

SUMMARY

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Toxics in the Arctic

The Arctic indigenous people show signs of contaminant levels that supersede sources in their own neighborhood.

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Glaciers indicate global change

In South America a number of glaciers are showing signs of change. One scientist believes these changes are linked to the globally changing climate.

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First Arctic Human Development Report

The first ever Arctic Human Development Report will be released in 2004. New methods and concepts were designed for this very special task.

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Farmed fish on the plate

Sealice, contaminated discharge and escaping fish remain a problem for the fastest growing food sector in the world. In the Barents Sea they struggle with all of these challenges.

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Climate changing what we eat

Some of the animals that indigenous people eat will have totally different living conditions as a changing climate alters our world. In the Canadian north the health of indigenous peoples depend on these animals.

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Russia's remote communities

Improved health, self-governance and education in the indigenous communities in Russia are hindered by the fact that the communities are remote both in terms of actual distance and the distance to authorities.

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Seven ministers on the Arctic ice

Seven ministers, one assistant secretary and the UNEP executive director spent a week on the Svalbard ice in northern Norway. Five of them recall their experiences from the trip and suggest future directions for the Arctic environmental agenda.

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Conventions and the Arctic people

In a double pager, the *Polar Environment Times* outlines which Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) impact on the Arctic people.

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Oil exploitation in northwest Russia

About 11,000 people can have their lives turned around if this area in northwest Russia will see further oil exploitation. Conflicts tighten between the indigenous peoples, the oil companies and the local authorities.

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2007: Next Polar Year

In four years the next International Polar Year will take place and the preparations are increasing by the days.

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Reindeer and Saamis on the run

Saamis and their reindeer herds might soon be on the run away from their traditional ranges as oil exploitation is planned in the Barents Sea region.

PAGE 8 SEVEN MINISTERS ON THE ARCTIC ICE



OLE MAGNUS RAPP

PAGE 4 GLACIERS INDICATE GLOBAL CHANGE



ANDRES RIVERA/CECS

New bombing ranges and their impact on Saami traditions

The Saami Parliament and local reindeer herders are protesting against Norwegian and NATO plans to expand bombing exercises in the traditional summer ranges of Halkavarre, northern Norway. Halkavarre has been used for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years as summer and calving grounds for reindeer, and also contains numerous ancient Saami sacred sites including *sieidit* (stones where gifts and sacrifices were laid down) and *álda* and *sáivu* (sacred hills). The Saami Parliament has raised the issue with the UN International Labour Organization (ILO)-convention and with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR). **BY CHRISTIAN NELLEMAN AND INGUNN VISTNES**



BRYAN AND CHERRY ALEXANDER

Blue fiords, snow covered mountain tops, and early blossoming flowers are the first sights that reindeer calves see when they are born in spring on the ranges of Halkavarre in northern Norway. These ranges have been used by the Saami herders for hundreds of years. However, the region is also one of the few areas in Europe which provides opportunities for low-level flying training and combined military exercises involving ground, air and naval forces. Testing of missile systems by Norwegian and allied forces has also been proposed for the area.

Not a new conflict

Over the years there have been many

disputes between the local Saami people and military and government authorities, and relationships have often been characterized by extended legal proceedings. The last formal agreement

the Norwegian Ministry of Defence now wants to expand the existing bombing ranges by up to 500 km²

between the parties on the extent of bombing exercises in the Halkavarre reindeer lands ended in 1996, and for nearly a decade no new agreement has been signed. The Norwegian Ministry of Defence now wants to expand the existing bombing ranges by up to 500 km², plans which have been met with bitter

opposition from the indigenous people in the area.

Mr. Anders S. Utsi, a reindeer herder, was born in a *lavvú* (a Saami tepee tent) in the summer 80 years ago in the middle

of a proposed new area – an area which he says is already being used for bombing practice. His niece, Anne Kirsten Eira, an active reindeer herder, protests strongly. "It is worst for our children. Many feel our uncertainty and are frightened, asking us what will happen to them if they will not be able to live their lives with

the reindeer and the land." Eira goes on to express her commitment to fight for their right to continue their lifestyle in the lands where they have always lived.

The consequences of new military agreements

However, the needs of the defence forces appear to be changing. Recently, Kristin Krohn Devold, the Norwegian Minister of Defence agreed to the location of a new NATO command centre in Jättå, southern Norway. At the same time a practice bombing range was closed in the south, increasing the motivation to find new practice areas in the north.

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