

Expert Advice on Indigenous Consent and Self-Governance in the Sámi Parliament Act

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Introduction

1. I am a globally recognized expert in Indigenous Peoples' rights, self-determination, and governance, with extensive experience in human rights, and policy advisory roles. With a distinguished career spanning academia, the United Nations, and advisory positions with Indigenous organizations and governments, I am a regular advisor on policy frameworks that protect and advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide.
2. I am currently a member, past chair and past vice chair of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP).¹ The EMRIP is charged with providing high-level technical advice to states, Indigenous Peoples, and international bodies on matters related to Indigenous self-determination, governance, and human rights protections. As part of this mandate, I have worked extensively on free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), Indigenous political representation, land rights, and the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in domestic legal and policy systems.
3. Beyond the UN system, I have served as an advisor to Indigenous organizations and governments across Canada, assisting in developing legal and policy frameworks that reinforce Indigenous governance structures, cultural and linguistic rights, and economic self-determination. This work includes advising various national governments, constitutional bodies, and Indigenous governing institutions on legal reforms, treaty negotiations, and strategies to strengthen Indigenous political authority in domestic and international legal contexts.
4. As a scholar, author and the past Canada Research Chair in Global Indigenous Rights and Politics (2013-2023), I have published extensively on Indigenous self-determination,

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsiadiaries/expert-mechanism-on-indigenous-peoples>

Indigenous rights implementation, Indigenous governance models, and free, prior and informed consent (FPIC.) This body of work has been influential in shaping international discourse on Indigenous rights, particularly in relation to the legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples as political entities distinct from minorities. My research has been cited by United Nations bodies, human rights organizations, and state institutions engaged in Indigenous legal and policy matters.

5. I have also been a keynote speaker and expert witness in numerous parliamentary, legal, and international human rights forums.
6. As an expert in Indigenous rights implementation, I am honoured to provide my views to the Constitutional Law Committee on the proposed amendments to the Sámi Parliament Act. This submission addresses the two key questions posed by the Committee:
 1. *The relevance of the formal consent of Indigenous Peoples when enacting legislation that directly affects them.*
 2. *Whether this consent should be given by a unanimous parliament or a simple majority.*
7. These responses are grounded in international human rights law, comparative political science, and legal precedent, with a specific focus on the obligations arising from Finland's commitments under the UN Human Rights Committee's findings (2019) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). They were also informed by the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) engagement, which began in 2018.

Background

UN EMRIP's 2018 Country Engagement and Findings in Finland

8. The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and is mandated, under its country engagement component, to provide technical assistance to States and Indigenous Peoples, upon request, particularly in the development of domestic legislation relating to Indigenous rights.²
9. The EMRIP conducted a country engagement mission to Finland from 10-16 February 2018, at the request of the Sámi Parliament of Finland, to provide technical assistance on proposed amendments to the Sámi Parliament Act 1995. The engagement was intended to align Finland's legal framework with international Indigenous rights standards,

² <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/33/25> and <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/36/57>

particularly those outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other human rights treaties. The EMRIP engagement with Finland was guided by recommendations from other international human rights bodies, including the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (SR RIP) in 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2017, and the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in 2013.

10. The primary focus of EMRIP's country engagement mission to Finland focused on two key issues: (1) the definition of Sámi identity in electoral registration, and (2) the state's obligation to negotiate with the Sámi Parliament on measures affecting them. EMRIP's findings underscored that self-determination is a collective right – not an individual right – and that the Sámi Parliament, as the primary representative institution of the Sámi people, as an Indigenous People, must have the authority to define membership based on Sámi traditions and customs, in accordance with Article 9 of UNDRIP.
11. The EMRIP advisory note emphasized that the obligation to negotiate, as set out in Section 9 of the Sámi Parliament Act, should be strengthened and aligned with FPIC principles.³ EMRIP highlighted that Finland's legal framework does not yet fully comply with international standards on Indigenous consultation and negotiation, particularly regarding land management, electoral processes, and cultural preservation. The Mechanism pointed to constitutional provisions (Sections 17 and 121) that recognize Sámi self-governance and cultural autonomy, reinforcing that the Sámi Parliament must have an enhanced role in decisions affecting Sámi rights. EMRIP further noted that international treaty bodies, including the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), have repeatedly urged Finland to respect Sámi self-determination, particularly in regard to defining electoral participation criteria.
12. The findings concluded that Finland should amend the Sámi Parliament Act to explicitly reference UNDRIP provisions and clarify the obligation to negotiate with the Sámi Parliament in good faith. This includes recognizing FPIC as a standard, ensuring that consultation processes allow for meaningful participation, and preventing state interference in Sámi electoral matters. EMRIP also recommended that Finland strengthen procedural safeguards, including independent review mechanisms for individual membership claims while ensuring that the Sámi Parliament remains the ultimate decision-maker on matters of identity and governance. The advisory note stressed that a failure to implement these recommendations could further erode trust between the Sámi and the Finnish government and violate Finland's obligations under international human rights law.

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsiadiaries/expert-mechanism-on-indigenous-peoples/country-engagement>

Key Principles from International Human Rights Law

13. The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle of international human rights law, enshrined in Article 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).⁴ These instruments establish that "all peoples have the right of self-determination", meaning they have the autonomy to determine their own political status, governance structures, and pathways for economic, social, and cultural development. This principle is particularly significant for Indigenous Peoples, who must have the unfettered right to make decisions about their membership, governance structures, and internal political affairs without external interference, particularly from states.⁵
14. The distinction between Indigenous Peoples and minorities is crucial in international law.⁶ While minorities have protected rights within a state, they do not possess an internationally recognized right to self-determination. Indigenous Peoples, on the other hand, are recognized as distinct "peoples" under international law, with the inherent right to govern themselves and exercise political autonomy, as affirmed in Articles 3 and 4 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).⁷ A key component of self-determination is the right to determine their own membership, a right explicitly affirmed under Article 33 of UNDRIP, which states that "Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions." International bodies such as the ILO supervisory mechanism and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have reinforced this principle, urging states—including Finland—to respect Indigenous Peoples' authority over their own membership decisions, particularly in electoral processes affecting Indigenous governance.⁸
15. Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs), such as the Sámi Parliament, are not merely advisory bodies but recognized political institutions with some measure of direct

⁴ See CCPR/C/119/D/2668/2015; E/C.12/SLV/CO/3-5; CCPR/C/SWE/CO/7; and CPCR/C/ECU/6

⁵ The CERD recommended that a state party implement the fundamental right to self-determination for Indigenous Peoples. See CERD/C/AUS/CO/18-20 and CERD/C/NZL/CO/21-22. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has also tied Indigenous Peoples right to self-determination to common article 1 in the Covenants. See Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Members of the Saramaka People v Suriname* (case No. 12,338) and *Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v. Ecuador* (case No 12,465).

⁶ Under UNESCO's direction, an International Meeting of Experts on Further Study of the Concept of the Rights of Peoples took place in 1989. The final report lists seven characteristics that are 'inherent in a description (but not a definition) of a "people"' (UNESCO, 1990: para. 22 at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000085152>). According to this list, a people enjoys some or all of the following common features: a common historical tradition, racial or ethnic identity, cultural homogeneity, linguistic unity, religious or ideological affinity, territorial connection, and common economic life. See also Ulrike Barten, "What's in a Name? Peoples, Minorities, Indigenous Peoples, Tribal Groups and Nations," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Vol 14, No 1, 2015, 1-25 which points out that international law has accepted that Indigenous Peoples have the right to internal self-determination while minorities to not enjoy the right to self-determination.

⁷ A/HRC/48/75

⁸ CERD/C/FIN/CO/20-22, para 12 and CERD/C/FIN/CO.23.

authority over Indigenous self-governance. Attempts by the state to override decisions made by these bodies not only undermines their legitimacy but also constitutes a violation of international human rights standards. In Finland, the Constitution explicitly recognizes Sámi self-governance in linguistic and cultural matters under Section 121, reinforcing the obligation to allow the Sámi Parliament to define its own membership without state interference. Both the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) and the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) have reaffirmed that Sámi self-determination includes the authority to determine who belongs to their political community. Thus, Finland must ensure its laws and policies align with these international legal obligations to uphold Sámi rights.

16. Indigenous Peoples' language rights are foundational to the right of self-determination. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has noted that Indigenous Peoples' languages are paramount in cultural rights and also a key factor in supporting the enjoyment of all cultural, social and economic rights.⁹
17. The principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a human rights norm grounded in the fundamental right to self-determination and also a corner stone of Indigenous rights, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have full autonomy in decisions that affect their communities, lands, and governance.¹⁰ FPIC operates as a safeguard for the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and is a manifestation of Indigenous Peoples' right to determine their own political, social, economic and cultural priorities.
18. FPIC establishes four essential conditions: it must be free, meaning no coercion, intimidation, or undue pressure is exerted on Indigenous Peoples during decision-making; it must be prior, requiring that consent is sought before any decisions or actions are undertaken; it must be informed, guaranteeing that Indigenous Peoples receive all relevant information to make meaningful decisions; and it must uphold the fundamental right to consent, meaning that Indigenous Peoples have the right to accept, reject, or propose alternatives to any proposed measures affecting them. These safeguards ensure that Indigenous Peoples retain agency over their governance and resources, rather than being subjected to unilateral decisions imposed by states or external entities.
19. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) enshrines FPIC as an international legal standard, explicitly referencing it in several key provisions, including Articles 10, 19, 28, 29, and 32. These provisions reinforce the requirement that Indigenous Peoples must be consulted through their own representative institutions before any legislative, administrative, or developmental measures that may impact them are undertaken. In legal precedent, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) affirmed this principle in cases such as *Sanila-Aikio v. Finland* (2019), ruling that the Sámi Parliament has an internal self-determination process that Finland must respect and not interfere with. Similarly, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

⁹ See E/2020/22-E/C.12/2019/32.

¹⁰ See A/HRC/39/62.

(CERD) has emphasized that FPIC should not be limited to issues of land and resource management but must also apply to internal governance decisions, including membership determinations by Indigenous Peoples.¹¹

20. Internationally, some Indigenous Peoples have begun operationalizing FPIC within their own Indigenous governance structures. Within Canada, for example, a number of Indigenous Peoples have developed Indigenous-led FPIC protocols that formally recognize Indigenous jurisdiction over consent-based decision-making within their communities.¹² The Government of Canada has acknowledged FPIC as a necessary component of decisions affecting Indigenous rights, reinforcing its commitment to consultation through Indigenous-led mechanisms. Notable examples include the Tahltan Nation, Squamish Nation, and James Bay Cree, all of whom have established FPIC frameworks that prioritize Indigenous decision-making institutions over state or external authority, for matters that impact their rights. These models provide valuable lessons for ensuring that FPIC is fully respected in all contexts, including membership decisions, governance structures, and legislative matters affecting Indigenous political representation.
21. Canada has acknowledged that its current legal framework governing Indian status and band membership under the Indian Act is not fully aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Historically, the Indian Act has imposed state-defined criteria for Indigenous identity and membership, limiting the ability of Indigenous Peoples to exercise their right to self-determination in defining their own citizenship. While legislative amendments such as Bill S-3 (2017) have addressed sex-based inequities in registration, these changes have not resolved the broader issue of Indigenous self-determination over membership decisions. Indigenous organizations and international human rights bodies have widely criticized the failure to address this systemic misalignment, prompting Canada to take steps toward legislative reform.
22. In response, Canada's federal UNDRIP Action Plan (a requirement of the UN Declaration Act [2021]) outlines a commitment to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' membership decisions are fully aligned with UNDRIP in the future.¹³ This plan includes consultation and co-development measures with First Nations to transition away from the Indian Act's imposed registration system toward opt-in alternatives that respect Indigenous governance. The First Nations Priority #9 within the Action Plan specifically focuses on working with First Nations to co-develop opt-in alternatives for registration and membership that better reflect the principle of self-determination. Additionally, the government has committed to collaborative consultation processes, particularly engaging Indigenous women and gender-diverse groups, to address remaining gender-based inequities in membership policies.

¹¹ See CERD/C/FIN/CO/20-22, para 12, CERD/C/106/D/59/2016, para 9.10, and CERD General Recommendation No 23 (1997).

¹² <https://fnemc.ca/category/part-4-final-mining-and-consent-report/>

¹³ <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/ah/pdf/unda-action-plan-digital-eng.pdf>

23. The opt-in alternatives to Indian Act registration and membership are still in the early consultation phase, requiring further input from Indigenous organizations and federal institutions. However, Canada has affirmed that any reforms must be consistent with UNDRIP. The goal is to ensure that Indigenous Peoples can determine their own citizenship, free from state-imposed definitions, in full accordance with international human rights standards.

The Importance of Formal Indigenous Consent in Enacting Legislation Affecting Indigenous Peoples

The Right to Self-Determination Requires Consent in Decision-Making

24. The right of self-determination, as established in Article 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), guarantees that "all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development." For Indigenous Peoples, this principle is meaningless without self-governance, as self-determination encompasses establishing their own political institutions, controlling internal decision-making processes—including defining their own membership criteria—and ensuring that their representative bodies are recognized as legitimate authorities.
25. Within this framework, the Sámi Parliament serves as the primary self-governing institution of the Sámi people, making it the central decision-making body on all matters affecting Sámi political rights. Its authority must be fully respected and upheld, as it embodies the Sámi people's right to autonomously govern their own affairs, particularly in issues related to membership, governance, and cultural preservation. Any external interference in these decision-making processes undermines not only Sámi self-determination but also the broader international legal standards protecting Indigenous rights.

The Obligation to Obtain Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

26. The principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is both a procedural and substantive standard in international law, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have a meaningful role in decisions that affect their rights and governance. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), explicitly requires that FPIC must be obtained in two critical contexts. First, it is mandatory before the adoption of legislative or administrative measures that may impact Indigenous rights, as outlined in Article 19 of UNDRIP. Second, FPIC is essential for decisions concerning Indigenous governance and political representation, as stipulated in Articles 3, 4, 18, and 33.
27. The importance of this principle was reinforced by the 2019 UN Human Rights Committee rulings, which found that Finland had violated the political rights of the Sámi people by failing to uphold their right to electoral self-determination. The ruling underscored that the Sámi Parliament's formal consent is not merely a procedural

requirement but a fundamental obligation that Finland must respect to comply with international human rights standards. Moving forward, Finland must ensure that its policies and legal frameworks align with the FPIC standard, allowing the Sámi Parliament to exercise full self-governance over electoral matters and political representation.

Legislative Consent Must Be Expressed Through Sámi Representative Institutions

28. Indigenous Peoples' rights are inherently collective, meaning that Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) cannot be exercised by individuals alone. Instead, it must be expressed through legitimate Indigenous institutions, such as the Sámi Parliament. This principle ensures that decision-making reflects the collective will of Indigenous Peoples, rather than being determined by external actors or individual claims.
29. International human rights bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), have reaffirmed that the Sámi Parliament's decisions must be recognized as the authoritative expression of Sámi consent. These bodies have further emphasized that the Finnish government must refrain from unilateral intervention in Indigenous political processes, as such actions undermine Sámi self-governance and violate established international legal standards.
30. As a result, the Sámi Parliament's formal consent is a prerequisite before any legislation affecting Sámi governance can be enacted. This requirement aligns with Finland's international legal obligations under treaties and declarations protecting Indigenous rights, ensuring that Sámi self-determination remains firmly within the control of the Sámi people themselves.

Should Indigenous Consent Be Given by Unanimity or a Majority?

31. The question of whether decisions should require unanimous consent or a simple majority depends on the nature and significance of the decision being made. While unanimity may seem like an ideal standard for ensuring full agreement, it is unreasonable and unworkable in democratic governance. Requiring unanimity would grant a small minority the power to veto decisions, effectively paralyzing the decision-making process. No democratic parliament in the world operates under a requirement for unanimous consent, as it would make governance inefficient and impractical. Even within Finland, constitutional amendments only require a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority, recognizing that absolute consensus is neither necessary nor feasible for effective governance.
32. Applying a unanimity requirement to the Sámi Parliament would create an unrealistic and overly restrictive burden, preventing the Sámi people from exercising meaningful self-governance. Indigenous self-determination must be supported by functional and representative decision-making mechanisms, which require balanced and workable voting thresholds. A majority-based approach, with higher thresholds for significant decisions, ensures both efficiency and legitimacy while respecting Indigenous governance principles.

33. Political science and constitutional law recognize different thresholds of consent based on the importance and impact of the decision.

Decision Type	Standard of Consent	Example
Routine decisions	Simple majority (50%+1)	Most legislative decisions
High-impact policy changes	2/3 or ¾ supermajority	Constitutional amendments, major governance reforms
Constitutional decisions	2/3 or ¾ supermajority	Constitutional amendments

34. In the context of Sámi governance, the level of consent required for decision-making should likewise depend on the nature and impact of the decision. Routine parliamentary decisions, such as those related to budgets and administrative policies, typically require a simple majority (50%+1) to pass. However, when it comes to major decisions affecting Sámi political rights or electoral rules, a higher threshold of consent is often necessary. In such cases, a supermajority (2/3 or ¾) is more appropriate, as it aligns with the standards used for constitutional amendments in many democratic systems.
35. The ongoing debates surrounding the Sámi Parliament Act have highlighted concerns that a simple majority may be insufficient for fundamental electoral changes. Given that Finland itself requires a 2/3 majority for constitutional amendments, it is reasonable to argue that Sámi electoral rules should be treated with the same level of significance. As a result, adopting a 2/3 or ¾ supermajority threshold for major Sámi governance **decisions** could provide a stronger democratic foundation, ensuring that significant reforms reflect broad consensus within the Sámi Parliament.
36. In Indigenous self-governance models across Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, decision-making thresholds are structured to balance routine governance with higher levels of consent for constitutional or fundamental changes. In Canada, for example, First Nations Self-Government Agreements require a simple majority for routine decisions, such as day-to-day governance matters, but higher thresholds—such as a two-thirds (2/3) or three-fourths (¾) majority—for constitutional-level changes that affect fundamental governance structures.
37. Similarly, in New Zealand, the Māori Electoral and Treaty Agreements allow for majority rule in general decision-making processes but require Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for changes that have a significant and long-term impact on Indigenous governance or rights. These models emphasize that while majority rule is an essential democratic principle, certain key decisions demand a broader consensus to ensure legitimacy and long-term stability.
38. Given these international best practices, Finland should consider applying similar decision-making thresholds in Sámi governance. Routine parliamentary decisions, such as budgets and administrative policies, could be decided by a simple majority (50%+1), whereas major governance or electoral rule changes should require a supermajority (2/3 or ¾) to reflect the importance of these decisions and ensure they align with self-determination principles.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Indigenous Peoples' Formal Consent is Essential When Enacting Legislation Affecting Their Governance

39. The formal consent of Indigenous Peoples must be a cornerstone of legislative processes that impact their self-governance. Finland has explicit obligations under international law, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the 2019 UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) decisions, which emphasize the necessity of obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the Sámi people through their representative institution, the Sámi Parliament.

40. Failure to secure Sámi consent would constitute a direct violation of international law and Finland's human rights commitments. More critically, it would undermine Sámi self-determination, which is a collective right recognized under international legal frameworks. Disregarding Sámi consent not only weakens Indigenous governance structures but also erodes trust between Sámi institutions and the Finnish government, reinforcing a history of exclusion and state-imposed decision-making. A legislative framework that does not explicitly uphold Sámi FPIC would risk being legally and politically illegitimate, further marginalizing Sámi authority over their own affairs.

2. Unanimity is Not Required, but a Higher Threshold is Necessary for Major Governance Decisions

41. While democratic decision-making principles must guide Sámi governance, expecting unanimous consent for all decisions is impractical and unreasonable. No democratic system in the world requires unanimity as a standard, as it would give an effective veto power to a small minority and stall governance processes. Even Finland's own constitutional amendments only require a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority, underscoring that a more flexible yet robust standard should be applied to Sámi decision-making.

42. The appropriate threshold for Sámi governance decisions should be determined based on the level of impact of the decision:

- Routine parliamentary decisions, such as budget allocations, administrative policies, and day-to-day governance matters, should be resolved through a simple majority (50%+1) to ensure functionality and efficiency.
- Major decisions affecting Sámi political rights or electoral rules, such as amendments to governance structures, membership criteria, or political representation rules, should require a supermajority ($\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$). This approach aligns with constitutional principles in Finland and other democratic systems where more substantial consensus is needed for foundational changes to governance.

43. Given that Finland requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority for constitutional amendments, and Sámi electoral rules carry similar significance in terms of self-determination and political representation, a higher threshold ($\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$) is justified for major Sámi governance decisions.

3. Finland Should Recognize the Sámi Parliament as the Legitimate Decision-Making Body on Matters Affecting Sámi Self-Governance

44. For self-determination to be meaningful and effective, Finland must fully recognize and respect the Sámi Parliament as the primary decision-making body on all matters related to Sámi self-governance, political representation, and membership determination.

45. To align with its obligations under UNDRIP and other international human rights treaties, Finland should:

- Formally acknowledge that the Sámi Parliament has exclusive authority in defining Sámi membership, electoral processes, and self-governance frameworks.
- Ensure that state interventions do not undermine Sámi self-determination by preventing unilateral state actions that affect Sámi governance without Sámi consent.
- Strengthen procedural safeguards that require government consultation with the Sámi Parliament to be conducted in good faith, with FPIC as a binding standard rather than a discretionary measure.

46. Respecting the democratic procedures of the Sámi Parliament is essential for maintaining legitimacy, accountability, and alignment with international legal obligations. By ensuring that Sámi governance is determined by Sámi institutions themselves, Finland can rectify past injustices, strengthen Indigenous rights, and foster a relationship based on trust and meaningful dialogue between the Finnish government and the Sámi people.