of resistance, as well as dreams about their futures.

Indigenous groups from Asia, the Americas and Africa confront similar obstacles on a daily basis despite their geographical dispersion. Threats to their indigenous lands, resources and traditional cultures represent a direct assault on their community cohesion. These commonalities can be addressed through positive action that assists their adaptation, builds community and youth capacity, reconstructs histories, preserves and promotes language and protects natural resources.

Inter-cultural dialogue both between different indigenous groups, and with non-indigenous groups, is also paramount to creating greater harmony in societies in which different cultures coexist. UNPO remains hopeful that constructive dialogue can emerge between European and indigenous actors in order to find solutions for the preservation and the promotion of indigenous rights across the globe. Far more needs to be done to recognize indigenous peoples as equal partners in national and international deliberations on issues, which affect them, their lands and resources, so that their unique interests can be represented and concerns defended.

Marino Busdachin
UNPO General Secretary
3 • CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Opening Remarks

Francisco Assis MEP (S&D)
Iva Petkovic (UNPO)
Luca Catalano Gonzaga (Photojournalist)
Janete Capiberibe (Member of Brazilian Parliament, PSB)

Panel I: Exploitation and the Environment

The EU and Indigenous Rights in South America: Obstacles, Challenges, Competences and Opportunities
Adrianus Koetsenruijter/Head of South America Division EEAS

The Perilous Intersection of Culture, Environment and Profit – The Mapuche Case
David Monticelli/President of Associazione II Cerchìo

Mapuche Self-Empowerment and the Environment: Legitimate Demands to Design our Future
Alina Rodenkirchen/Mapuche Coordinator for Society for Threatened Peoples and German Mapuche Network

Indigenous Peoples in the Artic – The Impact of Climate Change and Human Exploitation
Dorothée Cambou/PhD Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Panel II: Language, Culture and Identity

Indigenous Peoples and Modern-Day Slavery in Mauritania
Abidine Merzough/President of IRA-Section Europe

The Predicament of ‘African Culture’: Representation as a Double-Edged Sword
Prof Koenraad Stroeken/Ghent University

Preservation of Mapuche Cultural Heritage: Obstacles and Opportunities Ahead
Rafael Railaf/Mapuche Netherlands Network

The Case of the Degar-Montagnards
Dr Susan Kerr/Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Q&A
4 • SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Francisco Assis
*Member of European Parliament (S&D)*
Francisco Assis (born 8 January 1965 in Amarante) is a Member of the European Parliament for the Socialist Portuguese Party. He is currently the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Mercosur, and a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, and of the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly. He has a degree in Philosophy and was a university teacher.

Ms Janete Capiberibe
*Member of Brazilian Parliament (PSB)*
Janete Capiberibe started her political activism in 1966 when she joined the Brazilian Communist Party and Amapá’s Secondary School Students Movement. She joined the National Liberation Alliance (ANL), was subsequently persecuted and arrested by the military dictatorship. She was exiled from Brazil in 1971, alongside her family, residing in Bolivia, Chile, Canada, and Mozambique, returning to Brazil in 1979. In 1988, as a member of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), she was elected alderwomen for Macapá. In 1990, Ms Capiberibe was elected Amapá State representative and reelected to the position in 1994 and 1998. In 2000, Ms Capiberibe was nominated as Secretary for Industry, Commerce, Mining, and Ecotourism of the State of Amapá. In 2002, she was elected Amapá’s federal representative, a position that she currently holds, after being reelected twice.

Marino Busdachin
*General Secretary of Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization*
Marino Busdachin has a long history of political activism. In the 1980s, he was active in promoting human and civil rights with the Radical Party in Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. Between 1993 and 1998, he worked in the United States on campaigns for setting up ad hoc international courts for war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. He was engaged in the battle for a global moratorium on the death penalty at the United Nations and was Secretary General of No Peace Without Justice between 1994 to 1999. Since July 2003, Mr Busdachin has been Secretary General of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

Luca Catalano Gonzaga
*Photojournalist*
With an Advanced Degree in Economics and Commerce, he has worked in advertising and marketing for various companies namely Mondadori, Stream, Mediaset and NBC Universal. In 2008, he became a full-time professional photographer, focusing mainly on social issues, portraits and ad hoc projects in the private sector. He was awarded the “Grand Prix Care du Reportage Humanitaire 2009” for a feature on child labor in Nepal, which was shown at the International Festival of Photojournalism “Visa Pour l’Image” at Perpignan. In 2010, he co-founded “Witness Image”, a non-profit association aimed at developing photographic projects on human rights issues. He received long-term funding
from the Nando Peretti Foundation to carry out the project “Child Survival in a Changing Climate” on the impact of climate change on children in developing countries (2011) and, in collaboration with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, to carry out the project “Invisible People” on the threats made to indigenous people around the world (2013). He has been awarded several prizes and has seen his photo reports published by many leading Italian and international press outlets.

Adrianus Koetsenruijter
*Head of South America Division, European External Action Service*
Adrianus Koetsenruijter is the Head of South America Division of the European External Action Service. He is responsible for relations with Latin American countries in the Mercosur and Andean regions. He has worked on EU foreign relations and development policy since 1989. He was the EU Ambassador in Colombia and Ecuador between 2003-2007 and in Tunisia and Libya from 2008-2012.

David Monticelli
*President of Associazione Il Cerchio*
David Monticelli is the President of an Italian NGO called “Il Cerchio”, a network of human rights activists who support indigenous peoples around the world. Among the various projects of the organization is the “Acipama” project, initiated in 2012, through which several observers, including Mr Monticelli visited Mapuche communities to directly experience the human rights violations that the population faces daily. The goal of the project is to raise awareness of their situation in Italy and to write detailed and informed reports. Mr Monticelli studied Sociology at the University of Urbino, where he then specialized in Anthropology and Religious Epistemology. In the 1990s, he took part in humanitarian projects organized by “Time for Peace” during the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. He also conducted research in South Dakota on the Sioux indigenous population. After starting at Il Cerchio in the early 2000s, Mr Monticelli also cooperated with Benerwanda to raise awareness about the genocide in Rwanda.

Alina Rodenkirchen
*Mapuche Coordinator for Society for Threatened Peoples and German Mapuche Network*
Alina Rodenkirchen studied Latin American Studies at the University of Cologne. She is Mapuche and working as Mapuche Coordinator for the Society for Threatened Peoples on a voluntary base. She is also Coordinator of a Mapuche Network in Germany and leads a human rights support group in Cologne.

Dorothée Cambou
*PhD Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*
Dorothée Cambou is a PhD candidate at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). Her research focuses on the rights of indigenous peoples and she has published various articles analyzing in particular the situation of indigenous peoples in the Arctic and in Ethiopia. When doing research on Ethiopia, she paid particular attention to the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to development projects conducted on their lands. Before starting her PhD research, Ms Cambou studied in France, the United Kingdom and Belgium.
Mr Abidine Merzough
President of Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania - Section Europe

Abidine Merzough was born 1968 in Mauritania, but has been permanently based in Germany since 1988. He manages his own engineering and consulting business for Ford Motor Company. As a descendent of former slaves, Mr Merzough has been involved in the struggle against slavery and discrimination. His father, with the support of activists from the liberation movement EL-HOR (“The Free”), was the community leader of the Haratin village (community of slaves and former slaves) Chogar Gadel, which revolted against their masters in 1976. During this insurrection, Mr Abidine Merzough helped the cause by engaging with the authorities in written correspondence, as he was the only literate person in the community at that time. Mr Merzough is one of the Haratin activists from the Mauritanian diaspora who decided to join the fight against slavery. He publicly supports the recognition of the Haratin identity as an independent ethnic group. He serves as the European Coordinator for the anti-slavery organization IRA. He is also a member of the international NGO the Society for Threatened Peoples, as well as the Mauritanian anti-Slavery NGO SOS ESCLAVES led by Mr Boubacar Messaoud.

Prof Koenraad Stroeken
Ghent University

Dr Koen Stroeken is an Associate Professor in Anthropology and African Studies at Ghent University. He has published over 50 papers and authored 3 international peer-reviewed books dealing with cosmology and conflict in Africa, including the monograph “Moral Power” on Sukuma indigenous knowledge (Berghahn). Since its inception in 2012, he has been coordinating an inter-university exchange with Mzumbe University in Tanzania to build academic capacity on local governance (VLIRUOS-IUS Gre@t). He supervises 7 PhD projects in Tanzania, Congo, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda, most of which are focused on ethnicity and local institutions of initiation.

Mr Rafael Railaf
Mapuche Netherlands Network

Rafael Railaf is a Mapuche, living and working in the Netherlands. He is the Coordinator of the “Online Mapuche Radio”, an initiative of the Mapuche Foundation FOLIL (“roots”), which was founded in the Netherlands on 17 March 2000. The founders of FOLIL are mainly Mapuches who left Chile in the Pinochet era and continue to support the Mapuche people in Chile with the main objective of distributing information about the Mapuche people by organizing exhibitions and lectures.

Dr Susan Kerr
Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Dr Susan Kerr is the Europe Advocate at Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), a human rights NGO that specializes in freedom of religion or belief and works to defend this right for people of all faiths or none. One of CSW’s focus countries is Vietnam and CSW has long experience of advocating on behalf of religious minorities there. Dr Kerr also represents CSW as a member of the Board of Coordinators of the European Platform on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination. She holds a doctorate in Peace Studies and MA degrees in International Politics and European Union Studies.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES — INVISIBLE PEOPLES
22 APRIL 2015
15:00-18:00

a conference hosted by Francisco Assis MEP (S&D)
at European Parliament (BXL), Room ASP 3H-1

With opening remarks by photographer Luca Catalano Gonzaga
I begin by welcoming all those present and express my appreciation for the work of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), encouraging us to host the conference “Indigenous Peoples – Invisible Peoples”. I welcome the Secretary General, Marino Busdachin and the whole staff and members of the UNPO. A special thank you is due to Iva Petkovic, Program Coordinator of UNPO, who was our main assistant in organizing this conference. I also welcome the speakers and the photographer Luca Catalano Gonzaga.

One of the noblest functions of politics is to rescue the Other from invisibility. Its main instruments in this task are human rights and civil liberties, in particular those given to minorities. Such rights do not automatically give visibility to these minorities, but allow them to obtain it.

In the case of native Indian minorities, the issue of invisibility is even more complex. Because the preservation of their traditional ways of life is often dependent on a precarious balance between visibility and invisibility, we have to ensure their rights, which include, in some cases, a right to invisibility. This right to invisibility, understood as the right to exist immersed in their ecosystem in complete isolation, which is a condition for their survival as a people, is found particularly in the case of the Awá in the Brazilian rainforests.

The existence of these peoples – as many others around the world – depends on the forest, which is the realm of the invisible. Their livelihood depends on whether we make the invisible visible. It turns out that deforestation and the appropriation of land from these forest peoples for the benefit of agro-industry and the extraction of raw materials exposes their crops to the danger of undergrowth and, ultimately, their disappearance.

This right to invisibility, understood as the right to exist immersed in their ecosystem in complete isolation, which is a condition for their survival as a people, is found particularly in the case of the Awá in the Brazilian rainforests.

In other cases, the danger is assimilation and the consequent dilution of their ancestral lifestyles, which threaten their interactions and coexistence. Here, the survival of these communities depends on the visibility their ways of life, and thus on their recognition. Unlike the Awá, where the right to invisibility is at stake, the Mapuche of Chile and the Degar Montagnards in Vietnam fight for the
visibility of their language and culture, their cosmology and wisdom.

The Haratin in Mauritania fight for something more striking: for their dignity and freedom, held in slavery by an Arab minority.

The Rwandan Batwa are struggling with the idea that to survive they have to adapt, that is, in order to retain some visibility they hope for some invisibility.

Currently, one of the main factors of conflict over rights of indigenous peoples is the exploitation of natural resources of their ancestral territories by companies working in the mining, energy, timber, agro-business and livestock industries.

Globalization, with all its benefits, also entails, as we know, perverse effects. Often this economic activity is carried out on land and reserves recognized and protected by law. The resulting abuses and crimes have been systematically denounced by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and indigenous advocates. And they have been of concern to various international organizations. It was in this sense that the United Nations (UN) adopted in 2011, through Resolution 17/4, the “Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights”, which the European Union (EU) has adopted and that the Commission has endeavoured to integrate in the various national programs of Member States.

The challenge is immense, but it is not new: reconcile in the affected territories the need to attract investment that can drive economic prosperity and job creation in conjunction with the respect for the rights of indigenous peoples - the right not only to physical integrity and material subsistence of the native Indians, but also the right to maintain their unique values and ways of life inherited from their ancestors, the right to maintain their cohesion and their collective identity.

The UN “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights” contain the essentials of what approaches states should adopt, especially Western democracies that claim to be bastions of human rights. It advocates for the principle that companies must respect law and human rights. There is also the need to provide for compensation, if companies disrespect and damage the interests of individuals and organizations, especially the weakest and most vulnerable. Without these principles we can hardly have a humanized, socially responsible globalization.
The EU, as the largest player in globalization - and its precursor - has the duty, not only to respect these principles, but also to safeguard them in the context of institutional, diplomatic and especially economic and trade relations conducted with the rest of the world. We must not forget that many of the companies linked to mining and agriculture are European or companies based in Europe.

As a Member of the European Parliament (MEP), the Chair of the European Parliament’s (EP) Delegation for relations with the Mercosur countries and a member of Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT), I am particularly troubled by the situation of indigenous peoples of South America. For obvious historical reasons, inseparable from the conquest and colonization of the New World by Spain and Portugal (my country), this geographical space has always been a troubled and controversial area with regards to treatment of indigenous peoples.

The condition of the native Indians – and in particular the mistreatment they suffered – awakened early passionate debates. If Spain and Portugal carry in their conscience the crimes of the conquest of the New World, they are also at the forefront of the defence of the rights and dignity of the native Indians.

Think of Bartholomew de Las Casas, but also of my countryman Father Antonio Vieira, who vented in his sermons the indignation felt by the degrading conditions that the Brazilian Indians were subjected to.

In 1654, shocked by how the Indians in Maranhão were treated, Vieira sailed towards Lisbon, hiding from the authorities and settlers, and only returned there after getting from John IV the Decree of 9 April 1655, which delegated to the Jesuits full jurisdiction over the native Indians and forbade local authorities to have indigenous peoples as slaves.

The enormous natural resources of South America, spread over large territories, undiscovered in some cases, makes indigenous communities particularly vulnerable to the activities of extractive industries. The violence against native Indians and the violations of their rights are too frequent in this region of the world. So is the violence against those who denounce these abuses, in many cases, risking their own lives to protect others.

But it would be unfair not to recognize some progress from governments or regional integration. The role of the
Inter-American Court of Human Rights, created in 1979, should be noted. As recently as July last year [2014], a verdict of the Court declared the state of Chile guilty of violating the human rights of members of the Mapuche people in the case *Norin Catrimán and others vs Chile*, which found the criminalization of Mapuche peoples reclaiming their ancestral lands as illegal.

The criminalization of protest has been a widely used ploy by public authorities. Many governments exploit the relative vagueness of concepts such as “public nuisance”, “social instability” and even “incitement to terrorism” to silence those who fight for the respect of indigenous rights.

Obviously, one thing is the good-hearted nature, which governs the preparation of documents that set out the rights of indigenous peoples, and another is its thorough and systematic application.

Consider the situation of the Guarani-Kaiowá, who I received here in Parliament a few months ago. Since the monoculture of soy and cane sugar began to gain ground in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul from the 1970s, the Guarani-Kaiowá live in poverty with virtually no access to their ancestral lands.

As a consequence, there has been a wave of suicides in recent years that have no parallel with other peoples or tribes of South America. This is happening in a time when the access of indigenous peoples to their ancestral territories is a right under the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil 1988 (cf. Clause 231) and the Statute of the Brazilian Indian (Law 6001/73). The Statute of Brazilian Indians is one of the most advanced laws, and at the same time, the government’s record has been characterized by paralysis in indigenous land demarcation.

The EU is not home to indigenous peoples in the territories of its Member States. But it has special historical responsibility for their defense. And its economic and diplomatic activity has implications and direct consequences on the lives of many indigenous peoples.

The EU has been actively engaged in the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and supported its adoption by the UN Human Rights Council. Moreover, it participates in various international forums dedicated to this subject. Since 2006, the EU has supported numerous projects designed to develop the rights of indigenous peoples through the European
Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and also through the Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI). Its Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy includes commitments that encompass indigenous peoples.

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In general, we can say that the EU is now much more aware of the need to include standards of corporate responsibility to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in the free trade agreements it negotiates and concludes with third countries. The EP has adopted numerous resolutions on the rights of indigenous peoples and has the ability to approve and supervise European legislation in this domain.

However, we still have a long way to go, because the truth is, indigenous communities today continue to be victims of violence, discrimination and exclusion. They continue to face alarming poverty, disease and high illiteracy rates. They are still being driven from their ancestral lands, and thus deprived of resources indispensable to their survival. They endure ongoing disrespect and are stripped from their cultures, languages and symbolic heritage. Many are persecuted, arbitrarily arrested and murdered for being “obstacles” to powerful economic interests, owing to the conflict over land demarcation.
Part of the problem lies in the lack of sanctions when violations are committed by companies involved in extraction industries. It is not enough for the EU to reaffirm its international commitments to promoting the rights of indigenous peoples; it is also necessary for the EU to clarify and improve the regulatory framework for companies under its jurisdiction whose activities affect indigenous peoples.

*It is not enough for the EU to reaffirm its international commitments to promoting the rights of indigenous peoples: it is also necessary for the EU to clarify and improve the regulatory framework for companies under its jurisdiction whose activities affect indigenous peoples.*

The EU must ensure that investments and trade agreements it concludes with third countries respect the rights of indigenous peoples. It would be important for the EU to establish, prior to the conclusion of these agreements and investments, the obligation to carry out impact studies, which would evaluate their impact on the lives of indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, the EU must ensure that violations of these rights by European companies are duly sanctioned by creating mediation mechanisms with indigenous communities, so that the affected communities can lodge complaints regarding illegal practices and also benefit from technical or legal support for these procedures.

In addition to punishing those responsible for violations of indigenous rights, it is important to anticipate conflict situations. This point is of particular importance to Article 32 of Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provides that States must consult indigenous peoples in good faith in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before implementing large-scale projects with implications on their territories and ways of life.

The respect for this common sense principle presupposes the recognition of indigenous peoples’ ability and maturity to express their opinions and decide on issues that concern them.

The question of indigenous rights, should not be subtracted from the overall goal of achieving a more sustainable economic model and the fight against inequality, discrimination and worldwide exclusion. This is a condition that enables indigenous peoples to have an audible voice in global forums where these challenges are discussed.

I sincerely hope that this conference can make these five groups a little less invisible. For my part, you can count on my commitment, as part of my parliamentary activity in the EP, to give more visibility to the cause of indigenous peoples, particularly to those most fragile and vulnerable.
Dear ladies and gentlemen, friends of UNPO, on behalf of UNPO, I would like to thank you all for your interest in indigenous struggles and for your commitment to dialogue on indigenous rights.

I wish to send warm greetings to all allies of indigenous peoples and thank Mr Francisco Assis for hosting this event, as well as Ms Capiberibe and Adrianus Koetsenruijter for their sincere readiness to get involved in any way possible.

For those in the audience who might not be familiar with the work of UNPO, it is an international, nonviolent and democratic membership organization, founded in 1991 whose members also include numerous indigenous communities.

But who do we talk about when we talk about indigenous peoples? No definition has ever been adopted by any body of the United Nations system, but the working definition stipulates that:

- indigenous peoples have a historical connection to pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies;
- they consider themselves distinct (or different);
- they are a part of the non-dominant sector of society;
- and they hope to preserve their ancestral territories and ethnic identity in accordance with their own cultural, social, and legal systems.

Indigenous people have wisely preserved and lived on some of the most biologically diverse lands by sustainably fostering their cultures, economies and philosophies in harmony with the natural world. They have sustained, protected and nurtured their ancestral lands where they practice their way of life; cultures, traditions, languages, and spiritual ceremonies.

Many indigenous communities have been expropriated from their ancestral lands, and are now unable to access their resources to ensure their survival, further pushing them into severe poverty. According to the UN, indigenous peoples continue to be over-represented among the poorest, the illiterate, and the unemployed.

Indigenous peoples have also come head to head with the present economic system based on exponential growth, short-term profits and exploitation of natural resources. Rich resources, such as forests, wildlife, fresh water, and minerals have been well-sustained by traditional indigenous knowledge of balancing and limiting use. Yet, they are currently being corroded by new technologies and globalized rules of trade and investment. Free markets and trade liberalization have only brought devastation and no prosperity for the
ever vulnerable populations, including indigenous groups.

In pursuit of large-scale economic growth, the right to small-scale development has been denied to indigenous peoples. Clearly, the question of access, control and use of these lands is a question of their survival.

As many of us here are well aware, indigenous peoples not only suffer discrimination and marginalization from political and economic power. They also face growing pressures of assimilation in education, media and administration; their belief systems, cultures, languages and ways of life continue to be threatened, sometimes to the point of extinction.

Language is the voice of our/their ancestors and the question of preservation, protection and promotion is paramount. In many cases, traditional knowledge systems are not respected or protected, their collective intellectual property rights are not guaranteed, leading to unauthorized use and misappropriation, which amounts to theft.

Today, we will hear about five different indigenous groups living on three different continents. Although we will not be able to cover all issues that concern indigenous peoples worldwide, we will get short glimpses into their lives and stories, their methods of resistance and dreams about their futures with the aim of highlighting some of the possible steps that can be taken to address these challenges.

This conference is a part of the Earth, Exploitation and Survival project, which targets and seeks to redress the threats made to indigenous peoples’ natural environments, languages, traditional livelihoods and community cohesion, which form the core essence of their identity. To achieve our goals on-the-ground, UNPO has, among other activities:

- launched summer schools on Mapuche ethnicity, language and culture in Chile;
- organized (financial) literacy trainings and workshops uprooting the prevalence of gender-based violence among the Batwa in Rwanda;
set up local business development workshops to ensure freed Haratin slaves start their own sewing businesses and minimize risk of returning to slavery.

One of UNPO's greatest concerns is the lack of representation of indigenous communities, and their representative organizations, in the international political arena, preventing their voices from being heard in policies, legislation and budgets.

Why is this important? Because any action being taken to improve indigenous peoples' social and economic development must originate from their own definitions of well-being and their own visions of how to achieve it.

So, how can we ensure meaningful and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all levels of decision-making in national and international political forums?

And how can we ensure the recognition, protection and respect for indigenous peoples' right to self-determination?

After all, this is a precondition to guarantee their ownership and control of lands, a determinant of sustainable human development.

*Any action being taken to improve indigenous peoples' social and economic development must originate from their own definitions of well-being and their own visions of how to achieve it.*

And finally, how can we together develop strategies for their self-development and self-empowerment? UNPO will continue to see indigenous peoples and their movements of resistance as equal partners, questioning and scrutinizing national governments, regional and global institutions about measures being taken to promote collective rights, foster linguistic, cultural and religious diversity, balance commercial interests with indigenous concerns, protect ancestral lands from corporate profiteering, and ensure indigenous economic self-determination and political sovereignty.

UNPO looks to a future where all indigenous peoples will enjoy peace, human rights, dignity and well-being. Many questions remain, but I will give the floor to our notable speakers who have so kindly accepted our invitation to make their expert contributions in our open exchange of ideas. I thank you again for coming, and wish you a fruitful debate.
L. Catalano Gonzaga
(Photojournalist)

First of all, allow me to express my gratitude for having been invited to a prestigious location, such as the European Parliament to talk about my experience living and working in direct contact with ethnic minorities: the Haratin, the Montagnard, the Mapuche and the Batwa.

All this would not have been possible without the help of UNPO. Therefore, I thank Mr Marino Busdachin for giving me this opportunity.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am not a professional speaker and I never feel too comfortable when I do not have my camera with me, so I hope you will forgive me for expressing myself in my native language.

I was born in Rome, but I have not always been a photographer. I graduated in Economics and Management and then started working in the field of marketing and communications for several different companies.

I worked for business-oriented companies and was also quite successful, but despite all this, I felt that it was not the right path for me.

In 2008, I took the most important decision of my life: I dropped everything and became a professional photographer. In fact, photography had always been my passion. I started doing reportages on social issues and portraits for the private sector.

In 2009, I was awarded the Grand Prix Care du Reportage Humanitaire prize for a service on children in brick factories in Nepal, which was displayed the following year at the International Photojournalism Festival Visa pour l’Image in Perpignan.

This recognition gave me the energy to go a step further, and with Ms Susanna Bucci, a journalist, I decided to establish Witness Image, an organization dedicated to humanitarian photojournalism whose objective is to contribute to the human rights debate through images, without overlooking the ongoing changes of contemporary society.

Photography is a universal means of communication that can reach people’s hearts through emotions that only an image can instil thanks to its absence of linguistic barriers.

If photography was used more often to tell stories of injustice, it would certainly be the strongest, most sincere means of communication.

In 2011, thanks to the financial support of the Nando Peretti Foundation, the Child Survival in a Changing Climate initiative began in 8 different countries. In 2013, I started my cooperation with UNPO and it is with this organization that I have worked on four reportages as part of the Invisible People project, which I wish to present today.

This project allowed me to spend several weeks with the populations that I portrayed in my photos. Generally, a photograph is the final product of a period of sharing. I take pictures after spending many days with those I portray, listening to their stories and memories, having a meal together and sleeping in their homes.
These are instances when I feel privileged for my work, for how much I grow in these moments with them and how much I carry inside me afterwards.

My first trip was to Chile. I visited the semi-dry Araucania region in central Chile, close to the Andes Cordillera, where a significant chunk of the Mapuche community resides, despite the fact that they have been expropriated and deprived of their ancestral lands to build hydroelectric plants.

I also visited their new houses, obtained through government or company concessions. They are made of hard plastic instead of wood and are therefore unfit to withstand the freezing climate of the area. The people there use them for their livestock, rather than as homes.

I visited a dam on the Alto Biobio River, which completely flooded a valley where a village and cemetery once stood, but are now under water.

Unfortunately, people often pay very little attention to the importance that every culture gives to the sacred land where their dead rest. The water has brushed away everything, almost as if the purpose was to erase the memories and recollections of Mapuche people. Despite the dire conditions they live in, the Mapuche have not lost their ancient pride and identity as “untamed fighters”.

... the water has brushed away everything, almost as if the purpose was to erase the memories and recollections of these people.

Their stories attract your attention, because their history is that of a people that fiercely opposed “foreign” invasion, both when it came from the Incas and when it came from the Spaniards.

They only surrendered when they were debilitated by Western diseases and Chilean weapons in the nineteenth century, when they lost around 95% of their land.

When I was working on this reportage, the anti-terrorism laws introduced by Pinochet, which allowed searches and preventive detentions, were still in force.

These laws particularly target the Mapuche. They are incarcerated for several years for simply organising a protest to defend their rights.

My second trip brought me to Vietnam to tell the life and stories of the Montagnards. I spent several weeks in their company in the central plateaus close to KonTum in the forests. I spent the night with them in river cane huts. I shared every moment of the day with them: when women washed their clothes in the rivers, when they worked together on their few plots of land...

Despite their marginalization, reinforced by the Vietnamese who still see them as traitors who fought side-by-side with the Americans, they are a
very hospitable people. They live off of subsistence farming and handicraft work. The government does not take care of them, even though decades have passed since the fall of Saigon and the unification of Vietnam. The stigma still accompanies this indigenous group and its children, who did not even see the war.

Their only source of relief is their religious faith. Their religion came from French missionaries, who throughout the nineteenth century, built churches in French style across the whole region.

I still remember how surprised I was when I ran into a reproduction of Michael Angelo’s Pietà in the heart of the Vietnamese plateaus next to a little church, which was already crowded at dawn, full of church-goers coming from neighbouring villages.

In addition to spending time in the forest on the central plateaus, I also visited the dam in Daklin, where water had invaded what was once their land. The central government gave these families more than $10,000 as a compensation for having been forced to abandon their villages, $15,000 to rebuild a house, in addition to free food, water and electricity for four years in exchange for resettlement to a mountainous area where it is impossible to grow anything.

If looked at superficially, these might seem favourable conditions to start a new life. In reality, they have been disastrous. Many people spent this money - for them a big amount - on dispensable consumer goods, such as motorbikes, televisions or other household electrical appliances. That small fortune, which would have allowed them to start over, went up in smoke, and now many of these people no longer have a house or a plot of land to cultivate.

It was a ruinous policy: you cannot really believe that resettling people and giving them cash in exchange for land that they have been cultivating for generations can work effectively.

Thirdly, I went to Mauritania. This was probably the toughest trip, both in terms of climate and in terms of the level of poverty that the Haratin minority lives in.

Allow me to make a short digression. When I speak about the Haratin, I think of the photo taken by Richard Avedon in 1963 of William Casby, born enslaved in Louisiana, just before slavery was abolished in the United States. This picture symbolized something that, at the time, people thought would never happen again.

And yet, today the Haratin are slaves in Mauritania. Despite abolishing slavery in 1981, Mauritania made it a crime only in 2007. The status of ‘slave’ is passed on, generation after generation, and very few have the strength and the means to achieve complete freedom.
And this resignation to a destiny that many see as inescapable is what emerges from the gallery of portraits I made. I wanted to picture the face(s) of modern slavery. This is why I asked a member of IRA Mauritania, an NGO, to help me find people who would let me portray them.

Early that morning, there was a very long queue of people: the elderly, the young, all waiting for their turn. The Haratin work lands that they do not own or seek fortune in cities, working instead in the fishing industry, mostly destined to exportation. Tough jobs just to survive.

And this is only the “visible” portion of slavery. There is also a form of modern slavery that hides in private homes and is much more hidden, less accessible to photographers: domestic slavery.

Those who do leave, like an 18-year old girl who managed to escape her master, normally do not feel comfortable re-telling what they went through.

This other girl instead, now under the protection of IRA Mauritania, has had the strength and the courage to tell me her history of domestic slavery, how she survived as a victim of physical and sexual abuses.

I brought home with me her courage, as well as her wish for a better life. My last trip was to Northern Rwanda, in the districts of Musanze, Burera, Nyabinjü, only a few kilometres from the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I spent a few weeks with the Batwa minority. Nowadays, the Batwa survive by producing pottery and growing potatoes after having abandoned, or actually having been forced to abandon the forests they had always inhabited.

They used to live off the forest, in close connection with nature. They told me about how they used to live, without clothes and about how they used to treat other animals in the forests, about how they would glance down and offer their hand to animals to touch as a sign of submission.

Then, they were suddenly kicked out by the government and forced to resettle next to the forest. The government did not even worry about their most basic needs.

Many told me that after leaving their ancestral woods, the families created solidarity connections that had never existed until then, as every group used to live in isolation.
These social connections are very important, as the people help each other, especially in hard times.

The Batwa have always been considered a non-influential minority, on the margins of Rwandan history, despite the fact that they are the most ancient population of the Great Lakes Region.

For this reportage, I was again in the right place at the right time, at least from a journalistic perspective.

In fact, I was in Rwanda during the 20th anniversary of the tragedy that shook the country in 1994. Rwanda was the stage of one of the most atrocious acts of ethnic cleansing by the Hutus against the Tutsis, during which, in only around 6 weeks, over 800,000 people were killed. However, the price endured by the Batwa during the genocide has been ignored.

In the past twenty years, a lot has been written about those tragic weeks in Rwanda. Despite the fact that they represent only 1% of the Rwandan population, over 10,000 Batwa were killed by the Hutu, while another 10,000 fled the country, simply because the community was accused of being “friends” with the Tutsis.

This form of invisibility seems to perpetuate itself. Despite the entry into force of anti-discrimination laws, which the government introduced to avoid the repetition of the destructive ethnic conflict, the Batwa are still considered as “pariahs”, individuals belonging to the lowest cast of society.

To conclude, these stories that I have told you, which I experienced first hand have strongly convinced me that simply being born in the “right” hemisphere of the planet plays a big role in the lives we lead; to be a European citizen is a great privilege.

However, particularly in view of this privilege, we have a duty, each with his or her own means and possibilities, to not stay quiet, to be a vehicle and a megaphone for those who were born where human rights are still systematically violated. Maybe this is how we should honour Europe. Thank you for listening to me.
J. Capiberibe (Member of the Brazilian Parliament, PSB)

Dear Iva, members of UNPO, ladies and gentlemen of the EP, dear conference participants, greetings from Brazil.

Last Sunday [19 April 2015] was the Day of the Native Indians. As such, throughout the month of April, indigenous spirits in Brazil intensified. In the first week, 150 indigenous leaders from all over Brazil came to Brasilia to the Training Seminar for the First National Indigenous Public Policy Conference, which will take place in November. They were invited by the President of Brazil by decree to evaluate the relationship of the Brazilian State with the indigenous peoples, to reaffirm the constitutional parameters that guarantee their rights, and to define the guidelines of new indigenous policies.

In a letter to President Dilma, the native Indians have insisted that the administrative proceedings for demarcation of indigenous lands be resumed. They demanded that the President signs the 20 ratified decrees that are already on her table and that the Justice Minister publishes the declaratory rulings for new lands. The letter also stated that the National Foundation for the Native Indians, subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, should publish the finalized detailed reports; and that the President and the Interim President of the FUNAI, Mr Flavio Chiarelli, puts an end to the long interim periods, and hence allowing the full exercise of FUNAI’s administrative functions.

In the second week of April – as I am making this statement – 1,500 native Indians are camping out in front of the National Congress where Brazil’s 513 legislators and 101 senators work. The native Indians are in the 11th edition of the “Free Land Encampment”, lasting 4 days with the aim of putting pressure on the Brazilian Federal Tribunal, the government and the Congress. Due to pressures from agribusiness, and energy and mining sectors, President Dilma has not demarcated any new land.

Beyond Parliament, there have been invasions of demarcated lands, threats, physical violence and the killing of indigenous leaders, as well as intense campaigns to denigrate native Indians.

The legislative branch of government is threatening with laws that endanger the rights of the native Indians. One of the most serious threats includes demining in indigenous lands, which allows for productive activities by non-Indians. This in turn transfers the power to demarcate the indigenous lands of Quilombo and other conservation units to Congress, which is mostly anti-indigenous.

Beyond Parliament, there have been invasions of demarcated lands, threats, physical violence and the killing of indigenous leaders, as well as intense campaigns to denigrate native Indians.
Investigations are not finding culprits. Almost a million Brazilians describe themselves as native Indians, but they do not have even a single indigenous representative in the National Congress. They are invisible with regards to parliamentary representation. On the other hand, the agribusiness lobby has influence over 250 of the 513 legislators. This distortion was realized by the influence of money in elections.

To change this reality, and to change the influence of money in elections, urgent political reform is needed. We need to include an amendment to the Federal Constitution that requires native Indians to have quotas for representation in the National Congress.

Almost a million Brazilians describe themselves as native Indians, but they do not even have a single indigenous representative in the National Congress. They are invisible with regards to parliamentary representation.

For UNPO and the EU, we suggest a boycott on the consumption of products obtained through the exploitation of indigenous peoples of Quilombo and conservation units, such as exported meats, grains, ores, and woods that endanger the existence of the peoples in the forests and outside them. I would like to thank UNPO and the EP for this opportunity. We count on you. I wish all the best for the conference. All the best.
7 • PANEL I:  
EXPLOITATION AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT

A. Koetsenruijter, “The EU and  
Indigenous Rights in South America: Obstacles,  
Challenges, Competences and Opportunities”

Today I will present an overview of how the EU tries to build in its policies for the protection and defence of rights of Indigenous Peoples in its external relations.

The EU’s references for action are, first, the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Convention 169, which sets out most of the rights of indigenous peoples. The EU also refers to international human rights standards. Last year, I was very happy to have the occasion to see everyone who defends indigenous peoples’ rights come together to draft development policies and a human rights strategic plan for the EU, encompassing all the principles set out by the EU, which will be applied to all countries in the world.

The basic principles of the EU – and this is not an exhaustive list – are the following. First, the recognition of rights; if you do not have a definition of what ‘indigenous peoples’ is – which is a good thing by the way - recognition is more complicated. The next step is to make this recognition work. Second is empowerment. Third is consultation, which seems obvious, but prior consultation is essential. Fourth is social and economic development and justice; indigenous peoples usually face big poverty issues, in most cases because they are separated from the State, but also because they are ignored and not respected. Finally, there needs to be a sharing of best practices and the constitution of a monitoring capacity; having a monitoring capacity is essential, especially for the UN.

Indigenous peoples face a certain number of obstacles. The first obstacle encompasses the questions of empowerment, organization, and means. The difficult question is to decide whether to count on the international community or on fellow countrymen. As for means, you may have a spokesperson, but does your “messenger” have the appropriate tools to represent you well?

It is also difficult for them to have access to media, and thus to give an account of their problems to the public. Indigenous peoples also face the obstruction of their empowerment, since many interests go against their recognition and against the rights they claim to have.

The Mapuche, for instance, have difficulties making their territory recognized, since it contradicts the
interests of the State. But the obstruction can also be political. It is, in any case, far stronger than the political defense or protection of indigenous peoples.

The second obstacle indigenous peoples face is that of State compliance, rule of law and conflicts of interests. If indigenous peoples do not benefit from a committed defense, they are on the losing end. Adding to that, States often do not comply with their own rule of law.

Among the challenges faced by indigenous peoples is the challenge of empowerment, of strengthening their capacities and representation - in national politics, media and global fora. We need to have more capacities and more efficient representation in the global fora, this includes representation of indigenous peoples and their interests.

Another challenge is related to relations between States and their strategies of enabling different cultures to coexist. If you want to promote and defend indigenous rights, you have to have a productive relationship with different States, and they need to enable different cultures to coexist.

We should be having a discussion about the fact that between States, and among them, you might have different traditions. The question is: how to reconcile these traditions with social progress?

The last challenge I will outline today is that is not simple to find solutions to reconcile traditions and social progress, since conflicts of interest exist between these two factors. How are competences shared on this matter? States are the primary actors responsible for community building. The competence is there. The UN and donor communities operate under conditions created and enabled by the States, national laws and institutions.

States are the primary actors responsible for community building. The competence is there. The UN and donor communities operate under conditions created and enabled by the States, national laws and institutions.

Most States have good intentions, but sometimes they need more peer pressure to develop new forms of cooperation in order to guarantee a minimum level of access to social or educational services for the indigenous, to mention just one example.

To sum up, for the most part, the competences are held by the States, but adherence to UN principles should also be promoted.

I see several upcoming opportunities. The first is the recognition of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Conventions. The second is the opportunity to work on the basis of the outcome document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Global and national development policies also constitute great opportunities for further work to be done. Finally, the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the upcoming Climate Convention should also take indigenous issues into account.
D. Monticelli, “The Perilous Intersection of Culture, Environment and Profit – The Mapuche Case”

My association is called Associazione Il Cerchio (‘The Circle’) and it was born in 1992. In 2010, we started a program for peace in Mapuche communities and our first mission was to send international human rights observers to Chile. I was there recording some videos. I wondered what could be the best soundtrack for the video I made and someone recommended a clip of a song written by a Mapuche artist. It is a masterpiece in my point of view. This song explains the situation of the Mapuche community perfectly.

The Pilmaiquén river is a sacred spot and Mapuche communities defend it because it is in danger, menaced by the possible construction of a dam. Communities are now occupying the site. For the Mapuche of the south, the river is extremely significant. There is a big meadow and one can get down to the river by descending a slope. There is a cave with tunnels which branch out further into ever smaller tunnels. The community goes there to get answers from the spirits, and also to find remedies and medicines.

It is a special, energetic location and the water there is used for remedial purposes. The destruction of this site is the destruction of Mapuche identity.

Occidental people might look at it in a paternalistic way, but they would be wrong. Western society and its cultures are in crisis. It has lost its connections with nature, with invisible forces and energies, which connect us to other living beings. This is what indigenous peoples still have.

A different kind of struggle takes place in the Mallaco Province. In this province, the first community, which stood for the recovery of their lands resides.

The Mapuche were supporting left-wing parties in the Pinochet era. The Mapuche were really disappointed with the “Concertation Government”, because they continued Pinochet’s policies, including exploitation of resources and denial of indigenous rights.

The Mapuche communities are a good example of full democracy and self-determination. They tried to discuss and find solutions, and in the end, they took the decision to build a non-violent struggle. This struggle is one of the rare cases in which there is no use of weapons whatsoever. Since the government was deaf to their claims, they chose to start a non-violent struggle mostly based on the so called “recuperación productiva de
tierra”. They struggle for the recovery of their lands. The community redesigned the borders of its territory and the lands inside these borders are now occupied by animals, which have reintroduced.

The Government, by contrast, comes in to defend the interests of big corporations. We could call its strategy “methodological repression”.

This practice of Mapuche resistance needs great courage and fortitude, because it means repression, armed raids in the communities, imprisonments and persecutory use of the judicial system, governmental financing of racist paramilitary groups who threaten the Mapuche, and, unfortunately, also political killings.

The community is not as united as it seems, because the government comes in with money, corruption, but also with violence and weapons, terrorizing everyone, especially the children.

The repression is aimed at dividing the Mapuche people. The community is not as united as it seems.

The government comes in with money, corruption, but also with violence and weapons, terrorizing everyone, especially the children. It uses the judicial system as a tool of repression and persecution.

For instance, Pinochet introduced a law against terrorism that authorizes the use of witnesses “without faces” by courthouses. This is still used today against the indigenous Mapuche population in order to justify and legitimize the actions of authorities when arresting members of the community.

However, what I noticed living with them was a very real and concrete sensation: since they have already decided to struggle, they do not fear anything. They took a decision and it was final.

The Mapuche are like mice facing the menace of a cat on a daily basis, but they never leave and hide away from the cat. They proudly face the cat and defend themselves as part of their way of life.

The Mapuche are like mice facing the menace of a cat on a daily basis, but they never leave and hide away from the cat. They proudly face the cat and defend themselves as part of their way of life.

While the government is starting to have some success, the Mapuche will never give up the struggle and hope the EP will do the same.
A. Rodenkirchen, “Mapuche Self-Empowerment and the Environment: Legitimate Demands to Design our Future”

Mari mari kom pu che, kom pu lamngen, inche ta Alina pingen. Fentren mañum tamũ elelmufiel ŋi pepi zungual ..ta tufamew. Tufachi zungun academic ka científic no tati. Welu may, küpa nentu ngûtramûn tañi mongelünmew zungu. Chumechi ŋi femleken ka ŋi pegelünmew ka inche ŋi pepi konün afulu. Ka chew ŋi kompefunmew

Hello to everybody. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak at the EP. My name is Alina Rodenkirchen. This is not going to be an academic or a scientific presentation. I would like to share my own experience with you; what I felt and what I saw and what I was part of.

I am going to talk about three demands to address the current situation in which the Mapuche live, in addition to the demands for Mapuche territories and the respect for our linguistic rights. Under this point, we understand the revitalisation of our language, Mapuzungun.

In this context, some young Mapuche from different groups and organizations joined together to act as a collective. From this union, the idea of the first linguistic residential school of the Mapuzungun language was born, organized by the Federación Mapuche de Estudiantes (FEMAE - Federation of Mapuche Students), in collaboration with Academia Nacional del Mapuzungun, Comunidad de Historia Mapuche (The National Academy of Mapuzugun, Community of Mapuche History).

I took part in this residential school as a student this February [2015] in the community of Llaguepulli in the Lafkenche territory.

Fifty Mapuche and Winka came together and were received with great hospitality by the Lonko of this community.

We came from all territories. In our diversity, each of us represented one part of Mapuche history. We travelled from big towns and rural areas to Llaguepulli, but we had one thing in common.

We took the first step. We took the time to disconnect from our lives to learn for three weeks; to learn Mapuzungun. Three weeks in the summer is not an easy time to take off for everybody. Some could not make it because they had to go to the north of Chile to work in the fruit plantations to earn money. They went to harvest fruits that we here in Europe consume.

We took the first step. We took the time to disconnect from our lives to learn for three weeks; to learn Mapuzungun.

These 50 participants came together, sacrificed time and left their families, work and children to be woken up in the morning every day to follow a strict program.

But we didn’t just learn Mapuzungun.
We got closer to our roots, to our identity. We learned more about ourselves and our responsibility to take care of the revitalisation of our language.

If we left it to Chilean politics to resolve our issues, we would be condemned to lose. I can speak for myself, and maybe for other participants too, when I say that we woke up.

While talking, listening and getting to know each other, the same sentences were repeated. One of them said: “My parents or my grandparents are native speakers of Mapuzungun, but they wanted to protect me from bullying and discrimination. They experienced these situations because they were native speakers of the Mapuche language.”

**But we didn’t just learn Mapuzungun. We got closer to our roots, to our identity. We learned more about ourselves and our responsibility to take care of the revitalisation of our language.**

We are now the first or the second generation who cannot speak Mapuzungun. Yes, this is a really serious situation. But we can take it as an opportunity, because we are the generation that still has the opportunity to change this trend.

It is now or never, because we can learn from and talk to our grandparents or the older generation. They still have their experiences, their knowledge and their wisdom. We can take the initiative and start to listen to them.

On the one hand, there is the belief that we have to make changes within our society and to make our own future.

It is our right and the duty of the Chilean state to recognize us as Mapuche. And this goes hand in hand with the recognition of Mapuzungun as the second official language in the Araucanía region, for example.

This is one demand of the Mapuche Party (*Wallmapuwen*), among others. Some years ago, they, together with other organizations, began to organize a huge demonstration every year in February on the International Mother Language Day.
This organization not only wants to make politics for the Mapuche, but for all people living in the Mapuche territory, the Wallmapu. They ask for the recognition of a plurinational state. In Wallmapu, this means living and creating a future, together with the Winka, because everybody is a Wallmapu-che. And everybody should be bilingual.

The participants of the residential school took part in the demonstration this year [2015]. Now, we are waiting for the response of the governor of the Araucania region, Mr Huenchumilla, to declare Mapuzungun the second official language of this region. By the way, this should be realized everywhere, where there is a large population of indigenous peoples.

Our language is in danger. Parents cannot, or are not, educating their children in Mapuzungun. There must be Mapuzungun lessons in schools.

For us, the stay in Llaguepulli brought about a change in our minds and hearts. Before this experience, I thought that it might be too difficult to learn Mapuzungun. It even felt strange to listen to other people talking to each other in our language or making jokes or songs in Mapuzungun. In Llaguepulli, we saw children playing in Mapuzungun and switching easily from Winkazungun to Mapuzungun. I began to believe it is possible to learn.

Hearing Mapuzungun all day long, changed my perception and maybe that of the other participants as well. Listening to and making the effort to speak more Mapuzungun has become a part of my daily life now.

We became accustomed to speaking Mapuzungun in public from shopping in the supermarket to greeting each other.

Two weeks ago, I found myself in a situation; during a phone call with someone from the Chilean consulate I answered “Feleeey”, which means “I am okay with it” in the Mapuche language. In that moment, I was wondering why the person could not understand me.

The participants of the residential school, their organizations and activist groups continue to work together.

On 14 March [2015], a big fire started to burn in the national parks China Muerta and Conguilío, destroying thousands of hectares of native forest and pehuen/araucaria trees. The participants of the residential school joined together, organized solidarity concerts, collected water and food for the volunteers who were trying to stop the fire.

The Chilean government received a lot of attention, because of their total lack of response even when the communities were crying for help and support to save the holy pehuen and their houses from the fire. This fire was not a coincidence.

In this region, large gold and copper deposits were found. For the
Pehuenche, the pehuen is a holy tree and it is prohibited by law to cut them down.

Big landowners in this region already attempted to put an end to the protection years ago. Their intention is to grow more non-native pine and eucalyptus trees.

Following the Spanish conquerors and later the Chilean state, the forestry companies are now the third invaders on Mapuche territory.

Our resistance, be it cultural or political, is permanent. We are foreigners in our own land. We are discriminated against when we speak our own language and wear the clothes our grandparents used to wear.

But we – the youth – we are not afraid or ashamed anymore.

The damage that these plantations are causing is affecting the whole country. The plantations are destroying the soil and drying groundwater. A 3-year old eucalyptus consumes 20 liters of water every day. Pesticides are sprayed from helicopters without regard for the people living next to the plantations. Landscapes are deforested and the remaining soil is exhausted. The consequences are too many to count.

This year [2015] there was an extreme drought. The wells have dried out; there was no available water for livestock, crops or for personal use. The harvest was devastating.

Our resistance, be it cultural or political, is permanent. We are foreigners in our own land. We are discriminated against when we speak our own language and wear the clothes our grandparents used to wear. But we – the youth – are not afraid or ashamed anymore. On the contrary, we are glad to know our roots, to know where we come from, and we appreciate the cultural and spiritual richness of our society. We are diverse. But no matter where we live, we are Mapuche, we are the survivors. We are the children; we are the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of those who fought to survive.

We are not invisible!
We are invisiblised!

We give thanks to our ancestors for their fight and we assume our responsibility to continue to fight for our people, for our land, our language, for our society. Joining our strengths we are already designing our future, respecting and listening to the advice and the wisdom of the elders.

We are not invisible! We are invisiblised!
D. Cambou, “Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic – The Impact of Climate Change and Human Exploitation”

Today I was invited to give a small presentation of the situation of indigenous peoples in the Arctic and address the question of how the changes in the environment affect the indigenous groups in the Arctic, their struggle to preserve their identities, culture and survival.

In order to get directly to the point of this presentation, I would like first to show a picture:

This is probably the most advertised picture of the Arctic, a picture that also reflects probably what the majority of people have in mind when they think about the Arctic region.

However, what I want to emphasize today is that this picture of the arctic region is problematic in so far as it overshadows the visibility and the existence of indigenous peoples living in the arctic region [Saami, Inuit].

In this regard, what I want to show you next are a couple of pictures which represent what the life in the arctic is for about 4 millions of peoples, including indigenous communities.

The first picture is the city of Tromsø in Norway, a beautiful city of about 75,000 people, as you can see the arctic is therefore not only wilderness, it is also urbanized.

Although a substantial part of the indigenous now live in cities, they also continue to preserve and maintain their subsistence lifestyle outside of urban zones. For instance, this is the case for the Saami in the region of Lapland, whose livelihood is deeply interconnected with reindeer herding. This is also the case for the Inuit peoples who live in Canada and Greenland and whose livelihood depends on fishing and hunting activities.

Those activities - fishing, hunting and herding - have two functions. The first is to provide for the essential means of subsistence of the concerned community: for instance, seals are used for their fur, meat, and bones which are then utilized for food, clothing, and shelter by the Inuit peoples. Seal hunting is consequently valued for contributing to the survival of Inuit communities.

The second function of those activities is cultural. Reindeer herding, fishing and seal hunting are some of the activities that define the identity of
indigenous communities. They maintain their cultural identity through the practice of those activities.

Indigenous peoples’ existence, as you can see, is therefore closely interconnected to the environment.

This leads me to the second tenet of my presentation, which focuses on the challenges indigenous communities are currently facing in the “High North”.

**Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change**

As you might have guessed, the first challenge faced by indigenous communities in the Arctic nowadays relates to the impact of climate change. Today, climate change is a major concern of indigenous communities in the Arctic mainly because it has directly affected their ecosystem, and consequently, their ability to hunt, fish or herd reindeer.

As an example of the impact of climate change I will refer to the melting of sea ice caps. With temperatures warming up, the ice has been receding. In the summer of 2007, the Arctic sea ice was melting at an average of 4 centimetres each day – more than 6 times the average calculated in the 1990s.

In practical terms, the melting of sea ice significantly impacts the traditional activities of indigenous peoples. Occurrence of thin ice makes hunting more dangerous. Additionally, the ice plays an important role in sea temperature regulation and therefore affects the ecosystem. It can lead to the fluctuation of fish stocks and the disruption of migration routes of animals, such as caribous.

As a result, the reduction of sea ice caps may disrupt or even lead to the extinction of food and culture of some indigenous peoples, as the fauna on which they depend sees its populations decline and become less approachable or even disappear.

Additionally, housing, infrastructure and transport connections of coastal indigenous communities are seriously affected by climate changes due to rising maintenance costs, and sometimes, even the necessity of relocation. Altogether, this deeply affects the capacity of indigenous peoples to live in the region. As changes have been happening quickly, it is not certain whether all indigenous peoples will be capable of adapting.

**Indigenous and Industrialization**

The second threat to the survival of indigenous peoples, which is also connected to climate change, relates to the impact of industrialization. With increasing demands for oil, gas and other mineral resources, as well as timber, the Arctic is increasingly being industrialized. However, the impact of mining, logging and other industries
have disrupting effects on the Arctic ecosystem.

As an example of industrial activity that has impacted the Arctic ecosystem directly, I will refer to oil exploitation and more particularly to the developments taking place in Northern Alberta, Canada. Today, this specific oil field is considered as one of the major and most destructive industrial projects on Earth by environmental, human rights and indigenous activists.

Over the last 40 years of its production, tar sand mining has changed Northern Alberta from an “untouched environment” to a real “war zone”.

Regarding indigenous peoples, the problem with this development is that in practical terms it has directly affected the livelihoods of indigenous peoples living in this part of the territory. Indigenous peoples have not only lost access to part of their lands, their well-being has also been compromised.

*Although it can be argued that Canada is making economic profit, indigenous peoples are in fact paying a high price for this development project.*

According to different studies, the health of indigenous communities has been impacted by water pollution, contaminated by oil extraction, which has caused disproportionate levels of deadly diseases, such as cancer and leukemia. As a result, although it can be argued that Canada is making economic profit, indigenous peoples are in fact paying a high price for this development project.

Besides, I also want to underline that in addition to the pollution created by local industries, trans-boundary pollution has also been identified as a major issue in the Arctic.

For instance, because of pollution, fish and mammals contain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), which have affected the health of indigenous communities who consume those animals on a daily basis.

For example, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs, oily, man-made substances, which evaporate from rubbish dumps and burning oil) have been found in the breast milk of Canadian Inuit women. PCBs cause cancer and damage the neurological and hormonal development of children. The pollution generated by industrialization is consequently threatening the food security of indigenous communities, and more generally, their subsistence livelihoods.

**Indigenous Peoples and Governmental Activities**

Finally, I also wanted to touch upon the impact of regulations and policies that are adopted by governmental authorities and more particularly by the EU on the livelihood of indigenous peoples. As a key policy maker, the EU
affects indigenous peoples when its work concerns environmental issues or economic development.

In 2009, the EP adopted the seal ban, a regulation that has prohibited the commercialization of products made of seals in Europe. Although this ban had foreseen an exemption for indigenous peoples hunting products, it has severely impacted their economy, especially in Greenland and Canada.

Another example is a vote adopted by the EP last December [2014] against a plan proposed by the Commission to label tar sands oil as “highly polluting”. As a result, the import of tar sands oil from Alberta, which is 23% more carbon-intensive than conventional oil, is not being penalized. This vote was a step back in the fight against climate change and therefore indirectly contributes to undermining the survival of indigenous peoples in the Arctic region.

**The EP must ensure that indigenous peoples are no longer invisible and that their voices are truly heard.**

**Conclusion**

To conclude, what I really wish to emphasize is that the threats indigenous peoples are facing at this very moment in the Artic are multiple, but they are not inevitable.

The negative impact of climate change and the diverse human activities that negatively affect the livelihoods of indigenous peoples in the region can be mitigated and even in some cases fully prevented.

The EP, as a key decision maker, has a role to play. It must take into account the voice of indigenous communities living in the Arctic region when its decisions are likely to affect them. More specifically, it must ensure that its decisions are not threatening the survival of communities, but instead, contributing to support their interests and well-being.

As a final thought, I would like to add that this is not only a matter of due-diligence; this is a human rights obligation. The EP must ensure that indigenous peoples are no longer invisible and that their voices are truly heard.
The Haratin constitute the largest group in Mauritania, even though it is completely invisible to the international community. The history of slavery in Mauritania is that of black gold. It is the history of trade in Haratin slaves waiting for departure to America with their Muslim “masters”. They suffer from slavery and their “masters” are the Moors, a dominant minority community in Mauritania. The Haratin are also victims of racism. The Haratin community represents half of the population, but if you take a look at their political representation in the Parliament, it is inadequate: 10% of the representatives are Haratin. The Arabs represent 25% of the population, but 75% of the Parliament. In 2012, 78% of Arabs and only 8% of Haratin were appointed for high-level positions in administration. We can see clearly who controls the power, economy and the regime.

The Haratin are also invisible in Mauritania’s diplomatic missions and in high ranking position of the security forces: the army, police, guard and gendarmerie. They are invisible in universities studies, rarely awarded with scholarships. They are underrepresented in the media, including TV, radio and print media, as well as in the field of business.

The minority controls 90% of the power. People in power are mostly white, which makes the Haratin minority invisible both inside and outside Mauritania. There are several reasons why the Haratin are kept invisible. The first reason is political, aiming to preserve the demographic superiority of white Moors as opposed to other African ethnic groups. The second factor at play is the push to transform Mauritania into a big Arabic nation. The third reason is economic, since slaves constitute a cheap labor force. The fourth and last consideration is how to keep control over power? The strategy followed in Mauritania is that of exclusion of the Haratin from sharing the country’s wealth.

**The Haratin constitute the largest group in Mauritania, even though it is completely invisible to the international community.**

The methods used to keep the Haratin invisible range from political tools, such as avoiding cooperation with Haratin leaders, to exploiting union workers and keeping them under control. They also include economic tools, such as imposing low payments for workers maintaining their dependency on the employer and providing no opportunities for promotion to higher positions. Education is also used as a tool, since the many Haratin attend school for only 2 to 5 years. Culture is also utilized by providing no support for the development and preservation of Haratin culture, and denying them space in the national media, such as television and the radio.
K. Stroeken, “The Predicament of “African Cultures”: Representation as a Double-Edged Sword”

As members of this Parliament know, representing people is no small matter. It impacts people’s lives. Representation in the right organization gives opportunities for people to preserve and improve their livelihoods. Representation can also take away opportunities by misrepresenting, consciously or unconsciously, the needs of those people.

For a long time it did not matter that fairly isolated small groups remained off the radar of governments and international organizations. It did not matter that we Westerners called them “primitive tribes” and considered ourselves as more advanced and civilized, and hence unlikely to learn from their ways of life. Our self-chosen ignorance was their bliss. Less (external) intervention often meant more (internal) peace for indigenous communities – their kind of peace in any case.

But in today’s world, where the local depends on the global, the unrepresented are always on the losing side. They face the consequences of the decisions made without them. A law passed here [European Parliament] will affect their survival via food supply and inflation, and will affect their environments, such as the rainforest.

They will only get a piece of the cake if their existence is known and their voices are heard. I want to distinguish two things at this point: the hearing of their voice and the understanding of it.

But in today’s world, where the local depends on the global, the unrepresented are always on the losing side.

As the economist and Nobel Prize winner Stiglitz argues, today’s globalization is half-baked. Today’s globalization is economic by creating one big market, but it is not a political globalization. While the market reaches every corner of the globe, not everyone has the same rights. A factory in Europe, Indonesia or Africa obeys different conditions of production. The list is long of multinationals negotiating directly with governments for exploiting natural resources on remote patches of land without involving local communities that suffer the consequences. So we have every reason to support political globalization of our planet.

A major step in this process should be, no doubt, to have local communities represented in international bodies of government. Concretely, this means, first, finding the communities that are unrepresented, and secondly, having communities choose their own representatives.
I am here to stress a paradox. All international organizations, including this Parliament, no matter how internally diverse their membership may be, share the same political history. That history is Western. It differs from the cultures of indigenous peoples. This means that the representatives of indigenous peoples who are most likely to be heard in this Parliament will be those educated like us, speaking like us and not like the indigenous communities they represent.

Because these representatives are known to master the language and culture of international bodies, their people will be “smart” enough to vote for them as they realize the need for representation of their people and to contact international organizations to remedy this lack. But when asked, they will most probably admit that although acting as representatives, they are not exactly representative of their community.

... the representatives of indigenous peoples who are most likely to be heard in this Parliament will be those educated like us, speaking like us and not like the indigenous communities they represent.

What characterizes the members of their indigenous community is in fact little concern with representation in the world. Preoccupied with seasonal cycles of work, ritual and gathering, the East-African rural communities I lived in, such as the six million Sukuma in North Tanzania, did not even contemplate representation in the national parliament, nor did they worry about their ethnicity. Another similar case are the Batwa of Burundi, who would rather not be identified as Batwa, because of the lesser social status attributed to them by society. With globalization come identity politics.

And yet, as we stated, there is no way back. Without claiming a cultural identity and the right to difference, those communities will be crushed by political disregard. Nation states will claim to speak on their behalf, and under the cover of “one nation”, conceal the important cultural differences within their country. These differences will not appear in statistical surveys.

As Troy Thomas’ study in Guyana, which I supervised, has recently shown, a “yes” by rural farmers is not a “yes” of urban dwellers in the same country. It is tempting to cite international indexes such as the Afrobarometer. The index indicates that most Africans prefer a democratic regime and about half of them regard their country as democratic. But after close examination, among others by Mrisho Malipula (whom I also supervise), I can assure you that in today’s increasingly connected Africa, the voices of the remote communities rarely reach those surveys. With globalization the cultural gap only becomes wider.
To the outside world, national regimes can pretend to be democratic, precisely because few of us know about the cultural differences at stake or realize how little the governments do to involve the remotely located communities; how little respect they have for the uneducated, perceived as culturally void. The indifference is mutual, but one side misses out on a piece of the pie.

Should unrepresented peoples then strive for independence? The greatest danger is probably to copy the terms of the nation-State; to assume that creating a new nationalism for communities is the only way forward when it comes to political participation.

In fact, as an anthropologist, having stomached thousands of ethnographic studies across the world, I dare claim that this is invariably not what the voices of the unrepresented - in all their diversity - say. Their wish is never to become a separate state, except when facing military invasion. Their representatives should not fall in the trap of assuming this objective to be their duty and mandate. To understand and communicate the voices of their community is their task.

Indigenous voices will talk of relations with the “larger world” and ways of participating in it without uprooting themselves. They will warn about environmental degradation, about new, yet unsustainable ways of life, undermining the old sense of purpose, and the dire fate of their culture without structural, economic and political support.

But the most important concerns cannot be voiced because these are too deeply seated within culture. It takes an outsider to tell non-Western cultures about the remarkable balance they have struck with nature's challenges and human drives. Modernity, always critical of past beliefs, has put all its money on individual reason and genius, and thus historically speaking, it has ventured into unknown terrain. To the anthropologist, the contrast is clear between the world, which international organizations (inspired by scholars) are building and the world generally conceived by indigenous peoples.

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Unlike the Western model, which imposes one sphere of exchange - called the market - and distinguishes modes of production, the indigenous communities I know of do not separate modes of production (because they only accept the encompassing mode called “fertility”), but they do distinguish spheres of exchange: they differentiate markets on a moral basis. In their worldview, money only counts in one sphere, that of commodities and consumption. Another sphere is land and housing, and yet another sphere is education/initiation, and so on, each with its own terms of exchange.

How did this system evolve? It was not invented by an individual genius. It grew naturally. We should ask
ourselves, if we could learn from other cultures, and if not, at least keep them represented for future generations, because surely our hard reason yielded no better fruits with two world wars, a record income inequality and a planet that is warming up as a result of pollution and overconsumption.

This brings me to the second point. The warnings of unrepresented peoples can only reach us if their voices are understood, which means translated in terms that we can grasp. This requires mediation, not only linguistic but also cultural. Anthropologists, who stayed at least 2 years in the field for ethnographic studies, can help to interpret the voices of unrepresented peoples, to interpret their words in our cultural terms - the terms Parliaments like this one can work with.

There are obvious advantages to having anthropologists who are actually in the community, mainly in terms of communication. But the mediation should proceed in the two directions, not only from Western to native code, but also from native to Western code. Hence, Westerners learning to master the native codes can be equally helpful. The native worldviews, also known as “cosmologies”, are part of our heritage, whose disappearance will be lamented by our children as much as we are saddened by the destruction of the Assyrian statues in Nimrud today.

Besides the injustice of stifling voices by the concerns of nation States and international bodies, why should we defend the political participation of these minimally globalized communities?

I think many of us realize that there is wisdom in their voices, which may benefit us all, especially those among us who have sacrificed our roots and traditions for blind belief in technological progress.

While through schooling and science we excel in individual reason, we should dare to ask whether collective reason exists in other communities, drawing on centuries of trial and error and cultural experiments in relative isolation from the Western hegemony, disseminated through development projects and universities producing universal knowledge.

There are over a thousand languages and cultures in Africa, many of which are struggling to preserve their traditions and social institutions via initiatory systems. But the opposition and discouragement by national governments, schools, orthodox religions and churches are very strong, because of their joint conviction that local traditions hinder development.
Out of ignorance about the cosmologies, and adaptive, balanced ways of life that existed before external intervention, we have come to associate rural cultures with harmful practices. We do not see that the upsurge of violence, ethnic and witchcraft-related violence, such as albino killings and human sacrifice in eastern and southern Africa is recent and takes place in communities whose youth have deserted initiations and, without proper socialization, now embrace uprooted beliefs and practices. They crave for a sense of purpose. They are waiting for a truth to fill their minds.

Among the many expressions of culture popping up and disappearing worldwide, those least adapted to the global economy appear to be selected away. Prohibiting initiation into medicinal systems and cosmologies, governments, churches and Charismatic movements destroyed the reproduction of culture at its heart. A century of colonial undermining of cultures closely followed by the postcolonial disparagement of roots has paved the way for a culturally poorer planet and a withering sense of purpose.

Did we have no clue what globalization had in store? Or was representing the unrepresented too much of a paradox for us to handle on our own? We can only hope organizations, such as this one [EU] will take up the issue further.

Let me end with a call for a law on representation. Following the decolonization of Africa, anthropology entered a new phase, which was coined by the crisis of representation. Basically, we realized that no individual could claim to represent a culture, one's own or another's, in writing or speech. It is time we all enter this phase. Globalization has meant more irritation, more chance for cultural misunderstanding, and a stage for magnifying identities and distinctions. Why?

It is the representation of others that has gone global, whether it is about the Greeks, Germans, Russians, English, Americans, Jews or Muslims. As members of the global village we have to regulate how we represent each other.

At present, our words are like cars in cities without traffic lights or rules, collisions abound. What else is racism
or bullying if not a systematic and negative representation in the public space? Could opposing a certain (mis)representation have been the cause behind the bombing of the highest towers in New York? Creating a public counter-image seems to be the goal of the Islamic State videos on YouTube. And what about the monstrous attack on Charlie Hebdo?

*To prevent cultural tensions worldwide from turning into violence, there should be a regulated digital platform to learn from each other. More than ever it is needed, and possible, to represent the unrepresented of the world and have them represent themselves.*

It seems as if those terrorists mistook the work of individual artists for a collective European representation of Islam. As you know, in Islam, representation is taken so seriously that the prophet should not be pictured. But in the West, artists have the right to represent; their pictures are expressions of individual creativity.

A deep cultural misunderstanding of representation seems to lie at the root. To be able to say “Je suis Charlie”, there should be laws to determine when and where we can be Charlie. Like art, cartoons should not be seen as representing people.

It is amazing how little work has been done as of yet in cultural mediation.

We can no longer pretend that the whole world thinks, or should think, how we think.

For too long, at our own peril, we have ignored the different perspectives that were screaming to be noticed and needed to be represented in an open forum. For many anthropologists like me, the EP could be an example of a forum for cultural mediation and equal treatment of cultures.

*Social* equity did not come overnight either. One century ago, the invention of printing, which allowed books and pamphlets to be spread and discussed, helped to end the disenfranchisement of workers.

Today, the digital revolution allows us to crawl out of our trenches and evolve towards *cultural* equity. The right to cultural difference is one of the last taboos on Earth.

To prevent cultural tensions worldwide from turning into violence, there should be a regulated digital platform to learn from each other.

More than ever, it is needed, and possible, to represent the unrepresented of the world and have them represent themselves.
R. Railaf, “Preservation of Mapuche Cultural Heritage: Obstacles and Opportunities Ahead”

My name is Rafael Railaf. I am Mapuche and a member of Mapuche Foundation FOLIL. FOLIL has now been active for 15 years and was founded in 2000, shortly after the house arrest of former dictator Augusto Pinochet in London in 1998. Mapuche Foundation FOLIL is one of the first Mapuche organizations in Europe. Most of its members are first and second generation Mapuche. We focus on human rights, culture, tradition, language and supporting different media (internet, radio and music) concerning the Mapuche people in and outside of Chile.

I was born in the Mapuche community of Quetropura in Lautaro, southern Chile. My family and my parents speak Mapudungun, which is the language of Mapuche. At school I learned Spanish. At the time it was impossible to receive education in Mapudungun. Most Mapuche spoke their own language in their communities and spoke Spanish outside of them. People were afraid to be rejected or discriminated against if they spoke Mapudungun. In 1977, our family fled to the Netherlands. There, I learned to speak Dutch, English and German, but the Mapuche language was also spoken in our family.

Mapudungun means “language of the land”. There are about 1.5 million Mapuche people in Chile and 35% of them regularly speak Mapudungun. It is important for Mapuche to learn and speak their own language, but it is even more important to preserve that language. Language is culture, and if our language becomes extinct, the foundation of the Mapuche culture will disappear.

It is obvious that during important cultural events, such as the Ngillatun and the Wetripantu, Mapudungun is spoken. The Ngillatun is the harvest celebration. People ask the great Gnechen (a Mapuche god) for a good harvest. During the Wetripantu, the turn from the old year to the new year is celebrated. The Machi, a spiritual leader and often a woman, speaks, prays and sings in Mapudungun.

Singing is also an important part of the Mapuche culture. Old stories were passed on to younger generation - from father to son and mother to daughter - through songs, so as not to forget our history, such as the one about Leftraru (Lautaro in Spanish),
one of the most important Mapuche warriors in our history.

Peter K. Austin, a professor of linguistics says: “A language is under threat when it threatens to disappear and when there are no speakers left. If a language wants to be healthy, it has to be spoken by children”. Therefore, we advocate for more Mapudungun in schools in Chile.

At this moment, some schools in Chile offer Mapudungun classes, but these are mostly temporary projects. Above all, not all of the teachers that teach Mapudungun in schools have a didactic background. There should be more professionally educated teachers, so that the language has a chance to develop on a higher level.

As I said before, language is culture, but land is also a part of Mapuche culture. Mapuche literally means “people of the land”.

At this moment, there is an unnecessary territorial conflict going on in Chile. Indigenous Mapuche people are occupying land that had traditionally belonged to them. This has been causing conflicts between Chilean farmers, companies and the Mapuche community. The Chilean Government has reacted to this harshly with violent raids. In turn, this has caused unnecessary injuries in the Mapuche communities, pushing the Mapuche to get into conflicts with the police, after which they end up in prison.

Recently, on 13 April 2015, the Mapuche community Rankiko in the Malleco area experienced raids. The community built houses on ancestral Mapuche land and has claimed it. The authorities do not agree and so the police was called and it took excessive action against the people. They used firearms and helicopters to intimidate the people there. The Rankiko community does not think this is the way to solve a political problem. They responded by saying that what happened to the Mapuche people shows a lack of political goodwill on the part of the government.

The Rankiko Mapuche community demands the return of Mapuche territory and wants legal action to be taken against the use of force by the police, especially against its children, and to protect the physical, psychological and territorial integrity of the community.

Today, Mapuche people in Angol, who were imprisoned 31 days ago, started a new hunger strike. It is part of a series of many hunger strikes that have taken place over the past years. It includes - among others - Miguel Toro Marin and Claudio Huentecol Huentecol. They believe their arrest is unjust and that the court’s judgments are questionable. During the legal investigation, there were clear indications that Miguel and Claudio’s innocence could be proven, but the public prosecutor still imprisoned them.
Mapuche communities, such as the Winkull Newen community, plead for the demilitarization of their territory and decriminalization of their struggle. They have recently started a social networking campaign in support of the community, because they are experiencing a new wave of political persecution.

Mapuche communities feel that the state has started a new attack against them. They have been hoping to start dialogue with state officials for years, but they feel that the government does not intend to solve problems relating to their ancestral territory. They say that the government does not want to speak to people in the Mapuche communities where the conflicts are taking place. There are many Mapuche that wish to engage in dialogue, but this offer has not been taken into consideration by the government.

Numerous national and international organizations have made similar proposals. Philip Alson, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on extreme poverty and human rights, described the Mapuche situation in Chile during his recent mission, as “the Achilles’ heel of Chile in the application of human rights” and called for urgent and serious adherence to international guidelines.

Language is culture, and if our language becomes extinct, the foundation of the Mapuche culture will disappear.

Mapuche Foundation FOLIL advocates for a deeper focus on the Mapuche language, in relation to human rights, at the EP. The Parliament should give recommendations to the Chilean government regarding the most important point for the Mapuche; their land and their language.

Our recommendations are:
- Firstly, the Chilean government should give proper information on traditional communities to the companies that buy and operate on Mapuche land;
- Secondly, the Chilean government should let the Mapuche community have a say in deciding which lands can be sold;
- And lastly, the Chilean government should strive for more education in Mapudungun and for professionally educated Mapudugun teachers, so they can teach the language to younger generations in a more efficient way.

Thank you for your attention.
S. Kerr, “The Case of the Degar-Montagnards”

Good afternoon. Thank you to UNPO for inviting me here today. I work for Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), a human rights NGO that works on freedom of religion and belief for people of all faiths or none. One of our focus countries is Vietnam; as such, this afternoon, I will outline the situation of Degar-Montagnards in terms of freedom of religion or belief.

If you have heard of the Central Highlanders of Vietnam, it is probably through this lens. Indeed, early last decade, in 2004, thousands gathered together in protest against the confiscation of ancestral lands and religious controls. This protest turned violent and led to a brutal crackdown by security forces that saw hundreds of Montagnards charged with national security crimes with many others going into hiding. I will look at the situation today and note that serious challenges still exist.

Vietnam’s Central Highlands are home to some 30 tribes of indigenous peoples. The terms “Montagnards” or “Degar” are used to collectively identify these different tribal groups with their unique languages and cultures. Both of the terms “Montagnard” and “Degar” are somewhat problematic; especially “Montagnard”, which is not used by the Vietnamese government, as they see it as a remnant of the French colonial period. That said, “Montagnard” is still widely used by human rights groups and by many Montagnards themselves. We have noted that some Central Highlanders like to self-identify as Montagnards as it increases the solidarity between the different groups.

From 2013 to 2015, CSW has conducted a series of interviews with different groups from Vietnam and we noticed a consistent theme: that is the stark contrast between the treatment of Christians and other religious minorities in cities like Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, and the situation in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. It became clear that the distinction was not based solely on location, but on the ethnicity and religious convictions of the people involved. Put simply, Protestant Christians who are also Central Highlanders, or Montagnards, as both a religious and ethnic minority, are subject to double-discrimination.

As a Protestant who had managed to move to Ho Chi Minh City explained:

“It’s easier to be a Christian in the city […] They [the government] allow Christians to have some services and worship meetings, but they do this because of the international community: they want things to look like they are open. But inside, they continue to make things difficult for us, especially in the Highlands […] The people living there are poor so they cannot afford to pay lawyers, and the government does not allow lawyers to defend these cases.”

Tragically, a similar pattern can be seen in the treatment of Cham ethnic Muslims in the south, Khmer-Krom ethnic Theravada Buddhists in the Mekong Delta and K’ho ethnic Catholics, also in the Central Highlands. It would be incorrect to conclude that only ethnic minorities suffer violations
of the human right to freedom of religion or belief. CSW’s 2014 Vietnam report includes cases of restrictions and violations against both Kinh Vietnamese and ethnic minorities from five religion or belief communities: Buddhists, Catholics, Cao Daoists, Hoa Hao Buddhists and Protestants. The report also notes some improvements, including an increase in the number of groups recognized by the government.

Following his visit to Vietnam in July 2014, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief also noted in his report positive developments at the central level, for example, the inclusion of a chapter on human rights in the amended Constitution, which was adopted on 28 November 2013. Moreover, the government has increased engagement with international human rights mechanisms, and was elected to the UN Human Rights Council in 2013.

Whilst these developments at the central and international level could potentially improve religious freedom in Vietnam, the changes have yet to be felt on the ground for many religious communities. This is particularly true for ethnic minorities, such as Montagnard Protestants.

Reported violations include harassment, discrimination, intrusive monitoring, forced eviction, confiscation and destruction of property, imprisonment, torture and extra-judicial killing.

Obtaining detailed, cross-checked information about these violations from the most remote parts of the Central Highlands is an ongoing challenge for human rights activists. For each case that is detailed, timely and clear enough to make it into the hands of an EU or UN officials or perhaps the international media, there are dozens, if not hundreds, more stories of beatings, forced evictions, and deaths in police custody. It is extremely difficult to substantiate these reports, but the consistent allegations of police brutality aimed at ethnic minority Christians undermine the government’s claim to have (and I quote from the government) “created favourable [sic] conditions for Protestants to practice their religion at home or by groupings”.

Kinsh Vietnamese and ethnic minority Protestants readily acknowledge the difference in treatment of Protestants from different ethnicities. Most believe that the government’s suspicion of the Montagnards stems from the cooperation between some ethnic minority Central Highland groups and the US forces during the America-Vietnam War. FULRO, or the United Front for the Liberation of Oppressed People, was an armed resistance group, which aspired to independence for ethnic minority Central Highlanders. Many of the leaders were Christian, leading the authorities to equate the resistance group with the house church movement in the Central Highlands, which was growing rapidly.

Although FULRO appears to have been disbanded in the early 1990s, some local authorities continued to see Protestant Christianity as a real or potential tool of anti-government forces. Then in the 2000s, a new

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1 UN Human Rights Council, Twenty Eighth session, Agenda item 3, Mission to Viet Nam: Comments by the State on the report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt
movement calling for greater religious and political freedom for the Montagnards emerged, which had a strongly Christian identity. The government called this *Tin Lanh Dega*, referring to all Protestant ethnic minority Highlanders. Once again, Central Highlands Protestantism was seen as being connected to “anti-government” sentiment.

Whilst some Christians do want greater political freedom, many Central Highlanders simply want to be able to practice their religion without harassment. Their faith is personal, rather than political. As such, many ethnic minority churches have tried to register with the Government or have joined denominations already registered with the authorities. However, many Central Highlands churches have been refused registration, and perhaps a greater number have not received a response at all. Their counterparts in cities and large towns face comparatively fewer obstacles.

*Whilst some Christians do want greater political freedom, many Central Highlanders simply want to be able to practice their religion without harassment. Their faith is personal, rather than political.*

I would also like to highlight the discrimination that occurs in the distribution of government assistance for ethnic minorities, specifically against ethnic minority Protestants in the Central Highlands. Vietnam’s five-year socio-economic development plan for 2011-2015 includes aims to reduce poverty and to (and I quote) “improve the material and spiritual life of people, especially those living in remote, mountainous areas, islands, areas stricken by extreme difficulties and ethnic minority-inhabited areas”.

This is consistent with the information CSW has received from Central Highlanders in Vietnam, who report that families in their area typically receive assistance from the government in the form of housing, scholarships, blankets, drinking water and sometimes money. However, Christians from the Central Highlands consistently report that Protestants are not given this assistance. In the majority of cases, they are told directly by the authorities that Christians are not qualified to receive government assistance because of their religion. Often, when ethnic minorities convert to Christianity, the local authorities confiscate the documentation they have that states that they are eligible for government assistance as a poor family.

Many of the families affected by this blatant discrimination are desperately poor, living hand-to-mouth. One single natural calamity, a failed harvest, or sickness in the family, can push them from survival to disaster. Families who cannot work are forced to borrow money at high interest, pushing them into a cycle of poverty and debt.

Before I conclude, I will now share some words from Central Highlands Christians, reported to CSW this year:

1. The first is from a M’nong Protestant from Dak Lak Province. He says: “We are discriminated against: non-Christians are given scholarships and financial support by the Government, but we are not given anything. There is a big fund for ethnic minority people, but Christian families

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2http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails%3FcategoryId%3D30%26articleId%3D10052505
do not receive any assistance [...] They told my children directly, ‘even if you finish school, you won’t be able to get a good job’. They mean because we are Christians [...] They say directly, ‘you are Christian, so we won’t give you anything’. So the poor Christians are living almost like animals, without even enough to eat.’

2. An ethnic minority Protestant from Quang Ngai Province also says: “There is discrimination because the government gives the non-Christians money for electricity for their homes and they give them a house and salt, but they don’t give any of these things to Christians. They tell us directly, ‘this is because you are Christians’. It is normal, and we expect it now. We don’t complain because we know that nothing will change.”

3. A young female M’nong Protestant from Dak Lak reported: “When I was a child I had difficulties because the government treats Christians and non-Christians very differently. Even though my family was very poor, the government gave money for schooling and housing to others, but not to us. When my family became Christian, the government took away many of our things, including our rice and our documents which entitled us to benefits as a poor family.”

When questioned about the divide between urban and rural areas in terms of religious freedom, the central government has often cited problems in communication between the central and local level authorities. While this may go some way to explaining the double-discrimination suffered by ethnic and religious minorities, it does not excuse it. As the Special Rapporteur states in his 2015 report, “[c]entral authorities should review their policies and instructions to ensure that their implementation is compatible with international human rights standards. It is also not fair to blame the existing problems on the lack of education of villagers or people in rural areas, because many of the described challenges are of a systemic nature, as evidenced in respective domestic legal regulations.

I will end with some key recommendations and concluding remarks. While this presentation has focused on Protestants from the Central Highlands, the issue of double-discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities is not limited to this demographic. As mentioned above, Cham Muslims, Khmer-Krom Theravada Buddhists, and ethnic minority Catholics, including the K’ho in the Central Highlands, all suffer restrictions against the right to freedom of religion or belief as well as their cultural, social and economic rights. In fact, the issue of freedom of religion or belief is of critical importance to adherents to every one of Vietnam’s recognized religions. It is also an issue, which has received relatively little attention from the international community.

The EU delegation to the human rights dialogue with Vietnam in January 2015 noted as a “positive development” the long-awaited visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief in 2014, which has helped to shine some light on the situation. CSW hopes that the EU, which this year celebrates 25 years of diplomatic relations with Vietnam, will reflect carefully on the report of the Special Rapporteur, and encourage the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to implement its recommendations.

The EU, together with its Member States, is currently the largest grant donor in Vietnam, allocating €400 million for development cooperation
for the period of 2014-2020. The EU has a responsibility to ensure that projects and programs aiming to reduce poverty and encourage sustainable development in Vietnam are run in accordance with principles of good governance and non-discrimination. Where possible and appropriate, the EU should monitor the distribution of aid and conduct case studies into the impact of assistance in areas where ethnic minorities belonging to different religion or belief groups live side by side.

In addition, the EU should continue to monitor violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief and to raise concerns through all available means. It should maintain close contact with ethnic and religious minorities who are, or should be, the direct beneficiaries of development assistance, and, where there are allegations of discrimination, raise these directly with the authorities.

Lastly, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam should be encouraged to thoroughly and impartially investigate and address claims that local authorities have discriminated against ethnic minority Protestants in the distribution of government assistance. The government should also ensure that officials at all levels are required to undergo thorough training on constitutional and legal provisions on religious activities and organizations, and re-examine mechanisms or procedures for complaints of violations against the right to freedom of religion or belief, ensuring that such provisions are accessible, impartial and effective. In particular, ethnic and religious minorities should have access to remedies in cases of religious freedom violations by both State and non-State actors.
OPENING PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION
LUCA CATALANO GONZAGA

“INDIGENOUS PEOPLES – INVISIBLE PEOPLES”

FRIDAY 3 JULY 2015
18:30-20:30
MUNDO-b, the brussels sustainable house
Rue d’Edimbourg 26
The exhibition “Indigenous Peoples – Invisible Peoples” is a project that seeks to reveal through photography threats made to indigenous peoples’ natural environments, languages, traditional livelihoods and community cohesion. The 4 indigenous groups represented in this exhibition, the Batwa, Haratin, Mapuche and Degar-Montagnards, confront similar obstacles on a daily basis, despite their geographical dispersion.

The artworks remind us that indigenous peoples all around the world share an integral association with their ancestral lands, both economically and culturally. Decades, if not centuries of misrepresentation, marginalization and discrimination, intertwined with acute poverty, exacerbate the preservation of their cultures. This exhibition is dedicated to their initiatives to reconstruct their histories, protect their threatened group identity and create better futures.

Remarks by:

Iva Petkovic,
*Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization*  

Alina Rodenkirchen, Mapuche  
*Coordinator for Society for Threatened Peoples and German Mapuche Network*

Luca Catalano Gonzaga,  
*Photojournalist*
11 • ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

ABOUT UNPO

The UNREPRESENTED NATIONS AND PEOPLES ORGANIZATION is an international, nonviolent, and democratic membership organisation. Its members are indigenous peoples, minorities, and unrecognised or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and promote their human and cultural rights, to preserve their environments, and to find nonviolent solutions to conflicts which affect them. Although the aspirations of UNPO Members differ greatly, they are all united by one shared condition – they are not adequately represented at major international fora.

ABOUT WITNESS IMAGE

WITNESS IMAGE is a non-profit association founded in 2014 by Susanna Bucci, journalist, and Luca Catalano Gonzaga, photoreporter. Its purpose is to share their view of the world in constant transformation and, with their choice of images and words, engage those who believe that positive social change is achievable collectively.

ABOUT LUCA CATALANO GONZAGA

With an advanced degree in Economics and Commerce, LUCA CATALANO GONZAGA has worked in advertising and marketing for various companies namely Mondadori, Stream, Mediaset and NBC Universal. In 2008, he became a professional photographer, focusing mainly on social issues, portraits and ad hoc projects in the private sector. He was awarded the “Grand Prix Care du Reportage Humanitaire (2009)” for a feature on child labour in Nepal, which was shown at the international festival of photojournalism “Visa pour l’image”. In 2010, he co-founded Witness Image. He received long-term funding from the Nando Peretti Foundation to carry out the project “Child Survival in a Changing Climate (2011)” on the impact of climate change on children in developing countries, and in collaboration with UNPO, to carry out the project “Invisible People (2013)” on the threats made to indigenous people in the world. He has been awarded several prizes and has seen his photo reports published by many leading Italian and international press outlets.

ABOUT MUNDO-B

MUNDO-B is an initiative of associations active in sustainable development. As an eco-renovated building in the center of Brussels, Mundo-b brings together under one roof the offices of many organizations and companies active in the environmental and social sectors. Mundo-B is a space that is functional and has a soul. It offers the ideal framework for collective creation, and sharing of ideas and resources. By encouraging interaction between associations and cooperative, its members form a stimulating working community, lead to new perspectives.
THE FORGOTTEN BATWA
Burera district, Rwanda
Batwa farmers on a corn field. The Batwa are 1% of Rwanda’s population and 10,000 were killed by Hutus during the horrific ethnic cleansing of 1994. The Batwa were targeted as they were thought to be friends of the Tutsi. Another 10,000 fled the region at the time.

THE FORGOTTEN BATWA
Nyabihu district, Rwanda
Zanika, 20 years old, with her daughter Manirumva, who is one month old.
THE FORGOTTEN BATWA
Nyabihu district, Rwanda
Francis with his wife Jackline and their children Fidele, Patrick and Innocent. They left the forest in 2006.

THE FORGOTTEN BATWA
Musanze district, Rwanda
Zanika, 17 years old, an orphan, the eldest sibling of a large family of 9 children. Her mother died following a car crash.

THE FORGOTTEN BATWA
Burera district, Rwanda
Hidundu, age 6
Between 2006 and 2010, the ancient region of lakes and forests where the Batwa once lived was converted into an attraction site for tourism due to the presence of gorillas. Batwa land was officially confiscated. Unable to return to their lands, they now live in extremely poor conditions.
HARATIN, THE MASK OF MODERN SLAVERY
Village of Jedida, Mauritania
Noura, 18, a slave since she was 4, just like her mother before her. After working as a servant, enduring extensive abuse and violence, she fled and filed a complaint to the local authorities, unsuccessfully. She contacted IRA Mauritania for protection and legal aid. Now free, she is currently unemployed and has never attended school.

HARATIN, THE MASK OF MODERN SLAVERY
Village of Daguag, Mauritania
A Haratín woman farmer trying to keep birds away from her wheat field.

HARATIN, THE MASK OF MODERN SLAVERY
Village of Tejala, Mauritania
A family of Haratin farmers at work. Most Haratin, including the elderly, still farm on land that is not theirs and by law must give away a part of their meagre harvest to their masters.
HARATIN, THE MASK OF MODERN SLAVERY
Village of Daguag, Mauritania
Ichida Snaba, 42, in front of her house.

HARATIN, THE MASK OF MODERN SLAVERY
Nouakchott, Mauritania
At the Plage de Nouakchott, fish is collected, ready to be transported to the international food market.

The young Haratins flee from rural areas to the city, in search for work at construction sites or at the fish market of Nouakchott.

MAPUCHE, PEOPLE OF THE LAND
Araucania region, Chile
Inside a Mapuche house at the Nanco community. A history of marginalization and social exclusion, exacerbated in the era of Augusto Pinochet’s military dictatorship, has meant that despite reforms, the Mapuche people are still not benefiting from Chile’s fast economic growth.
MAPUCHE, PEOPLE OF THE LAND

Araucania region, Chile
Ortenzia Pitrikeo, 15, next to her house. Since the fall of the regime, some Mapuche land has been seized, and some returned, leaving behind a scattered patchwork of indigenous lands. In Chile, land restitution efforts have been minimal.

MAPUCHE, PEOPLE OF THE LAND

Araucania region, Chile
Mirta Vega, 40, in front of her house at the Pewenche Aukin Wall Mapu Community. Under Pinochet’s dictatorship the Mapuche native lands were sold to the 7 most powerful families in Chile. The social, economic and environmental effects are catastrophic.

MAPUCHE, PEOPLE OF THE LAND

Araucania region, Chile
Avelino Huillical, 38, Mapuche from the Araucania Region. The Mapuche have been forced into the poor mountainous regions of Chile with limited means of making a living. Many hydro-electric and mining projects go hand in hand with serious human rights violations as Mapuche ancestral lands are threatened.
MAPUCHE, PEOPLE OF THE LAND
Araucania region, Chile
Maria Luisa Gutierrez, 46, working in her small greenhouse. Chile eradicated local fauna and flora on ancestral Mapuche lands to make way for eucalyptus plantations, which dry out land, altering and ultimately destroying the region’s biodiversity.

MONTAGNARDS, SONS OF MOUNTAINS
Central Highlands, Vietnam
Going home at sunset after a hard day’s work. Economically dependent upon shifting cultivation and supplementary trade in forest products and local handicrafts, Montagnards live in scattered settlements, having been forced to leave their lands.

MONTAGNARDS, SONS OF MOUNTAINS
Central Highlands, Vietnam
Y tho, 32, a Montagnard peasant woman.
MONTAGNARDS, SONS OF MOUNTAINS
Central Highlands, Vietnam
Y DAT, 28, takes a moment to rest on a cassava field. Central Highlands were a strategic region during the Vietnamese war with Americans military camps, recruiting Montagnards to fight the communist forces. Since fall of Saigon in 1973, the Montagnards have suffered political, economic and religious discrimination.

MONTAGNARDS, SONS OF MOUNTAINS
Kon Tum town, Vietnam
One of many churches in Kon Tum, a fiercely Roman Catholic city. Montagnards have suffered political, economic and religious discrimination, often seeking refuge in churches.

MONTAGNARDS, SONS OF MOUNTAINS
Central Highlands, Vietnam
Early morning preparations before going to school in the nearest village.
13 • EXHIBITION
REMARKS

A. Rodenkirchen

A great thank you to UNPO for inviting me again and for giving me the opportunity to tell you about some aspects of the young Mapuche movement.

First, I am very thankful for every person who shared with me a part of their experiences. For their words, their advice and their kimün (knowledge/wisdom in Mapuzungun). Everybody is present in each step I do on this earth. Right now, I feel the support of the people I got to know during the residential school of Mapuzungun. I participated in this residential school in Wallmapu this year. I would like to talk to you about this experience and what I learned there.

The individualism we often learn here is not necessarily the only way to interact with our environment. What we can see with our eyes is not necessarily the only truth, the only reality that exists. I learned to listen. I learned to hear, to observe my environment and to respect my feelings. Talking to our elders, I still found knowledge, which not even the biggest library could represent.

When I say “still”, I mean that not much time has passed since the Chilean government and the settlers took our territory and our right to determine ourselves and our destiny.

What are 132 years compared with more than 500 years of colonization and occupation?

Yes, nothing.

Only 132 years have passed since the Chilean government violated internationally recognized treaties with our Mapuche nation and occupied our land by force.

Our elders still remember the histories their parents told them about how we lived as free people in the Wallmapu territory. They still remember how the Chilean troops burned down their houses and killed our people.

No, not much time has passed.
Besides everything they did and what they are still doing to oppress us, we have our dignity.

We are not helpless, passive or mute objects. We are not poor people. We are people with the ability to create, to act, to think, to speak for ourselves.

**We are not poor people. We are people with the ability to create, to act, to think, to speak for ourselves.**

We are persons, we are creators. We have many strong voices... as every other peoples. We don’t stand still. NO! We are constantly on the move, inventing new strategies and new ways to survive as Mapuche.

Now, the young Mapuche in the big cities and in the rural areas are taking the responsibility to fight exclusion, discrimination and racism.

**We don’t stand still. NO! We are constantly on the move, inventing new strategies and new ways to survive as Mapuche.**

I take an active role to support the revitalization of our language, the *Mapuzungun*. I took part in the first *Mapuzungun* residential school this year. This was an initiative of several Mapuche organizations, among them the Mapuche Students Federation (FEMAE), the Mapuche Academy and the Comunidad Historia Mapuche. This was not a usual residential school. This was a political act. This was a statement: “We are here, we are still alive and we have no fear in demanding our rights. We are prepared to keep our language alive.”

**We are here, we are still alive and we have no fear in demanding our rights. We are prepared to keep our language alive.**

Nowadays this is not an easy task. The day before yesterday, my friends from FEMAE occupied the SEREMI (Ministry of Education in the Region Araucania) to protest against the racist education system. Among other demands, they are reclaiming the possibility to learn *Mapuzungun* at university level.

The Mapuche are still not recognized in the Chilean Constitution and some weeks ago it was forbidden to put up our Mapuche flag during the Copa America, the South American soccer games. Even when my friends showed our flag in the stadium, they were asked to leave if they would not stop displaying the Mapuche flag.

Our language is still not recognized as an official language. Initiatives, such as the residential school, to teach and learn our language are self-financed. The Chilean government has no consciousness. They only want to take advantage of us and want to show us as “their” folklore and to decorate their speeches. We are not seen as people with political, social, economic, religious or linguistic rights and demands.

Besides of all these attempts to *invisibilize* us, we can say out loud: “We are Mapuche. We are all
representing the untold invisibilized history of the Mapuche people.”

During the residential school, we could make Mapuzungun a part of our daily life. Before this experience, I thought that it might be too difficult to learn our language. Now I can say that I feel this language, I can feel every word with a lot of love and energy. Maybe it was just a small seed – this residential school – but this seed is growing and multiplicating itself.

“We are Mapuche. We are all representing the untold invisibilized history of the Mapuche people.”

From almost every student you hear about initiatives in their territory. Here in Europe, we are Mapuche as well. We want to speak the language of our land too; the language of our ancestors.

And we are organized. I have ten Mapuche students from six different European countries. I am in regular contact with my people in Wallmapu, with my Mapuzungun professors. New technologies are facilitating our learning.

Now I can say that I feel this language, I can feel every word with a lot of love and energy.

With my friends from the residential school, we have our Whatsapp and Facebook groups and we are trying to write, talk or give lessons via Skype.

We are sending audio files and documents about pronunciations and grammatical difficulties.

We take part in our lives. The support my sisters and brothers from the residential school are showing me is not easy to articulate in words. They are here with me now. I know, they are thinking of me and sending me their Newen, their energy. I am part of this collective, I can't see myself as an individual in the same way. We created our community, we are all fighting to keep our society and language alive... as our parents and grandparents and our great grandparents and great great grandparents did!

We are here, I am here, because they resisted. Amulepe taiñ Mapuzungun.