

Extractive industries and public participation in Russia

Case of oil industry in Izhma



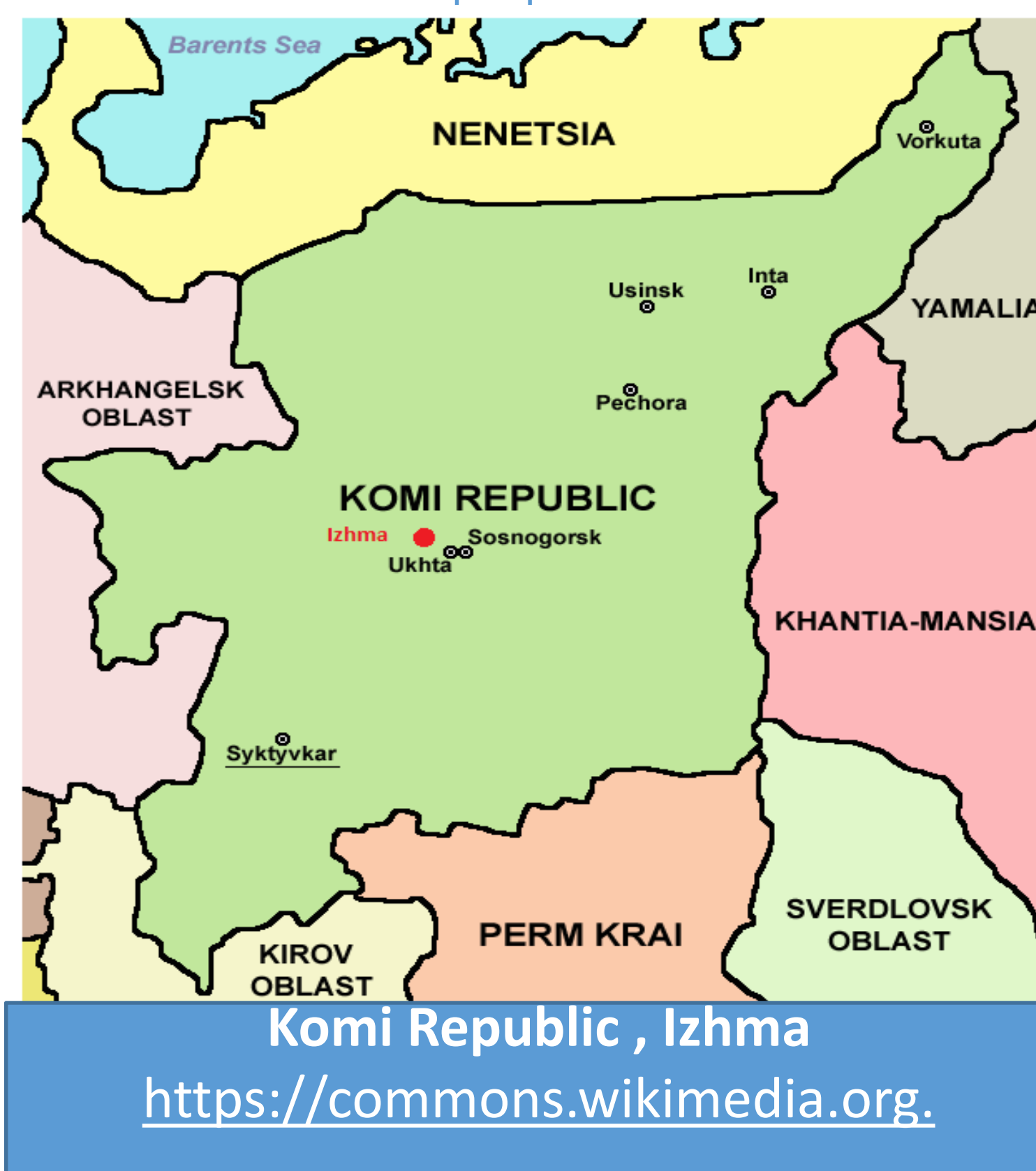
Indigenous communities (e.g. Sámi, Nenets) for whom the North is a homeland rather than a resource frontier, are engaged, or are attempting to engage, in dialogue with one another and with government and industry and seek to express their views about what oil exploration and extraction could mean for both present and future generations in terms of socio-economic impacts, community sustainability, wildlife, and environmental health (Nuttall 2010). The aim of the study is to get a deeper insight on the participatory rights of local people, living in the areas of extensive oil industry operations in the Izhemskii district of the Komi Republic in Russia.

The local economy depends on a large scale on the extractive industries, it is also evident that the districts, as for instance, Izhemskii, have long suffered from oil leakages and the resulting negative environmental impacts. Lukoil-Komi, the company working in the area bought the business directly after the Soviet times with old pipelines and inherited consequently the ecological threats and shortcomings. As a consequence, Lukoil-Komi promised to put things in order, but there should be done still a lot.

METHODS

The project group has made several field trips, conducting semi-structural interviews with different stakeholder's groups. These groups comprise actors from the governmental sector, business side, local activists, community representatives and academia. The interviews provided valuable information about benefits and shortcomings of oil drilling in Izhemskii region and about the response of legislation and oil companies in case of public participation process

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Exhibition in Izhma „Oil and people“

FINDINGS

- The Conflict over resource extraction is based on the ground that the access to information is limited. Local communities, are lacking receiving sufficient information at the public hearings within environmental impact assessment about upcoming oil projects.
- Local communities are trying to find procedural justice, applying mostly not to the legal instruments, but using benefit-sharing tools, as e.g. social partnership agreements.
- The Lukoil-Komi company claims that the company respects local people, nature and operate according to the law.