

# Statement Condemning Repression at Jagatsinghpur

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We strongly condemn the indiscriminate use of State police force by the Orissa Government on peaceful Anti-POSCO project demonstrators of Jagatsinghpur District of Orissa on 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 2010. The 15<sup>th</sup> May state offensive had inflicted injuries on more than a hundred vulnerable villagers mainly comprising of farmers and fisher-folk. The Orissa State government's repression spree comes in the wake of the local people's struggle against the proposed POSCO Steel Plant in the Ersama Block of Jagatsinghpur District. To us it seems to be an attempt at dissipating the demonstrators who are hell bent on resisting plunder of their land by corporate interests. We consider this act to be a direct assault on the people's right to life and livelihood and an act posing a serious threat to democracy.

In the recent past the projects introduced by the Orissa state government in the guise of fostering development have been subject to fierce opposition from the people living in the areas under the proposed project sites. The sufferers include peasants, adivasis and toiling poor who live on the margins of the society. Massive displacement of such marginalized communities from their land and livelihood is a testimony to the state's vision of development which serves the rich by displacing the poor. The fierce opposition of the Adivasis at Kalinganagar is a burning example of mass ire directed against the Orissa state projects. Approximately three weeks back, a similar assault by the state police force on the adivasis of Kalinganagar had taken place to dissipate the Adivasis strong anti-project stand. The proposed Tata project at Kalinganagar is another Orissa Government promoted project which is bound to evict thousands of adivasis from their land and livelihood. Orissa Government's coercive development projects are bound to displace lakhs of people from their land and subsequently their livelihood leading to a threat to their very existence. This might stimulate anarchy fuelling further violence in the region. Also, we feel that the environmental damage which projects like POSCO Steel Project and Tata Steel Project would inflict would be huge adversely affecting the environmental balance of the region.

- We demand an immediate enquiry into the May 15<sup>th</sup> police repression and a stern action to be taken against those found guilty.
- We stand with the people of Jagatsinghpur and Kalinganagar and other project-affected toiling masses in the country who are victims of land grab who face an uncertain future.
- We demand the immediate halt to work at the proposed POSCO Steel Plant a fresh enquiry in strict conformity with local people's interests and keeping in view the environmental sustainability of such projects.

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\* From Radical Socialist:

<http://www.radicalsoci alist.in/index.php/articles/statement-radical-socialist/182-statement-condemning-repression-at-jagatsinghpur>