

The Tornedalian Kven & Lantalaiset people

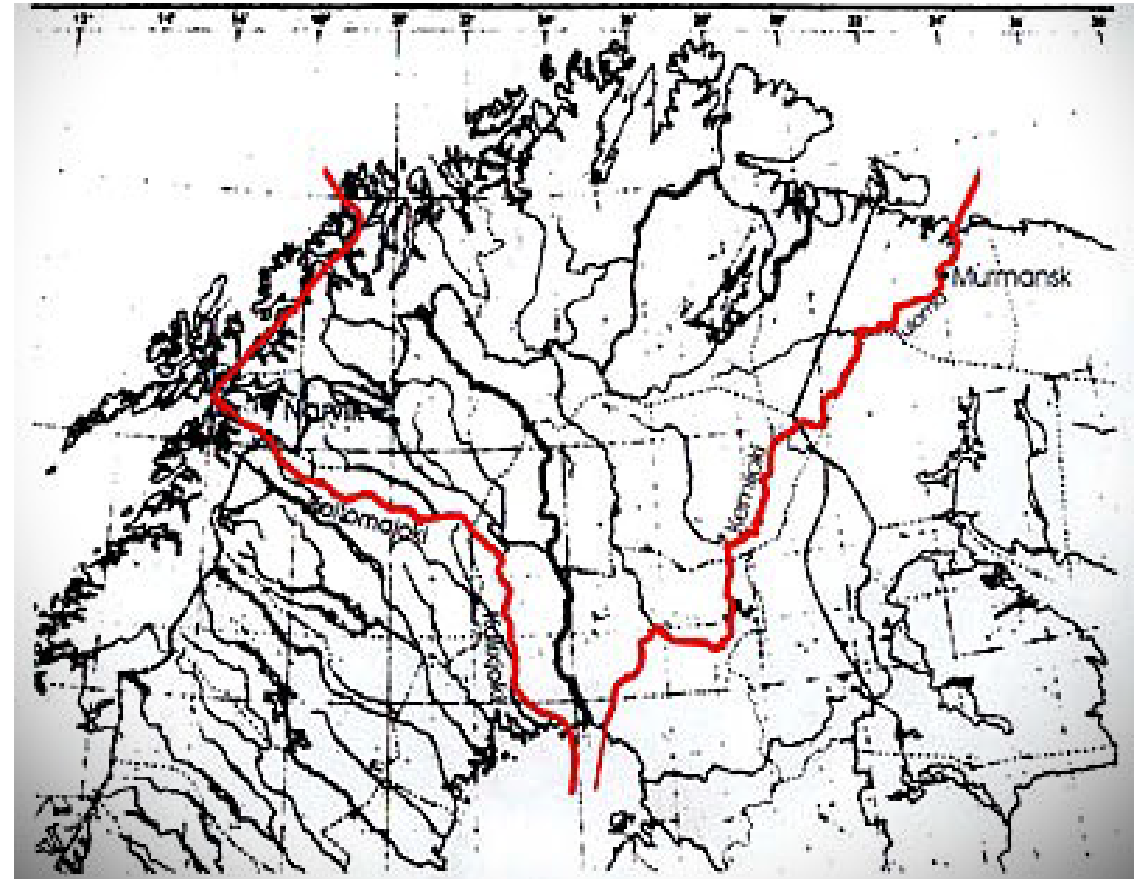


Svenska Tornedalingars Riksförbund
Tornionlaaksolaiset



- *Tornedaling* is the official designation of the minority, given by the state in 2000
- *Tornedaling* as a designation is geographically linked to Tornedalen, the Torne Valley
- Some who have their roots outside Tornedalen prefer to identify themselves as *Kven* or *Lantalainen*

Kveenimaa - Kainuu - Kvenlandia



The Kven flag



The Tornedalian flag





Meänflaku (Our flag)
Creator: Herbert Wirlöf, 2013

Meän päivä

Tornedalian Day

is celebrated on 15 July.
The colours symbolize the
yellow sun, the white snow
and the blue sky.



Kvänflaggan (The Kven flag)
Creator: Bengt Johansson Kyrö, 2009

Kväänikansan päivä

Kven Day is celebrated on
16 March. The sunflower
originates in Kven folk art
traditions and occurs on many
historical utility objects.



150 000

Tornedalian, Kven, Lantalaiset people

Meänkieli – a recognized national minority language since 2000

The language has three varieties:

- *Tornedalian variety*
- *Lannankieli*
- *Jellivare variety*

The figure 150 000 is based on a survey in 2005. The actual number of people belonging to the minority is in all probability much greater.

The minority's traditional livelihoods



The Tornedalian, Kven and Lantalaïset people have combined a variety of ways to obtain food:

- **Fishing** – particularly important in the early history of the minority.
- **Trade** – one of the main industries of the so-called *Birkarl* traders.
- **Hunting** – small game by using snares and trapping pits.
- **Reindeer-herding** – for centuries, the minority has owned reindeer for food and transportation.
- **Small-scale farming** – gradually became more important as well as collecting berries and herbs.



Coexistence with the Sámi ethnic group

The Tornedalian, Kven and Lantalaiset people have shared lands and cultural traditions with the Sámi people for centuries.

The two peoples have lived in so-called friend-guest relations, where nomadic Sámi people have been given shelter by Lantalaiset people during reindeer migration to seasonal foraging areas. Old and sick Sámi sometimes stayed with the host family when the demands of migration with reindeer could impact their health.

Sámi children played with Lantalaiset children and there was occasionally romance and marriage between the ethnic groups.



*Photos: Members of friend-guest family group in Idivuoma.
Nomadic Sámi at their friend-guest host's home.*

The early history of the Kvens

- Kvens are mentioned and depicted in very early historical sources, as early as the 9th century AD.
- Kvenland is described in at least three early independent historical sources including the accounts of Ottar (Oththere), the sagas of the Icelandic poet Egil Skallagrimsson, and the writings of the German history writer Adam von Bremen.
- The border commission documentation of Major Peter Schnitler also describes the same district as *Kvenland*.
- The accounts of Oththere are of considerable value as a historical source. They were used as arguments and crucial evidence when the Norwegian Sámi people were given legal protection of their rights.
- In the final report of the Norwegian truth and reconciliation commission, it is stated that the migration of the Kvens into Norway also took place from Swedish Tornedalen in the 16th century.



koviters eller rutheners infall visste Olaus Magnus att berätta. I sitt
ga epos berör han bl a 1490-talets gränskonflikter. Hösten 1592
illasinnade ryssar genom Torne lappmark och vid Muonioniska
ppbrände de många träskfiskande bönders fiskevånor med not,
annat. Fiskeriet blev förstört för flera år framåt i tiden. Ur Olaus
s II 1912:226.

Photo: The book "1617 Övertorneå storsocken under en dramatisk tid", Sture Torikka.



Tornedalian, Kven & Lantalaïset culture and handicraft

- **Tornedalian beak shoes** has been manufactured by the family business Kero in Sattajärvi since 1929. Today, Kero's beak shoes and boots are known worldwide and worn by various ethnic groups.
- **The Lovikka Mitten** was invented by Erika Aittamaa in 1892 in Lovikka in Tornedalen. The story of the mitten is exciting, since it came about through a mistake but became a major success!
- **Knife craft, boat building and weaving rana rugs** are also traditional crafts which the ethnic group has possessed for generations.

Photo: Kero & Shop in Lapland



Tornedalian, Kven & Lantalaïset cuisine

- Traditional dishes include fish, elk and reindeer meat, and reindeer blood
- Drying, salting and smoking meat and fish are still used old methods to preserve food
- Home-grown potatoes and home-baked bread *rieska* are typical for Tornedalen cuisine
- Lingonberries for jam are preferably self-picked, as are cloudberry and blueberries

Photo 1: Doris Niva. Photo 2: Private





Wetland haymaking

Wetland haymaking and haymaking on so-called “common meadows” was necessary for supplying livestock with fodder.

This cultural expression survives to this day, but now features more modern implements and machines.

Photo: Private. The Tornéus brothers on their haymaking wetland Kierunavuoma, early 1930s.



Sweden's first truth and reconciliation commission

The commission has investigated abuse against the Tornedalian, Kven and Lantalaiset people in the 19th and 20th centuries.


Assimilation contributed to loss of language and marginalization of the minority.

The final report was handed over to the Swedish government in 2023. Proposed actions for reconciliation are divided into four overall goals:

1. Visibility and empowerment
2. Realised and extended rights
3. Language revitalisation and culture promotion
4. Strengthened Nordic co-operation for the Meänkieli language



Photo: 1.Karin Keisu 2.STR-T



In 2023, a request to the Swedish government was submitted for the *Tornedalian, Kven* and *Lantalaïset* people to be recognized as indigenous.

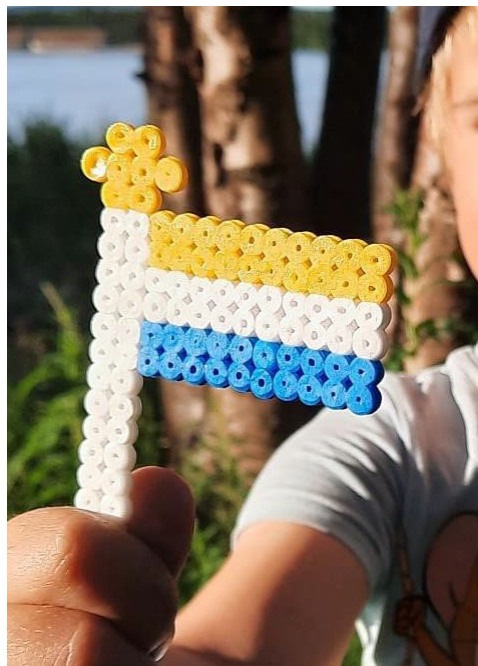
Why indigenous status?

The ethnic group meets the criteria for an indigenous people and international standards.

It is a matter of increasing the visibility of the minority. Strengthening the culture, the language and the minority's rights.

Increasing influence and self-determination.
Regaining self-confidence lost in the wake of the assimilation policy.

Official request to be recognized as an indigenous people



Svenska Tornedalingars Riksförbund
Tornionlaaksolaiset