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0430HIND
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India: Show down over the right to feed oneself in Kashipur, Orissa

The Chief Minister of Orissa plans to inaugurate the Utkal Alumina International Limited (UAIL) plant in January 2005. Many victims of Kashipur and the areas affected by the proposed mining project have been protesting against UAIL for more than 12 years now. Since December 1, 2004 the police have unleashed brutal attack and repression of all those protesting the mining project. The UAIL project will destroy the tribals' livelihoods and the livelihoods of generations to come leading to widespread hunger and malnutrition.

International action is urgently needed to halt the state repression of the peaceful protest against mining in Kashipur and to safeguard the right of the tribals to the land and forests, which is their major source of livelihood. Please write polite letters to the Chief Minister of Orissa with a copy to the Prime Minister and President of India, requesting them to put an immediate stop to the intimidation and repression of the tribals and respect and protect their right to feed themselves.

Profile

The East Indian state of Orissa is very rich in mineral resources and the government of Orissa has welcomed corporations to exploit the state's huge mineral wealth. One such mining project is proposed in Kashipur, Orissa by Utkal Alumina International Limited (UAIL). UAIL is a joint venture of the Aditya Birla Group and Alcan, a Canadian mining company. Norsk Hydro, a Norwegian company that had a stake in UAIL in 2000 withdrew from the project following criticism in Norway for its complicity in human rights abuses in Kashipur. The tribals of Kashipur have been opposing the establishment of the proposed 100 percent export-oriented alumina project and the peoples' protest has successfully kept UAIL from mining Baphlimali (a mountain held sacred by local tribals) for 12 years now.

Since December 1, 2004, the state has launched a campaign to repress the tribals, their leaders and key supporters of anti-mining protests. A massive police operation has been launched to terrorise the tribals and their supporters into allowing the bauxite mining and alumina refining project to come up in Kashipur. The police have also laid



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siege to a group tribal villages around Kashipur and all entry into and exit from the Kashipur villages have been barred. The police have reportedly resorted to indiscriminate and unprovoked physical violence against the tribal residents and everyone protesting the mining project. On December 1, 2004, a peaceful gathering of about 300 tribal and other protestors, predominantly women, were beaten with sticks. The increase in police violence and state repression is in preparation for a January inauguration of Utkal's project complex in D. Karal village .

The UAIL project will displace and alienate the tribals from their land and lead to the destruction of the fertile agricultural land, forests, perennial water-streams, the very basis of their livelihoods and livelihoods for generations to come. Around 20,000 people will be affected in 82 villages. Mining in Orissa is proceeding without the consent of the people who will be affected. If the government succeeds in inaugurating the project in January 2005 it will be a major setback for the people's struggle to defend their right to feed themselves.

FIAN Mandate

As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, India and therefore the state of Orissa is duty bound under international law to respect and protect the people's right to feed themselves. Alienation of the people from their land will threaten their right to feed themselves. Moreover future generations' food producing resources in the area will be destroyed. FIAN has launched actions repeatedly to support the cause of those struggling against the state and the mining corporations for their right to feed themselves. Your participation in the action will be invaluable. Kindly send your protest letters and contribute to the struggle for the right to food.

End of Action 28.02.2005

Addresses:

Shri Naveen Patnaik Chief Minister of Orissa Naveen Nivas, Aerodrome Road, Bhubaneswar 751001 Orissa, India Fax: +91-674-2535100, 2400100	Dr. Manmohan Singh Prime Minister of India, Room 152, South Block, New Delhi - 110001 Fax: +91-11-23016857
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Please keep FIAN International Secretariat informed of any responses you receive.



Shri Naveen Patnaik
Chief Minister of Orissa
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Dear Mr. Chief Minister,

Recently I received the troubling news about the constant police repression in the Kashipur mining area of Orissa. There have been large scale attacks on and arrests of protestors including tribals, who have been protesting against the Utkal Alumina International Limited's (UAIL) proposed alumina project in Kashipur, Orissa.

The tribals have been protesting against the UAIL project for atleast last 12 years, signalling that they do not want the mining project on their land, which is at the cost of the complete destruction of their livelihood. The UAIL project will displace and alienate the tribals from their land and lead to the destruction of the fertile agricultural land, forests, perennial water-streams, the very basis of their livelihoods and the livelihoods for generations to come. Around 20,000 people will be affected in 82 villages.

It was also brought to my attention that on December 1, 2004, the police used violence against those participating in a peaceful gathering to protest the mining project. The police have resorted to beating protestors with sticks and detaining and arresting them without provocation. In December 2000, under similar circumstances of repressive police measures against the anti-mining protesters, three tribals were killed in the unjustified and unprovoked police firing in Maikanch.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, India and therefore the state of Orissa is duty bound under international law to respect and protect the people's right to feed themselves. In the light of these obligations I am concerned about your plans to inaugurate the UAIL plant in January 2005, and I am very worried about your recent statements in the media indicating your disrespect for the economic, social and cultural rights of the project affected people. Let me remind you Mr Chief Minister that "people's progress" is never achieved by violating people's human rights, and that "industrialization" is unacceptable if it does not take place with the informed consent of the affected people. You and the state of Orissa are violating the people's right to feed themselves.

As a person working internationally for the right to feed oneself, I would, like to ask you Mr. Chief Minister to:

1. Reconsider the inauguration of the UAIL plant and ensure the tribals' right to feed themselves including access to land, forests and water is respected and protected.
2. Put an immediate stop to all intimidation and harassment of the tribals and other peaceful protestors, and stop besieging the villages of the proposed mining site.
3. Release all the arrested anti-mining protestors immediately and take immediate action against the police officers and officials involved in the harassment and brutal repression of the peaceful protestors.

Please inform me of the measures you intend to take on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

