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Reference: Tenth periodic report of the Russian Federation
on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention
on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/RUS/10, 15
December 2025)

The situation of women belonging to Indigenous minority peoples
of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation

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I Submitting organisations

1. The International Committee of Indigenous Peoples of Russia (ICIPR)¹ — an organisation of Indigenous peoples established in March 2022 by Indigenous activists in response to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The organisation works to defend the rights of Indigenous minority² peoples of the Russian Arctic, Siberia and the Far East to land, territories, resources and self-determination.
2. The Institute for Ecology and Action Ethnology (INFOE)³ — an NGO founded in January 1987 in Germany. INFOE exists to support Indigenous peoples in defend their natural means of existence, their, rights and culture, whilst countering environmental and cultural destruction.
3. Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial Brussels (ADC Memorial)⁴ — a human rights organisation, originally based in Russia, now exiled to Brussels, Belgium, which works to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and minorities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, addressing human rights violations through advocacy, legal aid, human rights education, research and publications.
4. ‘NorthWomen’ — an organization, which works to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous women and girls of the North and to strengthen the role of Indigenous women as leaders and human rights defenders at the international level, in accordance with international human rights standards.

II Content and methodology

5. This report is submitted to CEDAW in connection with the adoption of the List of Issues regarding the tenth periodic report of the Russian Federation. It focuses on the situation of women belonging to Indigenous minority peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.
6. These peoples are defined by Russian legislation as “peoples living within the territories of traditional settlement of their ancestors, preserving their traditional way of life, economic activities and livelihoods, numbering fewer than 50,000 people in the Russian Federation and identifying themselves as distinct ethnic communities”⁵ Russian legislation does not recognise Indigenous peoples as such, that is, without numeric and other qualifiers. A list adopted originally in March 2000 de facto determines whom the State party recognises as such.⁶ Government furthermore adopted lists of traditional settlement territories and of tradi-

¹ <https://icipr.international/>

² In the present submission, the Russian term “*malochislennyi*” (“small in number”), used in the legal expression “*korrenye, malochislennye narody*” (“indigenous small-numbered peoples), is translated as “minority”.

³ <https://www.infoe.de/>

⁴ <https://adcmemorial.org/en/>

⁵ Federal Law No. 82-FZ of 30 April 1999 “On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Minority Peoples of the Russian Federation”, Art 1

⁶ Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 255 of 24 March 2000 “On the Unified List of Indigenous and Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation” (as amended and supplemented) <https://base.garant.ru/181870/>

tional economic activities, which further narrow down eligibility.⁷ The present submission uses the terms “Indigenous peoples” and “Indigenous Minority Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation” interchangeably. This use is purely for ease of reading and thus without prejudice. It is not meant to deny self-identification as indigenous by peoples not matching these qualifiers.

7. Since the consideration of the State party’s ninth periodic report in November 2021 (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9), the situation of indigenous women has deteriorated dramatically. The 2021 Concluding Observations highlighted structural problems, such as restrictions on the activities of non-governmental organisations and pressure on female human rights defenders and environmental activists, the failure to realise collective land rights, and a lack of disaggregated statistical data on women. However, following the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, these issues have escalated into a systematic campaign of criminal prosecution against leaders of Indigenous communities, the exacerbation of gender inequality due to the disproportionate mobilisation and recruitment of indigenous men and the dismantling of what remained of independent representation for Indigenous peoples.
8. Information in the present submission is mostly derived from publicly available sources, including court documents, reports by independent Russian and international media, reports by human rights organisations, as well as government sources, such as statistics from Rosstat. It also uses information received directly from victims and other private contacts, who due to considerable risk must remain anonymous.
9. The picture of violations presented in this submission is almost certainly vastly incomplete, firstly, because the State party fails to live up to its obligation to compile and publish disaggregated data (see section Error: Reference source not found), and secondly, because victims often fail to speak out for fear of harassment and persecution or are being silenced by various censorship mechanisms.

III Failure at implementing CEDAW’s prior recommendations

10. In its Concluding Observations regarding the ninth periodic report of the Russian Federation (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, 30 November 2021), CEDAW
 - expressed concern at reports of persecution, threats and attacks against female human rights defenders and environmental activists their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, refrain from any reprisals against them, and ensure they have effective access to justice and protection from persecution, intimidation, reprisals and violence (para. 19);
 - took note of the adoption of Federal Law No. 11-FZ (2020), establishing a unified register

7 Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 631-r of 8 May 2009 (as amended on 3 August 2026) <On the Approval of the List of Places of Traditional Residence and Traditional Economic Activities of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation and the List of Types of Traditional Economic Activities of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation> https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_87690/be-b7e7f131a7ff3656b71b7b30c30454fc1fdde7/

of persons belonging to Indigenous minority peoples, but expressed concern at the lack of detailed information on the registration procedure and on the number of registered women from Indigenous minority peoples, which is necessary for access to traditional lands, means of subsistence and participation in decision-making (para. 44), recommending that the registration of women and girls from Indigenous minority peoples be facilitated and that the collective rights of women from these peoples to traditional lands and resources, as well as to effective participation in decision-making bodies and processes at local, regional and federal levels, be guaranteed and protected (para. 45);

- noted the absence of a gender perspective in climate change and disaster risk reduction policies and action plans, particularly with regard to rural and Indigenous women, despite their disproportionate vulnerability to the impacts of climate change (para. 54), recommending that climate and energy policies be reviewed, taking into account the adverse impacts of climate change on the livelihoods of such women (para. 55);

- expressed concern at the lack of statistical data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, geographical location and socio-economic status, which are necessary to assess the situation of women, including women from Indigenous and minority communities (para. 58).

11. The Russian Federation responded only in relation to the establishment of a unified register of Indigenous minority peoples (see section Error: Reference source not found), while ignoring issues concerning the protection of female human rights defenders and activists, access to traditional lands by Indigenous women and their participation in decision-making, a gender-sensitive approach to climate policy, and disaggregated data.
12. Thus, none of the Committee's 2021 recommendations concerning women from Indigenous minority peoples have been implemented. Moreover, as will be shown below, their situation has not merely failed to improve, but has deteriorated sharply.

IV Repression against Indigenous women, including human rights defenders (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 18–19)

IV.A Dismantling of the independent Indigenous human rights infrastructure

13. Since the early 2010s, Russian authorities have worked to suppress Indigenous peoples' collective agency. In 2013, full state control was imposed over the Association of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East or 'RAIPON', the largest all-Russian indigenous association. In 2024, an investigation revealed that RAIPON is mainly funded by a charitable foundation, whose donors include Norilsk Nickel, Lukoil and other extractive businesses, and, consequently, one of its main lines of activity is advocating the lifting of sanctions against Russian companies^{8, 9}.

8 Arctida. "RAIPON in the Hands of United Russia and Business Representatives". 2 August 2024. <https://arctida.io/en/projects/oni-rabotayut-na-bлаго-verhushki>

9 Verstka. Investigation: "How the Association of Indigenous Minorities became a tool for enrichment and lobbying". 2 August 2024. <https://verstka.media/rassledovanie-kak-associaciya-korennyh-malochislennyh-narodov-stala-instrumentom-obogasheniya-i-lobbizma>

14. To date, all independent organisations have been terminated or driven into exile. This process started with the legislation on ‘foreign agents’ adopted in 2013 to curb country-wide protests against rigged elections. The Centre for the Support of Indigenous minority Peoples of the North (CSIPN), a both highly respected Indigenous rights watchdog, was designated ‘foreign agent’ in 2015¹⁰ and terminated by court order in 2019¹¹. The International Fund for the Development and Solidarity of Indigenous Peoples ‘Batani’ was designated ‘foreign agent’ in 2016¹² and terminated in 2017¹³, the regional association of the Tubalar people of Altai Republic “Tuba Karlyk” was likewise designated ‘foreign agent’, along with environmental media who covered Indigenous issues in their reporting such as ‘Kedr.Media’¹⁴ and ‘Smola’¹⁵. Since 2012, 38 environmental organisations were declared foreign agents’, of which 36 had ceased operations by mid-2026¹⁶. In July 2022, the website ‘Indigenous Russia’, the only independent resource systematically covering the situation of Indigenous peoples was blocked.¹⁷
15. The State party has developed a habit of harassing female indigenous activists at UN bodies, as documented by the annual reports on reprisals as well as addressed by Special mechanisms. This includes the case of Y.T. who in her home territory had opposed the destruction of her people’s natural basis of life by large scale strip mining and was therefore forced into exile, at which point the harassment continued at multiple occasions when she attended UN bodies such as EMRIP.¹⁸
16. From 2023 onwards, there was a surge in designation of international allies as ‘undesirable organisations’, including ‘Bellona’ (Norway)¹⁹, Greenpeace International²⁰, the WWF²¹, the

10 Radio Liberty. The “Centre for Assistance to the Peoples of the North” has been designated a “foreign agent”. 27 November 2015. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/27394105.html>

11 OVD-Info. “Moscow City Court dissolved the Centre for the Support of Indigenous and minority Peoples”. 6 November 2019. <https://ovd.info/express-news/2019/11/06/mosgorsud-likvidiroval-centr-sodeystviya-korennyim-malochislennym-narodam>

12 BBC News Russian Service. Foundation for the Protection of Indigenous Peoples designated a “foreign agent”. 11 March 2016. https://www.bbc.com/russian/news/2016/03/160311_batani_foreign_agents

13 Inoteka (Inoteka.io). Page on the “Batani” Foundation. <https://inoteka.io/ino/nekommercheskaya-organizaciya-mezhdunarodnyy-fond-razvitiya-korennykh-malochislennykh-narodov>

14 Kedr.Media. ‘The Ministry of Justice has designated “Kedr.Media” as a foreign agent’. 10 November 2023. <https://kedr.media/news/minyust-priznal-kedr-inostrannym-agentom/>

15 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “Ministry of Justice designates Kirill Nabutov and the media outlet ‘Smola’ as ‘foreign agents’”. 22 March 2024. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/minyust-obyavil-inoagentom-kirilla-nabutova-i-media-smola-/32873501.html>

16 Environmental Crisis Group. Register of environmental NGOs designated as “foreign agents”. <https://help-eco.info/en/vfa/>

17 The Barents Observer. “Repressive authorities have blocked the Indigenous Russia website”. 21 July 2022. <https://ru.thebarentsobserver.com/repressivnye-vlasti-zablokirovali-sajt-Indigenous-russii/209424>

18 <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/42/30>, para 87, <https://srdefenders.org/russia-intimidation-of-ms-yana-tannagasheva-at-un-human-rights-council-joint-communication/>

19 OVD-Info. “Norwegian environmental foundation ‘Bellona’ declared an undesirable organisation”. 18 April 2023. <https://ovd.info/express-news/2023/04/18/norvezhskiy-ekologicheskij-fond-bellona-priznali-nezhelatelnuy-organizaciy>

20 BBC News Russian Service. “Greenpeace has been declared an undesirable organisation in Russia”. 19 May 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-65649866>

21 BBC News Russian Service. Following Greenpeace, WWF has been declared an undesirable organisation in Russia. Although the authorities had previously cooperated with it. 21 June 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-65977508>

Estonia-based Centre for the Development of Indigenous Peoples ‘URALIC’²²). In May 2025, the US-registered ‘Batani’ Foundation²³, which continued the work of its Russia-based predecessor.

IV.B Criminalisation through anti-extremist and anti-terrorism legislation

17. In 2024, criminalisation of Indigenous rights activism became comprehensive. In June, the Supreme Court ruled a non-existent organisation it called ‘Anti-Russian Separatist Movement’ to be ‘extremist’²⁴. A month later, the Ministry of Justice identified 55 entities as its ‘structural subdivisions’, including ‘Aborigin Forum’ (AF), an informal network of Indigenous human rights defenders, and ICIPR, the International Committee of Indigenous Peoples of Russia²⁵. In November 2024, the Supreme Court designated the ‘Forum of Free Nations of PostRussia’ a ‘terrorist organisation’²⁶, and by implication 172 organisations which it referred to as its “structural subdivisions”²⁷. This list included a variety of groups, some real, some fictional, with ethnic and regional agendas, as well as networks of Indigenous activists, including the previously mentioned AF and ICIPR, most of them completely unrelated to the Forum that had been labelled ‘terrorist’.
18. These rulings opened the way for the application of Articles 282.2–282.4 (participation in, organisation or financing of the activities of an ‘extremist organisation’, punishable by 4 to 10 years’ imprisonment) and 205.5 (participation in or organisation of the activities of a ‘terrorist organisation’, up to 20 years’ imprisonment or life imprisonment). Moreover, in practice courts no longer require any proof of violence, intent to use or endorse it, or any actual connection to a banned organisation.

IV.C The ‘Aborigin Forum’ case

19. AF was an informal network of Indigenous human rights defenders, documenting rights violations, pursuing international advocacy—including through engagement with UN mechanisms—and defending Indigenous land and cultural rights. Its activities were exclusively peaceful and focused on human rights. Following the June 2024 ruling, AF disbanded voluntarily. However, this did not stop the persecution: in December 2024, AF was included into

22 Sever.Realii. “The absurdity of the Russian regime: How Estonian human rights activists became persona non grata”. 6 October 2023. <https://www.severreal.org/a/absurd-rossiyskogo-rezhima-kak-estonskie-pravozashitniki-stali-nezhe-latelnymi-/32622450.html>

23 General Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation. Official statement on the designation of the ‘Batani’ Foundation’s activities as undesirable. 13 May 2025. <https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/ru/gprf/mass-media/news/main/e5605800/>

24 Novaya Gazeta Europe. “The Supreme Court has recognised the ‘Anti-Russian Separatist Movement’ as extremist — no such organisation exists”. 7 June 2024. <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2024/06/07/verkhovnyi-sud-priznal-ekstremistskim-antirossiiskoe-separatistskoe-dvizhenie-takoi-organizatsii-ne-sushchestvuet-news>

25 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “Ministry of Justice adds 55 organisations to list of extremist groups”. 26 July 2024. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/minyust-vklyuchil-v-spisok-ekstremistskih-55-organizatsiy-/33051877.html>

26 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “The ‘Forum of Free Post-Russian States’ has been designated a terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation”. 22 November 2024. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-rf-priznali-terroristicheskimi-forum-svobodnyh-gosudarstv-postrossii-/33212207.html>

27 Sever.Realii. “The FSB has published a list of 172 ‘terrorist’ organisations.” 11 January 2025. <https://www.severreal.org/a/fsb-opublikovala-spisok-iz-172-terroristicheskikh-obedineniy/33272270.html>

the list of ‘structural subdivisions’ of the ‘Forum of Free Nations of PostRussia’, which had been declared terrorist (see above).^{28 29}

20. On 17 December raids³⁰ were carried out at the homes of at least 17 Indigenous activists in Moscow, St Petersburg, the Republics of Altai and Sakha (Yakutia), Kemerovo and Tomsk Oblasts. Most targets were women (9 out of 17). In Moscow, two women – D.E.³¹ and N.L.³² – were detained and taken into custody. They have both been held in pre-trial detention since.
21. D.E., of Selkup Indigenous origin, for over 20 years represented Russia’s Indigenous peoples in UN bodies and processes, including UNFCCC, LCIPP, EMRIP, UNPFII. She was detained shortly after returning from UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, Brazil.
22. N.L. devoted over 20 years protecting Indigenous rights on behalf of CSIPN (see para Error: Reference source not found.) She was involved, among others, in capacity building, human rights education and documentation efforts.
23. The ‘terrorism’ charge under Article 205.5 of the Criminal Code carries a sentence of between 10 and 20 years’ imprisonment. The accusations solely rest on AF’s arbitrary inclusion in a list of ‘structural subdivisions’ of the ‘Forum of Free Nations of PostRussia’ at a time when it had already dissolved itself. (see paras Error: Reference source not found-Error: Reference source not found) Thus, it stands to reason that the actual motivation behind their persecution is the State party’s desire to suppress environmental and human rights activism by and for Indigenous women.
24. Other indigenous female activists and journalists targeted by the raids included O.K. (Chulym people, Tomsk Oblast, delegate to the UNPFII and EMRIP and UNFCCC COPs); I.K. (Yukaghir, delegate to the UNPFII and EMRIP sessions and to UNFCCC COPs); M.M. (Sámi, Saint Petersburg, member of the Sámi Nisson Forum (Sámi Women Forum) and Greenpeace volunteer); V.S. (Sámi, Murmansk Oblast, UNPFII member, former head of the Kola Sámi Parliament and member of the Sámi Nisson Forum. The victims were driven into involuntary exile.

28 Alexei Voloshinov: Forum gosudarstv postRossii" priznan terroristicheskim v RF. Deutsche Welle, 22 November 2022, <https://www.dw.com/ru/forum-svobodnyh-gosudarstv-postrossii-priznan-terroristicheskim-v-rf/a-70863485>; The Moscow Times: Russia Labels 172 Indigenous Groups as ‘Terrorist’ Organizations. 22 November 2024 <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/11/22/russia-labels-172-Indigenous-groups-as-terrorist-organizations-a87106>

29 Full list at <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/npd/terror.htm> The list is in Russian only, therefore Aborigen Forum is listed as ‘Абориген Форум’ and ICIPR as ‘Международный комитет коренных народов’ (‘International committee of Indigenous Peoples’.

30 OVD-Info. “An activist defending the rights of Indigenous peoples has been arrested in Moscow under a terrorism-related charge”. 20 December 2025. <https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/12/20/v-moskve-aktivistku-zaschischayuschuyu-prava-korennykh-narodov-arrestovali>

31 Ibid.

32 The Insider. Defender of the Indigenous peoples of the North sent to a remand centre under a terrorism charge. 7 April 2026. <https://theins.ru/news/291197>

V Armed conflict, women from Indigenous and minority communities and gender-based violence (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 32–33)

25. Indigenous peoples, including women, are consistently among those groups in Russia hardest hit by the impact of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

V.A Exorbitant rates of mobilisation, coerced recruitment and killed-in-action amongst Indigenous peoples

26. There are no public government statistics, disaggregated by ethnic background of those mobilised or recruited and subsequently incapacitated or killed in action, neither on the economic, social or cultural impact on Indigenous women. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence, that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected, which in some cases may amount to demographic and social catastrophes.
27. Independent investigations unanimously find exorbitant rates of mobilisation and coerced recruitment of Indigenous peoples. In theory, the right to an alternative civilian service (ACS) in place of military service is enshrined in Article 9 of Federal Law 82-FZ “On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Minority Peoples of the Russian Federation.” In practice, however, this provision is ignored during mobilisation due to a loophole in the regulatory framework, compounded by arbitrary conduct on the part of military commissariats (voenkomats).
28. Law No. 82-FZ addresses only peacetime conscription; a mobilisation regime was not something its drafters anticipated. The governing statute on mobilisation itself (Federal Law No. 31-FZ of 26 February 1997) provides no exemptions for Indigenous peoples. The right to ACS thus exists in the law on conscription but is absent from the law on mobilisation, and this gap is interpreted by authorities as making the guarantee inapplicable once mobilisation begins. This is implicitly acknowledged by lawmakers: in April 2026, Duma deputy Fedot Tumusov introduced a bill granting Indigenous men the right to exempt themselves from both conscription and mobilisation — singling out mobilisation as a ground requiring new regulation, confirming that current law does not address it³³.
29. The consequences of this gap are severe. According to an investigation, the mobilisation rate among the non-Indigenous population of the Khabarovsk Krai stood at around 34 people per 10,000 inhabitants, whilst among the Indigenous population it was around 95 people per 10,000³⁴, that is, almost three times higher. In the Udege village of Gvasyugi, with only 211

33 Parliamentary Gazette. “Lawmaker proposed deferment right for Indigenous Small-numbered peoples”. 29 April 2026. <https://www.pnp.ru/social/korennym-malochislennym-narodam-predlozhili-dat-pravo-na-otsrochku-ot-armii.html>

34 Indigenous Russia. “Maria Vyushkova. Disproportionate mobilisation of Indigenous peoples in the Khabarovsk Krai: the bare figures”. 19 August 2024. <https://Indigenous-russia.com/archives/38980>

people inhabitants, 14 Indigenous Udege men were mobilised³⁵. By August 2024, at least five of them had been killed in action³⁶.

30. Also, in Andryushkino, Nizhnekolymsky ulus (district)³⁷, where 581 of 839 residents, or 69 per cent, identify as Indigenous, 72 men were mobilised, of whom at least 22 were killed in action, more than a third of those who were actually sent to fight in Ukraine. The 72 men mobilised accounted for 17 per cent of all male residents³⁸. Since all men mobilised are of working age, such a loss spells social and economic disaster for a small village where the birth rate is already low.
31. This extreme disproportionality reveals a pattern of discrimination: Firstly, the authorities appear to be deliberately targeting mobilisation campaigns at Indigenous peoples³⁹. Secondly, Indigenous men usually have fewer resources to evade mobilisation — less information, fewer social and financial opportunities to leave the area or find other ways to avoid conscription.
32. Not only mandatory mobilisation, but also “voluntary” recruitment disproportionately targets Indigenous peoples. The village Sedanka in Kamchatka is home to 250 people, mainly indigenous Koryaks and Itelmens. Here, 52 of the 67 men were recruited. 19 of them or 36 per cent were killed in action.⁴⁰ One major driver, causing young men to seek out jobs in the army is profound economic despair. Further, due to their very limited access to quality education, reindeer herders are particularly vulnerable to State propaganda. Again, while the State party does not provide disaggregated data, the multitude of case reports suggest, that these are far from isolated incidents.
33. Our research also revealed a recurring pattern of direct coercion and forced recruitment virtually everywhere, where Indigenous peoples live. As one of our female sources reported: *“One of my brothers was taken from his place of detention – that is, prison; two brothers were taken away under threat of criminal charges being brought against them; two brothers signed up voluntarily (for the money). One disabled Indigenous man from my village, whilst intoxicated, entered his neighbours’ house, who called the police on him. They took him away, and the very next day he was sent to the ‘Special Military Operation’. His sisters were unable to do anything. He is now listed as missing. Another Indigenous man had his driving licence revoked. He went to the police to find out for how long his licence had been suspended, and when he returned home, he said that he had signed a contract under duress.”*

35 iStories. “Peoples on the Brink of Extinction”. 30 January 2023. <https://istories.media/stories/2023/01/30/narodi-nagrani-ischeznoveniia/>

36 Indigenous Russia. “War and the Indigenous Peoples of Russia: Problems of Statistical Analysis”. <https://indigenous-russia.com/archives/38980>

37 i.e. a settlement classified as being predominantly inhabited by Indigenous minority peoples

38 Indigenous Russia. “The head of a remote village in Yakutia told the II Tumen deputies the harsh truth”. 31 March 2026. <https://indigenous-russia.com/archives/46756>

39 CurrentTime. “How members of Russia’s small ethnic groups are dying in the war against Ukraine”. 19 August 2024. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/kak-na-voyne-protiv-ukrainy-gibnut-predstaviteli-malyh-narodov-rossii/33076873.html>

40 Novaya Gazeta Baltia. “Millions in food shop debts, bears on the streets”. 20 May 2026. <https://novayagazeta.ee/articles/2026/05/20/millionnye-dolgi-v-produktovykh-medvedi-na-ulitsakh>

34. For peoples with total populations of only a few thousand or even a few hundred people, the death in combat of even a small number of men risks the extinction of entire extended families and lineages, thereby threatening the survival of the ethnic group itself.

V.B Impact on Indigenous women

35. The mass mobilisation and the pattern of coerced recruitment of men of working age place an additional burden on Indigenous women, exacerbating the already vulnerable situation of these small communities.
36. **Economic burden.** Women are becoming the sole breadwinners for their families. The disappearance, incapacitation or death of men disrupt traditional subsistence activities such as fishing and reindeer herding, which are traditionally male domains, along with transmission of traditional knowledge⁴¹. Furthermore, women are forced to pay neighbours to help them with essential tasks such as chopping firewood and fetching water⁴².
37. **Caring for children, the elderly and war-wounded relatives.** Mobilisation and combat losses have removed men who previously contributed to the household's economic and physical labour, leaving women to bear the full burden of unpaid care for children, elderly relatives, and people with disabilities largely alone. In some cases, this burden is compounded by the return of severely incapacitated servicemen requiring long-term care, in regions where social and medical infrastructure was already limited before the war (see Section Error: Reference source not found).
38. **Psychological distress, poverty and forced assimilation.** The war has deepened the economic collapse of reindeer-herding communities, forcing women and children to abandon their traditional territories and move into predominantly non-indigenous towns and cities. This leads to assimilation, loss of culture, language, and traditional knowledge. Giving up one's indigenous identity is the virtual precondition for any career advancement.
39. A case example is one Indigenous settlement on Kolguev island, where families of servicemen killed or wounded in the war had to use death and disability compensation payments to relocate to the mainland, a departure described by locals as effectively permanent⁴³. It illustrates how the war compounds pre-existing poverty and drives irreversible displacement from ancestral land and loss of indigenous identity. Furthermore, the victims lose self-sufficiency and become permanently dependent on the State welfare system. All of that is destroying the social fabric, and women primarily bear the burden of mitigating the impact.
40. Domestic violence. The already omnipresent domestic violence in Russia is exacerbated by the war: rising psychological distress, the trauma suffered by men returning from the front, and extremely limited access to mental and physical health services and legal support in the

41 Amnesty International. "Meet three female Indigenous anti-war activists from Russia". 23 April 2025.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/04/meet-three-female-indigenous-anti-war-activists-from-russia/>

42 Novaya Gazeta Baltia. "Millions in food shop debts, bears on the streets". 20 May 2026. <https://novayagazeta.ee/articles/2026/05/20/millionnye-dolgi-v-produktovykh-medvedi-na-ulitsakh>

43 Radio Liberty. "Coffin Money Instead of Reindeer: A Vanishing Life on the Arctic Island of Kolguev". 31 August 2026. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/grobovye-vmesto-oleney-ischezayuschaya-zhiznj-na-arkticheskom-ostrove-kolguev/33843170.html>

chronically underserved remote Indigenous territories leave women without any protection. At the same time, the true extent of the problem is hard to assess, due to the State party's failure to provide disaggregated data.

VI Participation in decision-making (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 30–31)

41. In 2021, the Committee recommended that the State ensure the full and equal participation of women, including at regional and local levels, in political and public life, including through the adoption of temporary special measures (paras. 30–31).
42. The State party fails to publish any statistics on the participation of Indigenous women in regional and local government bodies, as well as on their representation in councils of Indigenous peoples' representatives attached to regional authorities, which makes it impossible to reliably identify trends, regarding participation in decision-making. However, according to our sources, the very institutional space in which Indigenous women could exercise their right to participation has been systematically dismantled.
43. For all practical means, Indigenous women are silenced, they are deprived of independent channels for voicing their concerns, both nationally and internationally. As noted in para Error: Reference source not found, RAIPON, the nation-wide Indigenous umbrella organisation is now under full control by the state and state-affiliated businesses. Women who held leadership and expert positions in organisations, such as CSIPN, AF and Batani have been targeted by criminal prosecution and were either arrested or forced into exile (see section Error: Reference source not found).

VII Climate, traditional lands, the extractive industries and FPIC (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 54–55)

44. In 2021, the Committee noted the absence of a gender perspective in the State's climate policy, particularly with regard to rural and Indigenous women, despite their disproportionate vulnerability to the effects of climate change. We were unable to identify any such policies, subsequently adopted by the State party.
45. Indigenous peoples' territories remain subject to intensive resource extraction. According to Rosstat, in 2020 over 150 million tonnes of oil, more than 600 billion cubic metres of natural gas and over 23 million tonnes of coal were extracted from them⁴⁴. At the same time, there are barely any effective legal mechanisms remaining to protect their lands, their traditional use of natural resources and their participation in decision-making affecting their territories. In addition, the deteriorating socio-economic situation and effects of gender shift raise the pressure to accept extractivist projects.

44 Vostokgosplan. Digest: 'Indigenous and minority Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East'. 2023. p. 30. <https://vostokgosplan.ru/wp-content/uploads/digest-kmns.pdf>

46. Territories of Traditional Nature Use' (TTNU) are Russia's only mechanism resembling something like demarcation of Indigenous territories. They were enshrined in law as far back as 2001. While virtually all Concluding Observations since adopted by CESCR, CCPR, CERD and other treaty bodies recommended according action, to date TTNU have only been established by regional and local administrations, even though, according to the law itself, the establishment of TTNU is the prerogative of the Federal authorities. Additionally, subsoil resources are issued by the Federal government, and local or regional TTNU status does not override a Federal extraction license. Most TTNU exist in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (KhMAO), and in virtually all of them, oil or gas are being extracted. Thus, their actual protective effect is near nil. In KhMAO, where TTNUs are typically owned by singled families, the indigenous owners are required to live within the territory, so that outmigration forced by economic distress (see para Error: Reference source not found) leads to forfeiting of any land rights.
47. Furthermore, the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous communities regarding the decisions affecting their territories and other cases stipulated by the UNDRIP, is absent from Russian legislation. Indigenous communities typically only learn of a project after a subsoil use licence has already been issued and works have begun. The existing 'ethnological assessment' of projects affecting the territories inhabited by Indigenous peoples is not legally binding on extractive companies or the state.
48. Industrial development, climate change and the loss of access to territories and resources have specific impacts on Indigenous women, which is not addressed by state policy:
- the loss of access to traditional foodstuffs (wild plants, fish, venison), the gathering and processing of which is largely the responsibility of women, leads to a deterioration in household food security and increased dependence on expensive imported food in remote areas, resulting in deteriorating mental and physical health of themselves and their children;
 - the inability to perpetuate traditional crafts due environmental degradation and declining animal populations, disrupting the production of items made from fur, bone and birch bark, a sector of high economic importance for indigenous women.

VIII Economic and social rights (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 36–43)

49. Current statistics on the socio-economic situation of Indigenous peoples are limited to data from the 2020–2021 census. No more recent official data has been published at the time of drafting this report. According to official data from Rosstat⁴⁵ :
- the total population of Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is 262,600 people, of whom women account for 53 per cent (140,000 people);
 - only 35 per cent of the total Indigenous population are formally employed;
 - the average household income of Indigenous peoples in remote areas is largely derived from state pensions and benefits (36 per cent) and maintenance payments (30 per cent), whilst wages are the main source of livelihood for only 28 per cent of the population.

45 Ibid., pp. 9, 12, 14.

50. Again, the State party fails to provide data on the economic situation, disaggregated by gender, which makes it impossible to assess the economic situation of women from Indigenous peoples separately from that of men (see Section Error: Reference source not found).
51. The war has further accelerated the trend towards a reduction in state funding for support for Indigenous peoples⁴⁶: Whilst 2.8 billion roubles were allocated for these purposes in 2013–2018, of which 1 billion came from the federal budget, in 2023 the total volume of subsidies from budgets at all levels had dropped to 450 million roubles. Furthermore, according to the Accounting Chamber, the beneficiaries of up to 85 per cent of federal budget earmarked for Indigenous peoples are non-indigenous entities, using the funds for their own needs.⁴⁷ Only 15.1 per cent went directly to Indigenous organisations.
52. **Healthcare:** Despite the Indigenous peoples’ nominal entitlement to free medical care and free medication in rural areas of the Far North, the number of healthcare and preventative care organisations in their ancestral territories is critically unevenly distributed across the regions (ranging from three facilities in the Republic of Karelia to 529 in Khabarovsk Krai⁴⁸). In many areas, medical infrastructure is either non-existent or requires patients to be transported for many hours. Healthcare lies almost exclusively on the shoulders of women, especially reproductive health. Women lack the right and opportunities to give birth within their communities. Almost all facilities are located outside and run by non-Indigenous personal
53. **Education:** Indigenous children in remote settlements are generally educated in boarding schools with limited educational opportunities and away from their families. In Russia, opportunities to learn the languages of Indigenous peoples and to be taught in those languages are steadily being reduced. According to the 2020 census, the number of speakers of a number of Indigenous languages (Selkup, Khanty, Yukaghir, Even, Kumandin, Sami, Telengit, Veps, Chukchi, Eskimo (Yupik), Kets, Tofalar) has fallen by between 2 per cent and 94 per cent over the past decade⁴⁹. Language loss directly affects the cultural rights of women and girls from Indigenous and minority ethnic groups as the custodians and transmitters of traditional knowledge within the family.

IX Register of persons belonging to Indigenous minority peoples (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 44–45)

54. In 2021, CEDAW recommended that the State facilitate the registration of women and girls from Indigenous minority peoples in the unified register established by Federal Law No. 11-FZ of 6 February 2020 (amending Federal Law No. 82-FZ ‘On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous minority peoples of the Russian Federation’), and, at the same time, to ensure

46 RBC. “Indigenous and minority Peoples of Russia: How Many Are There and How Do They Live?”. 1 October 2025. <https://www.rbc.ru/life/news/68d86d9d9a7947b5cc0cb618>

47 Accounting Chamber of the Russian Federation. Report on the results of the expert and analytical event ‘Analysis of the implementation of the Russian Federation’s state national policy strategy for the period up to 2025 with regard to safeguarding the rights of Indigenous and minority peoples in 2013–2018’, section 2.2 of the conclusions. 2019. <https://ach.gov.ru/upload/iblock/98d/98dcf2eb9715e70b8fb077429b5780c9.pdf>

48 Vostokgosplan, op. cit., p. 20.

49 Vostokgosplan, op. cit., p.

and protect the collective rights of women from Indigenous minority peoples to their traditional lands and resources, as well as their effective participation in decision-making processes (para. 45).

55. The tenth periodic report merely says that a register has been established. This does not amount to the realisation of either the collective or individual rights of Indigenous peoples, including women. Instead, there is significant concern, that the main purpose of the register is to further reduce the number of persons eligible for land and resource rights, already significantly narrowed by the other existing lists (see paragraph Error: Reference source not found).
56. The register is an administrative mechanism for recording individuals for the purpose of obtaining individualised benefits (the right to hunt, fish, tax relief, etc.), thus neglecting or even undermining Indigenous peoples collective rights to land, traditional use of natural resources or participation in decision-making.
57. The registration procedure requires documentary proof of their ethnic identity⁵⁰, which for Indigenous women in remote settlements presents a significant bureaucratic barrier in its own right.
58. Conditions are often formulated in such a way as to effectively exclude those from benefits, who lead a mixed lifestyle or live outside formally designated ‘traditional places of residence’, that is, a significant proportion of Indigenous women who have been forced to move to cities as a result of the processes described in Sections Error: Reference source not found and Error: Reference source not found.
59. Ultimately, to our information, only a minority of Indigenous women is thus far included in the register, and the State party has ceased publishing updated figures.

X Lack of disaggregated data (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, para. 58)

60. In 2021, CEDAW expressed concern at the lack of data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, geographical location and socio-economic status as other treaty bodies. In doing so, it joined CESC and CERD and other treaty bodies who have expressed the same concern many times in the past. With regard to Indigenous women, the State party fails to publish any such data on virtually all of the issues discussed above.
61. In particular, there is a lack of official disaggregated data on:
 - the number of men mobilised or recruited and incapacitated or killed in action in the war against Ukraine, broken down by ethnicity and gender (Section Error: Reference source not found, para Error: Reference source not found);
 - the number of women who have become the sole breadwinners of their families as a result of the mobilisation or death of men (Section Error: Reference source not found, para Error: Reference source not found);

50 An example of what the authorities consider a valid proof is the old Soviet passport which contained an entry called “nationality”, referring not to citizenship but to ethnicity.

- the gender gap in employment, pay and access to state support measures for traditional economic sectors of ethnic minority communities (Section Error: Reference source not found);
- the number of indigenous women who have experienced domestic violence and their access to specialised support in their traditional places of residence (Section Error: Reference source not found);
- the number of women and girls from Indigenous and minority communities registered in the unified register, as well as the impact of registration on the realisation of their rights (Section Error: Reference source not found);
- the representation of Indigenous women in government bodies and advisory councils at regional and local levels (section Participation in decision-making (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, paras. 30–31)).

• Proposed items for the List of Issue

62. We respectfully propose that CEDAW include the following points in the List of Issues concerning the tenth periodic report of the Russian Federation:
- 1) What measures does the State party intend to take to protect indigenous female human rights and environmental defenders from persecution for their peaceful activities, and on what grounds are charges brought against Indigenous women human rights defenders under Article 205.5 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation?
 - 2) Please provide data, disaggregated by both gender and ethnicity, on the impact of armed conflict on the situation of Indigenous women, including on mobilisation, recruitment, casualties, employment, domestic violence and participation in decision-making.
 - 3) Does the State plan to introduce a legally binding mechanism for the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples in cases stipulated by the UNDRIP, and how is the specific impact of such development on women from Indigenous minority peoples taken into account?
 - 4) What measures are being taken to prevent and combat domestic violence against Indigenous women, and is access to crisis centres and legal aid ensured in the remote areas where they live?
 - 5) What measures are being taken to ensure the meaningful and independent participation of Indigenous women in decision-making processes at local, regional, federal and international levels?
 - 6) What are the reasons for the reduction in state funding for support for Indigenous peoples from 2022 onwards, and what measures are being taken to ensure that funds actually reach the intended recipients?
 - 7) What measures are being taken to address regional inequalities in access to healthcare infrastructure?
 - 8) What measures are being taken to preserve educational opportunities in Indigenous languages?
 - 9) What measures are being taken to remove bureaucratic barriers hindering the registration of Indigenous women, including those living outside formally designated 'traditional areas of residence', and are there plans to expand the scope of the register to facilitate the exercise of communities' collective rights?
 - 10) What measures have been taken to implement CEDAW's 2021 recommendations (paras. 19, 45, 55, 58) concerning Indigenous women, apart from the creation of a unified register, and what timetable for their further implementation does the State party intend to submit to the Committee?