

Repression Continues as West Bengal Government Attacks Mass Opposition to Land Seizures

Wednesday 16 July 2008, by [IUF](#) (Date first published: 11 January 2007).

The government of India's West Bengal state is resorting to bans on assembly, the massive use of police power and illegal detentions in order to crush popular opposition to the government seizure of fertile agricultural land for nuclear power plant and special economic zone construction to benefit powerful domestic and foreign investors. The seizures threaten the food security, homes and livelihoods of tens of thousands of agricultural workers and peasants and their families. You can support their struggle by using the form below to send a message to the government of West Bengal.

Date launched: 11-Jan-2007

To West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya
To West Bengal Governor: Gopal Krishna Gandhi

Dear Sirs:

The government of West Bengal continues to use illegal police powers to repress the popular movements in West Bengal opposed to the seizure of fertile, multi-cropped farmland for the construction of industrial projects which could be sited in ways that do not threaten food security and the homes and livelihoods of peasants and agricultural workers. I am shocked to learn that on January 10 police detained, without warrant, Anuradha Talwar and other PBKMS members and supporters who were attempting to travel to Singur. That same day, Medha Patkar and Pranab Bannerjee of the National Alliance of People's Movements, Sujato Bhadra of APDR, and one more person were forcefully picked up West Bengal Police from a residence in Chingrihata, Kolkota and are being illegally detained in a youth hostel under Saltlake Stadium.

The West Bengal government, yielding to popular pressure, has cancelled the planned chemical SEZ in Nandigram and acknowledged the need for democratic process and participation in determining land use. It must do the same in Singur and Joonput-Haripur, where residents have manifested their clear opposition to the seizures. To this end, I call on your government to immediately release all those detained for their support to these struggles, an immediate lifting of Section 144 in Singur and end to the massive police presence and the use of force against opponents of these schemes.

Yours sincerely,

To send the letter of protest, go to:

http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/campaigns/show_campaign.cgi?c=255

Stop the Forced Eviction of Rural Workers in West Bengal

Date launched: 10-Oct-2006

Agricultural workers and peasants in the West Bengal community of Singur are resisting plans by the state's "Left Front" government to evict some 6,000 poor families from 420 hectares of farmland to make way for a small car factory to be built by the Tata Group, India's powerful multinational conglomerate. The plant will employ 2,000 workers, while up to 30,000 people will lose their land and livelihood, including agricultural labourers, marginal peasants, sharecroppers, cottage industry and other rural workers who would receive no compensation under the procedure. Eviction threatens to plunge thousands of workers into the starvation which has been stalking West Bengal's tea plantations. IUF affiliates are supporting the workers' resistance to the landgrab. You can support the struggle by sending a message to the government of West Bengal and to the Tata Group, calling on them to halt the forced evictions.

To the Governor and Chief Minister of West Bengal

cc Ratan Tata and Ravi Kant, Managing Directors Tata Motors

Dear Sirs,

I write to express my outrage to learn that up to 30,000 residents of Singur will lose their land and their livelihoods in the process of transferring 410 hectares of fertile, multi-cropped farmland to Tata Motors. I also write to condemn the increased repression of the villagers resisting the mass eviction and of their organization, the Singur Krishi Jami Raksha. The September 25 police assault, in the course of which many Singur residents were injured and one youth killed, was an intolerable assault on citizens exercising their democratic right to protest. An open and transparent official investigation must be undertaken immediately in order to prosecute those found guilty of organizing the violence. Issues of land use, which has so many implications for rural citizen's livelihoods and the wellbeing of the nation as a whole, cannot be determined by governments acting solely at the behest of investors - meaningful consultation with the organizations of agricultural and other rural workers and small farmers' organizations is essential. I therefore urge you to cease all repression against the residents of Singur who are resisting the proposed evictions and enter into negotiations with the Singur Krishi Jami Raksha and the other local organizations opposing the land transfer. Surely the factory could be sited on non-agricultural land which would not endanger employment

and local production - there is no need to destroy important sources of food production and rural employment in the process of creating industrial jobs. 'Development' which deepens food insecurity is no development at all.

Yours sincerely