

## THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

[Dr. Reguina A. Yavchunovskaya](#)

Academy of Creative Endeavours  
Russia

If we view the environmental crisis as an international problem, then, it demands solutions, which are closely connected with international efforts to improve the interests of peace and mutual understanding all over the world. It is necessary to stimulate international co-operation in the field of the environment and to actively look for solutions to the problem of the survival of national minorities. The model of the Russian State - the National-State establishment under development - should take into consideration, in every way, the varied lifestyles of the various ethnic groups represented. For example, the subsistence level of the Northern nations is extremely urgent; the North manufactures about 20% of the Russian national product, but 37 million hectares of pasture are non-productive. The concentration of harmful substances in coastal waters has exceeded the limit of permissible norms 5 to 6 times. The hunger threat weighs heavily on the spirits of the people. As another typical example, resulting from an explosion at the Ust-Kamenogorsky nuclear fuel factory, 120,000 people suffered. This region was not declared a zone of ecological disaster, by the Kazakhstan government, for the political reason that the population had asked for bilingualism to be approved for the majority of Russian-speaking people. It seems clear that the disintegration of the USSR has resulted in the tendency to convert ethnic groups into national minorities. To take as an example the Russian ethnic group; more than 25 million Russians now live outside Russia, and in newly-constructed sovereign countries they are becoming nationals without the rights of citizenship, language or education. Because of the environmental situation, negative influences on human health have worsened; there is a threat to the sanitary and epidemiological well-being of ethnic minorities; and both the life-span and healthy children birth-rate are being reduced. Considering the distant future, in conclusion, it is necessary to consider the results of current practical actions. A system of laws and regulations should be constructed, which will call a halt to the destruction of the environment in any form, by any means, as well as offering "compensation" for the damage caused to Nature as a direct result of human activity.

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**Dr. Reguina A. Yavchunovskaya** holds a Ph.D. in philosophy and specialises in Social Ecology and National Relations. She is currently with the Academy of Creative Endeavours, in Moscow, Russia.