

8 November 2019

Russia: Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North forcibly closed down

On 6 November 2019, Moscow City Court ruled in favour of the Russian Ministry of Justice' request to liquidate the **Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North**.

[The Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North](#) (CSIPN) is a non-governmental organisation that works to protect the rights of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Russian North and Far East. CSIPN is the leading organization working on indigenous rights in Russia, which provides informational, educational, expert and legal support to a range of representatives of indigenous peoples. CSIPN is also the only organisation of indigenous peoples of Russia that has gained the accreditation to UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNEA, FAO, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and others.

The Ministry of Justice requested the liquidation of CSIPN on the basis that the organisation's charter does not comply with recent amendments to legislation on non-profit organisations. The CSIPN was also charged with having failed to submit reports to the Ministry, and for listing an invalid address. Moscow City Court refused to give the CSIPN more time to make the necessary changes and avoid liquidation.

Moscow City Court's decision to liquidate the organisation is believed to be the culmination of a campaign against the organisation and its leadership that started in 2014 for its sustained efforts to defend the human rights of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Russian North and Far East.

In September 2014, at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, the Border Control Service of the Federal Security Service of Russia, seized the CSIPN director **Rodion Sulyandziga**'s passport, returning it later with one page cut out. As a result, the passport was considered invalid, and Rodion Sulyandziga was unable to attend the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in New York.

In 2015, CSIPN was placed on the government's register of "foreign agents". On 11 December 2016, police conducted a search in Rodion Sulyandziga's apartment, seizing the human rights defender's notebook and taking him to the police station for interrogation. In 2018, police searched CSIPN's office, seizing organisational documents and a computer. CSIPN was eventually removed from the register of foreign agents in 2018 as it had stopped receiving international funding.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by Moscow City Court's decision to liquidate CSIPN. Front Line Defenders strongly believes that the Court's sentence is disproportionate to the alleged administrative irregularities and appears to be aimed to prevent CSIPN from carrying out their legitimate and peaceful human rights work in Russia.

Front Line Defenders urges the Russian authorities to:

1. Reverse the liquidation of the CSIPN, as Front Line Defenders believes it has been targeted solely as a result of its legitimate human rights activities;
2. Immediately cease all further harassment of the CSIPN and its employees;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Russia and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.