

Press Release

India : Conference demanding closure of Koodankulam Nuclear P.P.

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**Friends of Koodankulam Anti-Nuclear Movement
with
P.U.C.L. (Delhi)
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5th December, 2011

PRESS STATEMENT ON ONGOING PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE IN KODANKULAM IN TAMILNADU AGAINST PROPOSED NUCLEAR PLANT IN ORDER TO SAVE THEIR LIVELIHOOD, LIVES AND ENVIRONMENT.

We, members of Human Rights, Pro-Democratic activists and movements, have formed a group at Delhi under the name of "FRIENDS OF KODANKULAM ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT" in order to support the anti-nuclear movement of Koodankulam people in Tamilnadu to save their lives, their livelihood and priceless environment.

- The people of 32 villages surrounding Koodankulam under the name of People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) are protesting the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) and started their agitation on August 16, 2011 and have been sitting on relay fasting since September 11, 2011.
- This struggle is a collective of the communities of the districts of Thirunelveli, Kanyakumari and Tuticorin ; this is supported by the people of Tamilnadu. The various peoples' movements of Tamilnadu have been showing their solidarity by different agitations and demonstrations.
- In the wake of growing resentment and anger of the people of Tamilnadu against the proposed nuclear plant, the State Government passed a resolution on September 23, 2011 to halt the works of Koodankulam nuclear plant in support of the united voices of the Fishing community, the Nadar community, the Dalit community, the Muslim community and all other communities of the southern half of Tamil Nadu. The Struggle Committee met the Honorable Prime Minister to submit their demands.
- Former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam claims KKNPP is 100% safe, but nuclear accident liability does not cover the responsibility of 100%. Further no one on earth can ever guarantee that there would never be any human or mechanical failure or natural calamity like earthquake, tsunami leading to disastrous consequences relating to nuclear plants.
- The Expert Committee of 15 members appointed by government did not answer the crucial questions of people on Environmental Assessment Report, Seismology Reports, Earth and Soil Report, Plants construction Quality, Equipments and Machinery Quality, Nuclear Waste Management.

- The Department of Atomic Energy and the KKNPP project have not stopped their work but announced the scheduled date of commercial operation of first plant in March, 2012 the second plant in December, 2012. These announcements, ignoring the concern and voice of the people, have further angered them and added momentum to their struggle.
- The struggle of people is not an emotional one or not based on any unscientific fears but the culmination of well established facts supplied by the Pro-life scientists, environmentalists and International awareness about Nuclear Plants.
- The Nuclear Energy is not merely an issue of economy and development but a threat to the human existence and environment. Studies have shown that even nuclear reactors functioning in normal course are associated with higher risks of cancer and unexplained deaths. Fukushima disaster of Japan has shown that risks of nuclear power far outweigh any benefits claimed by pro-nuclear lobby. The struggle of the people of Koodankulam is not an isolated issue of a remote corner of India but a burning issue of our nation which needs immediate attention and concern.
- The police have registered 85 false cases against the leaders of this movement and village people under various penal laws. There is disturbing news published in the 'Express' dated 22nd Nov, 2011 that Police has registered cases against 3015 fishermen, including the leader Sp. Udaykumar, under section 121 i.e. for 'Waging of War against the State' and section 124-A i.e. 'Sedition' under Indian Penal Code besides under other penal laws for organizing their peaceful protests with black flags hoisted on their boats on the sea near the plant on 21st November, 2011 which in fact is 'World Fisheries Day' and fishermen decided to observe the same as Black Day as nuclear plant constitutes serious threat to marine wealth.
- Dr. Pugazhenthiraj, a gold medalist medical doctor, who has experience as a researcher into the medical effects of radiation and who has been educating and treating people around Kalpakkam area against such health hazards, was called by the local police on 1st December, 2011 and threatened that if he did not stop his work, he might be booked under the National Security Act or might be done away in a police encounter.

Koodankulam Nuclear Plant is a Violation of Human Rights

- There are many genuine and scientific reasons to oppose the Koodankulam Nuclear Plant but the foremost reason for the people's struggle is that Koodankulam Nuclear Project is a bundle of gross violations of the rules and regulation set by AERB (Atomic Energy Regulatory Board).
- The opinion of people should be assessed before planning of any nuclear plants but in Koodankulam there was no any Public Hearing conducted by the government.
- There is a norm to share the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Site Evaluation Study and Safety Analysis Report with the people, but these reports were not shared with the people of Koodankulam since the commencement of the project.
- The site selected for the nuclear project should not be located in the earth quake prone area but there happened 3 minor tremors in Koodankulam area since 2003.
- The consequences of any Nuclear Plants should not create any damage to the resources of people's life but the Koodankulam Nuclear Plant will damage the coastal ecosystem and destroy the species of fishes and marine organisms by its radioactive water waste. It will destroy the life source of the fisher folk of this area. Atomic Scientists of India do not have alternative to this destructive process. And the emission of radioactive particles of iodine and cesium will create cancer and deformations of

body by genetic mutation to the people of this area.

- The regulation says that there should not be any habitations within the radius of 1.6 km around plant but in Koodankulam the habitation begins within the radius of .5 km. The norm says that the population of the area within the radius of 3 km should not exceed 5000 but the population around Koodankulam is above 33,000.
- The rule says that to facilitate the evacuation process during nuclear accidents the population within the radius of 30 km around the plant should be lesser than 1, 00,000 but the population of the area around Koodankulam is above 30, 00,000. According to the AERB the plant should not be located near any city or tourist places but very near to Koodankulam there are the town named Nagarcoil and a place of religious pilgrimage named Kanyakumari and the world famous Vivekananda Kendra.
- The government of India had announced the construction of 2 plants in the initial stage of the project but there is one more announcement about the construction of 4 more plants with US technology. The Ministry of Environment did not issue the approval to these new plants under norms of the Costal Regulation Zone (CRZ) ; hence it is evident that the 2 ongoing plants are also being constructed in violation of CRZ. The new Nuclear Liability Bill exempts the nuclear energy corporate and the operators from the liability of nuclear plant accidents which proves that the lives and livelihood of people are completely ignored by the Government of India in the name of development.

We are alarmed by the aforesaid undemocratic attitude and repressive mood of the State authorities in dealing with peaceful protests of the people who are genuinely concerned about their future, livelihood and environment. We appeal to the people of India to show their solidarity and support to this struggle and mobilize the democratic forces to pressure our state to deal this issue with humane approach and protect the life, livelihood and environment.

Demands :

- Central Government should immediately shut down the KKNPP and save life and livelihood of people.
- State should immediately withdraw all false cases against struggle organizers and village people lodged under various penal laws.
- Governments should plan to utilize the natural resources like sun, air and water of India to generate energy

(Statement issued in the Press Conference at Press Club, New Delhi on 5th December, 2011 and addressed by Justice Rajinder Sachhar (Retd.), former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, Mr. Vaiko, General Secretary, M.D.M.K. and Mr. R. Sreedhar, Chairperson, Mines, Minerals & People and formerly employed in the Dept. of Atomic Energy, Govt. of India.)

N.D.Pancholi,
Convener

Malathi Maithri,
Secretary

Radhika Krishnan,
Secretary

