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MEMBER PROFILE

SOUTHERN MONGOLIA

Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center



UNREPRESENTED
NATIONS & PEOPLES
ORGANIZATION
unpo.org

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Population: 4 million (total population including Chinese: 24 million)

Capital: Hohhot

Area: 1.8 million square kilometers

Language: Mongolian

Religions: Shamanism, Buddhism



OVERVIEW

Southern Mongolia, known as 'Inner Mongolia' within the People's Republic of China (PRC), geographically encompasses not only the Chinese 'Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region' (IMAR) but also large parts of other areas within China where Mongolian people have been living for centuries. 'Southern' translates as 'Uvur' in the Mongolian language, and refers to the areas south as well as west of the great Gobi Desert. On the other hand, the term 'Inner' is a translation of the Chinese word 'Nei', and this has had a long-standing effect on the history of the region. This is because through naming Southern Mongolia the 'Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region', the Chinese authorities are able to portray a false image that it has always been within China and an integral part of the country.



The history of Southern Mongolia within China is marked with perpetual injustice and indignity. Starting from its annexation by the PRC in 1949 Southern Mongolia has undergone a series of political purges, ethnic cleansing, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction. The case of Southern Mongolia is not simply one of the people being denied their basic right to self-determination, but also of a people who have been subject to perpetual systematic persecution, a denial of their most basic human rights, dignities and cultural heritage. The state apparatus in China has been implementing hostile policies that directly and adversely affect the Mongolian pastoralist way of life, while also causing immeasurable damage to the environment. Within the last few years the consequences of these policies whose aim is to extract minerals from the region, as well as the violence associated with them have increased.

Mongolian herders have been displaced through policies such as 'ecological migration' and 'ban over livestock grazing' leaving many landless, jobless and homeless. Moreover, through these policies China attempts to replace the traditions and cultures of Mongolians with more Sino-centric cultural characteristics. Thousands of Chinese state-run mining companies have come to occupy vast territories of Southern Mongolia, continuing to destroy the local economy by dumping hazardous waste in traditional herder grasslands.

UNPO REPRESENTATION: Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center

Southern Mongolia has been a Member of UNPO since 2007, although first the Member organisation was the Inner Mongolia People's Party, while now it is the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC). The SMHRIC's main goal is to establish a democratic structure in Southern Mongolia through gathering and distributing facts and information regarding the ongoing human rights violations within Southern Mongolia. Moreover, the SMHRIC aims to educate the Mongolian population about human rights and democracy through supporting grassroots organisations and political activists.

UNPO supports the endeavours of the SMHRIC through advocating for its cause and raising awareness of the PRC's discriminatory policies within the region in the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN).

HISTORY

Southern Mongolia contributed to the nation building of the Qing dynasty by the Manchu people. The Manchus defeated the previous Ming forces in 1644 in alliance with the Mongols and established the Qing dynasty. After its collapse in 1911, both Northern and Southern Mongolia concluded that the three-hundred-year alliance with the Manchu dynasty had ended and declared independence.

In 1915, with the signing of the Kyahata Treaty between China and Russia, Southern Mongolia was prevented from declaring its independence and from uniting with the North. Despite this, in 1937 Prince Demchugdangrov of Southern Mongolia declared the region's independence, yet an effort from Japan, China and Russia saw this move halted immediately. In 1947, Southern Mongolia declared the establishment of an independent "Southern (Inner) Mongolia Autonomous Government". It was two years before the establishment of the PRC. This Southern Mongolian state was independent and had no official relationship with China.

Despite this, in 1949 the PRC declared its independence and Southern Mongolia was reduced to the 'Nationality Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia'. This meant that all independent functions of Southern Mongolia were stripped away and stopped by the PRC. Soon after this, the region and the Mongolian people living within it were victim to purges that were being orchestrated by the Chinese Communist Party. Among all these political purges, one particular event must be given special emphasis. That is the massacre which took place under the name of "Purging the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party", a well-planned state sponsored genocide against the entire population of Southern Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution.

It is estimated that at least 100,000 Southern Mongolians were killed, and at least 300,000 to 500,000 were tortured, maimed and imprisoned during this period. According to the SMHRIC, the physical suffering, emotional trauma and psychological devastation inflicted on the population have had far-reaching impacts and haunting effects on the current political, socioeconomic, emotional and spiritual status of Southern Mongolians.

After this came what is defined by UNPO's Member as the "cultural genocide" that aimed to wipe out the entire population of Southern Mongolia as a distinct people through assimilation and the elimination of Mongolian culture, heritage, language, traditions and identity. This is something that, according to UNPO's Member, continues to happen to this day through the enforcement of aforementioned hostile policies being implemented by the Chinese state.

CURRENT ISSUES

Cases of political prisoners

China has time and again used its force in repressing any sentiment of self-determination or political activism in Southern Mongolia by labelling those who speak out for their culture, Mongolian identity or language as “national separatists”. In doing this, China has arrested a number of prominent political activists, most notably Mr Hada.

Mr Hada is an activist who was active in the 1990s with others in creating the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance (SMDA), which he led as President. In 1994, the SMDA started a newspaper that was banned by state authorities the following year. On 10 December 1995, police from the Inner Mongolian Public Security Bureau arrested him at his house. On 11 November 1996 he was convicted, in a closed trial, on charges of separatism and espionage for which he received a sentence of 19 years: 15 years in prison and 4 additional years being stripped of political rights.

Despite being tortured repeatedly for 23 years and serving the entirety of his sentence, Mr Hada remains under house arrest in dire conditions with an ailing health. Furthermore, his family has been placed under tight supervision and is subject to constant harassment and intense surveillance.

Eradication of pastoralism, economic exploitation and environmental devastation

As a result of intense economic exploitation, resource extraction, environmental destruction and cultural eradication, there exists a growing humanitarian crisis. According to the SMHRIC, continued policies of forced integration and economic colonialism in the region have meant that the most prized aspect of Mongolian heritage, herding on the pastoral grasslands, is being denied to them. Not only is it being denied, but many herders are being forced to give up their land and lifestyle to make way for Chinese corporation that are determined to exploit the land for financial gains.

Another policy adopted for the purpose of putting an end to the Mongolian traditional way life was the “Livestock Grazing Ban” (or “*jin mu*”). Under this policy, Mongolian herders grazing livestock on their own pastures were considered criminals and subjected to large fines or confiscation of their livestock. These policies, combined with various government projects including “Western Development”, “Western Energy to the East”, “Ten Coverages” and the most recent “One Belt One Road” seemed, according to UNPO’s Member, to achieve their set goal with the desired outcome: putting to an end the millennia-old nomadic civilization within the borders of China.

In 2009, with its largest coal and natural gas deposits in China, including production of 95 percent of the world’s rare earth supplies, Southern Mongolia was given the title of “China’s Energy Base” by the central government. Chinese extractive industries including state-run coal, gas and oil companies as well as thousands of private miners have poured into Southern Mongolia chasing their fortune. Herders’ grazing lands have been taken away and opened up for mines. Herders have forcibly been displaced from their land without adequate compensation or proper resettlement.

There are 658 billion tons of proven coal reserves in Southern Mongolia. It is hard to find data on exactly how many mines or mining companies there are. However, China Daily Online reported the following information in 2012: Southern Mongolia’s autonomous authority shut down nearly 900 coal mines and 2,000 other mines as part of a seven-year

effort to better manage resources. China Daily Online also reported that the authorities have reduced the number of coal mines to roughly 500 from more than 1,300 in 2005.

Denial of right to language, education, culture, tradition and identity

According to the SMHRIC, one of the ways in which self- and cultural determination is being denied to Southern Mongolians comes through the Chinese government's attempt to wipe out the memory of Southern Mongolia as a distinct national and cultural entity through rewriting history and discursively erasing it from the memory of China and the world.

Some of the specific policies, government initiatives and general attitudes that served the purpose of creating these conditions include the following:

1. Chinese policies including large-scale population transfer, elimination of Mongolian schools at rural level and merger of Mongolian schools with Chinese schools as part of the "ecological migration" and "quick urbanisation" programs;
2. *De facto* second-class citizen status of ethnic Mongolians. Although the Mongolian language is stated to be one of the official languages in Southern Mongolia, the Chinese Government has, according to the SMHRIC, made no effort whatsoever to make it reality;
3. Mongolian students who studied Mongolian language but are not fluent in Chinese do not have the same employment and career opportunities;
4. In some cases, Chinese employers including some government agencies clearly state in their employment requirement that "no candidate educated in Mongolian is considered".



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