

Press Release

Uttar Pradesh (India): Forcible Land Acquisition and Repression

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India: NAPM Press Release - UP govt Continues Forcible Land Acquisition Arrests Protesting Activists and Project Affected

26 September

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

- Uttar Pradesh Government Continues Forcible Land Acquisition in Name of Development
- Release Medha Patkar, Amarnath Bhai and 14 Other Detained Activists Now
- Withdraw false Charges Against Dr. Chandra Patel and immediately release 42 farmers, including 13 children languishing in jail since September 9

Allahabad / New Delhi : Once again the Uttar Pradesh government has shown its anti people face by curbing free movement, detaining activists, arresting protesting farmers, including children, and levelling false charges, all in the name of development. The wounds of police firing on people protesting against the construction of Kanhar Dam have not healed and yet again UP government has resorted to repression against people protesting destruction of their livelihood. Late last night, Allahabad police, firstly, denied the police permission to hold a meeting in village Kachri, tehsil Karchana and then later detained 16 activists, trade unionists, left leaders and others since early afternoon at Police Line.

The detained activists include Medha Patkar (NBA-NAPM); Amarnath Bhai of Sarv Seva Sangh; Ramjee Rai, Editor, Janmat; Anshu Malviya, Utpala Shukla, Prema, and Anuradha of Shahri Gareeb Sangharsh Morcha; Harishchandra Ji of CITU; O. D. Singh and K K Pale of Daman Virodhi Manch; Avinash ji of LIC Employees Union; Krishna Swaroop Anandi of Azadi bachao Andolan; Rajesh Sachan of Indian People's Front; and Vijay Yadav, Satyapal Yadav and Abhishsek Singh. Earlier in the morning, police even refused to let them come out of the University guest house and told them categorically to not proceed to the meeting venue in Kachri village, citing imposition of Sec 144 and fear of violence. Activists and organisers very clearly said the meeting was being organised on occasion of third death anniversary of eminent activist Shri Banwari Lal Sharma and in support of the ongoing struggle in the area.

Background to the ongoing Struggle

For years farmers and farm workers have been protesting against three thermal power plants being constructed within a distance of 20 Kms, near Allahabad. These plants of 1320 MW each Karchana and Bara (Jaypee) and Bara (NTPC and UP Power Corporation) will together impact more than 20 villages and nearly 5000 families. All three projects since beginning have been mired in protests and court cases due to irregularities in land acquisition processes. They have tried to avoid the due process of land acquisition, either by old land acquisition act or the new land act. In 2012, deciding a

case filed by the PAFs of Karchana Power Plant, High Court ordered the government to return the forcibly acquired land, give back land, if farmers return the compensation amount, and follow the due procedures for any further land acquisition. Farmers have been demanding the implementation of this High Court order, however, district administration has refused that in complete violation of the order. In fact the authorities have been forcibly seeking consent from the farmers and refusing to implement the land act 2013, which would mean seeking of farmers consent for the project, given that two of these are private power projects to be implement by Jaypee group. In fact, within a distance of 60 Kms near Allahabad and around six power plants cumulatively amounting for 7000+ MW are to be constructed, all geared towards meeting the demands of Dedicated Freight Corridor. However, no comprehensive social or environmental impact assessment has been done till date.

Continued Police Repression

Tehsil karchana has been converted in to a police camp for sometime now. People have been terrorised and brutalised since September 9th when project affected families of the Karchana power plant were beaten up by police and 42 people, including 13 children put behind bars. They have been denied bail are being punished for extending support to the resistance by Meja PAFs to forcible acquisition of their land on September 9. Dr. Raj Bahadur Patel, leader of Punarvas Kisan Kalyan evam Sahayata Samiti has been declared absconding and a gangster and any one providing information will be awarded with Rs 12,000. Many of the farmers have been implicated in false charges and their family members are being targeted and harassed since then.

Not only this, the district administration in complete violation of all laws have acquired more than 3500+ acres of land, as opposed to the 1100 acres which was needed for the Meja power plant. This includes the Gram Sabha land, forest land, and even Bhoodan land, on which nearly 1000+ labourers were working in the stone quarries. They have all been left out of the project affected families count and denied any benefit and compensation.

Uttar Pradesh government shows its autocratic face in name of socialist rule

UP government today stands exposed for its double speak. Nationally they oppose forcible acquisition and any changes to the Land Act 2013 but when it comes to their own state, they bring in police to terrorise and arrest anyone opposing forcible land acquisition. Earlier this year on Ambedkar Divas they opened fire on people protesting against Kanhar Dam in Sonbhadra and now it's the people of Karchana Tehsil. UP government seems not to learn from its past mistakes and only continue to show its ugly face.

The rule of police and goondas continue unabated in the state and those challenging the state are often at the receiving end of the law, facing false charges, arrests, illegal detention and restriction on their freedom of movement.

We demand that Chief Minister Shri Akhilesh yadav urgently intervene and release all the detained activists in Allahabad and also release the protesting farmers who are languishing in jail for more than ten days on false charges. Action also must be taken against the police officials who used high handed methods and have arrested 12 juveniles and are being kept in prison. Government also must implement the High Court Order and stop all forcible land acquisition in the area immediately.

NAPM condemns the action of UP government and will continue to support the struggle of the project-affected families unless and until government addresses their legitimate demands as per the order of the Allahabad High Court

Arundhati Dhuru, Sandeep Pandey, Richa Singh, Nandlal Master - NAPM, UP; Prafulla Samantara -

Lok Shakti Abhiyan & Lingraj Azad - Samajwadi Jan Parishad - Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti, NAPM, Odisha; Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava - Kisan Sangharsh Samiti & Meera - Narmada Bachao Andolan, NAPM, MP; Suniti SR, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe - NAPM, Maharashtra; Gabriele Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan - Unorganised Sector Workers Federation, NAPM, TN; C R Neelkandan - NAPM Kerala; P Chennaiah & Ramakrishnam Raju - NAPM Andhra Pradesh, Sister Celia - Domestic Workers Union & Rukmini V P, Garment Labour Union, NAPM, Karnataka; Vimal Bhai - Matu Jan sangathan & Jabar Singh, NAPM, Uttarakhand; Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant - Paryavaran Suraksh Samiti, NAPM Gujarat; Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan - Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan & Mahendra Yadav - Kosi Navnirman Manch, NAPM Bihar; Faisal Khan, Khudai Khidmatgar, J S Walia, NAPM Haryana; Kailash Meena, NAPM Rajasthan; Amitava Mitra & Sujato Bhadra, NAPM West Bengal; Bhupender Singh Rawat - Jan Sangharsh Vahini & Rajendra Ravi, Madhuresh Kumar and Kanika Sharma - NAPM, Delhi

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