PROSPECTS FOR MINORITY AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA: TOWARDS REGIONAL COOPERATION?

SPEAKERS’ BIOGRAPHIES

Mr Urmas Paet
Member of the European Parliament, ALDE – Estonia

Mr Urmas Paet has been a Member of the European Parliament since November 2014. He specialises in foreign and security policy issues and is part of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. Before his career in the European Parliament he was the longest serving Foreign Minister in Estonia – from 2005 to November 2014. Mr Paet has also served as Minister of Culture and as the elder of the Tallinn city district of Nõmme. He has also worked as a journalist with Estonian Radio and in the news office of the Postimees daily newspaper. Mr Paet majored in Political Science.

Mr Marino Busdachin
Secretary General of UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization)

Mr 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 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 and 1999. Since July 2003, Mr Busdachin has been the Secretary General of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

Dr Jolan Hsieh
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Dr Jolan Hsieh is Associate Professor at the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures, College of Indigenous Studies, National Dong Hwa University (Taiwan). She is also Director of the Center of International Indigenous Affairs and the Division Chair of the Eastern Taiwan Environmental Humanities Research and Social Practice Center. Dr Hsieh received a PhD in Justice Studies from Arizona State University (Tempe, USA). Her research interests include theories of justice, law and society, human rights, gender/ethnic/class relations and stratification, collective identity and social movement, indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge, and feminist legal studies. As a Siraya indigenous activist and scholar, Dr Hsieh also plays an active role in the Siraya cultural revitalisation movement and writes critiques of indigenous politics for several Taiwanese newspapers. Along with holding many other positions, she currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy and as Chairperson of Amnesty International Taiwan.
Mr Yapasuyongu Poiconu
Deputy Director of General Planning Department, Council of Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan

Mr Yapasuyongu Poiconu belongs to the indigenous tribe of Tsou in Taiwan and speaks Tsou, an Austronesian language, as his mother tongue. His area of expertise is indigenous Laws and in this context he published "Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Thinking and Interpretation" in 2008. He is currently working as the Deputy Director of the General Planning Department in the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan, which is the highest central government body taking care of indigenous affairs on the island. Since its establishment in 1996, the Council has invested in building relationships with the Pacific (via the annual Austronesian Forum) and the UN (via the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues).

Mr Michael Danielsen
Chairman of Taiwan Corner

Mr Michael Danielsen is the founder and Chairman of Taiwan Corner, an independent association that informs Europe about Taiwan. Taiwan Corner was the main organizer of a visit to London and Brussels for two of the principal leaders of the Sunflower Movement to talk with politicians, civil servants and academics in 2014. Mr Danielsen works in a Danish IT company while also being the Chairman of the international committee and the research and technology committee of the Danish Social Democratic Party in Copenhagen. Mr Danielsen has a PhD in Natural Sciences.

Mr Gymbay Moua
Representative of the Congress of World Hmong People

Mr Gymbay Moua has a Bachelor in Criminology and Political Science from University of Ladysmith Wisconsin and a Master in Urban Studies and Public Policy from Mankato State University (Minnesota). He has worked as a business owner and operator, and now manages the international relations and diplomacy section of the Congress of World Hmong People (CWHP). The CWHP is a non-governmental organisation based in Minnesota which advocates for the safeguard of Hmong people’s economic, social and cultural rights.

Mr Chum Chuon Son
Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Federation

Mr Chum Chuon Son is one of the founders of the Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KFF) and is now representing the KFF in Cambodia. He has been working with the Federation since 2005 and has had a great role in raising awareness about human rights violations against the Khmer Krom to human rights bodies and organisations in Cambodia. Mr Son has also worked with the Human Rights Action Committee, an NGO focusing on children rights (1998-2000), Australian Volunteer International (1999-2000), United Khmer Kampuchea Krom Scholars (2001-2003), and the radio program of the KKF Cambodia (2001-2003). Mr Son has a Bachelor in Education, a Master in Law and is now a candidate for a PhD in Law and Political Science.

Mr Ushatan Talukder
Member of the Bangladeshi Parliament

Mr Ushatan Talukder is a Member of the Bangladesh National Parliament elected during the 2014 general election in the Parbatya Rangamati constituency. He is an independent MP supported by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) - a political party of indigenous Jumma peoples living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region of Bangladesh. He has been working with the party since 1970s and is now its Vice President. He is also one
of the Presidents of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, a non-profit organisation protecting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities living in Bangladesh. Mr Talukder served as a member of the CHT Regional Council, the apex body of CHT administration system. He holds a Bachelor degree in Political Science from Chittagong University. Mr Talukder has had a key role in the dialogue between the PCJSS and the Bangladeshi government, which led to the signing of the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord.

Mr Arif Fadhillah
Chairman of the Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front

Mr Arif Fadhillah was born in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, in 1969 and currently lives in Germany. After studying chemistry at the Institute of Technology Sepuluh Nopember, Surabaya, he worked as lecturer at the University of Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh. In 1999 he joined the Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF), where he represents his people's struggle for self-determination. In March 2016, he was elected for a second four-year term as Chairman of the liberation movement.

Mr Csaba Sógor
Member of the European Parliament (EPP)

Mr Csaba Sógor belongs to the Hungarian minority of Romania. He studied theology and politics in Romania and Switzerland. He is a member of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania and was a pastor in the Reformed Church in Romania. Mr Sógor was also part of the Romanian Senate, where he was an active member of the Committee on Education, Science, Youth and Sport, as well as of the Committee on Equal Opportunities. He joined the European Parliament in 2007 and is active in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and in the Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Furthermore, a member of the European Parliament's Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, Mr Sógor has worked extensively for the promotion of minority rights in Europe and beyond.

Mr Paulo Casaca
Executive Director, South Asia Democratic Forum

Mr Paulo Casaca is the founder and Executive Director of the South Asia Democratic Forum and of the Alliance to Renew Co-operation among Humankind (ARCHumanKind). He also established Lessmeansmore, a consultancy company promoting sustainable development. Moreover, he is a former Member of the European Parliament (1999-2009) where he chaired the delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Mr Casaca is the author of several books and reports on economics and international politics.

Ms Joan Audierne
Head of the Secretariat of ProtectDefenders.eu

Ms Joan Audierne has worked for the past nine years for NGOs and for the International Committee of the Red Cross, where she occupied mainly management positions in conflict and post-conflict areas in Africa and in former Soviet States. She is now Head of the Secretariat of ProtectDefenders.eu, the European Union Human Rights Defenders mechanism, established to protect defenders at high risk and facing the most difficult situations worldwide. It is led by a consortium of 12 NGOs active in the field of human rights and is supported by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which provides for 95% of its funding.