



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

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To,
Sri Tarun Gogoi
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam
Guwahati

Sub : With regard to police action against KMSS activists and their continued harassment

Respected Shri Gogoi,

Greetings !

We are extremely concerned and pained to learn of the brutal police action on the peacefully protesting members of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), a member the National Alliance of People's Movements, which is an alliance of non-violent people's struggles against injustice and inequity.

We convey our serious condemnation of the high handed behaviour of the district administration who fired in the air, used tear gas and lathi charged the peaceful protesters when they had gone to submit a memorandum on the issues of mega dams, PDS anomalies and NREGA implementation at Dhemaji District Commissioner's office on March 29th.

We have come to learn that atleast 50 persons were injured and 23 admitted to hospital, of who two are in critical condition. The district KMSS president has been also been arrested and slapped with various false non-bailable cases.

We have also learnt of the false accusations against the KMSS general secretary, Akhil Gogoi, of being a 'Maoist' and having links with such groups. This is nothing but vilification of human rights workers and those using the democratic norms to challenge the government's inaction, destructive development policies, corruption in various programmes etc. The KMSS' stand has been supported by the likes of Bhuban Pegu, MLA from Jonai — who too has been accused of having Maoist links. This too is condemnable. You might be aware that Mr. Gogoi was recently presented the first National RTI activist award by Honourable Vice-President for his pioneering work in promoting the use of RTI Act for better governance and democratic control of resources and checking corruption.

We would like to reiterate what the KMSS Memorandum appealed to you that the State Government go for a serious policy intervention in matters of the mega dams. If the proposed 168 mega dams are allowed to come up in Arunachal Pradesh, this will ruin the farmers of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts and Sadiya subdivision of the State. These dams are also going to threaten the complete ecology and geographical sensitivity of the region.

We believe KMSS represents state's most backward, deprived, exploited and poorest of the poor agriculturists and the labour class people and have been organising them for their rights in most peaceful and democratic ways. KMSS have grown from strength to strength, unearthing many a scam and forcing action

to be taken against the guilty. It is the success of the movement that KMSS and Akhil Gogoi has become a threat, not only to the corrupt and powerful, but also to the district administration.

We demand the atrocities and harassments meted out to Mr. Akhil Gogoi and KMSS activists stop immediately and actions be taken against the guilty officials. The labeling of social activists as Maoists is a ploy to divert people's attention from the misdeeds of the political-administrative system by tarnishing the image of those who raise uncomfortable questions. In a democracy we all have the right to peaceful protest and it is our fundamental duty to contribute to better governance and expose corruption within the government and struggle for people oriented and sustainable development policies. KMSS and Mr. Gogoi are fulfilling that constitutional duty and need to be supported and encouraged from the government and not harassment.

We do hope that you will take necessary action against erring officials, provide relief to those injured, and withdraw all false charges.

With Regards,

Medha Patkar

Sandeep Pandey

Maj. Gen (Retd.) Sudhir Vombatkere

D.Gabriele

Vimal Bhai

Anand Mazgaonkar

Madhuresh Kumar

(THIS LETTER IS ELECTRONICALY SIGNED)