

Uchedh Pratirodh Committee – Nonadanga, Kolkata

The incident

On 30th March, the present TMC-led West Bengal government, its administration and police have demolished our temporary shanties with their bulldozers, set fire to them and tried to evict us from the area. We tried twice to organize peaceful sit-in protests and demonstrations in the nearby Ruby Hospital crossing to publicly highlight our condition and demand our legitimate right to housing. Instead of listening to our concerns, on 4th April, police forcefully broke and dispersed the gathering by rampant lathicharge; some plain-clothes personnel also pounced on the unarmed women. Though majority of the protesters were women, no women cops were present at the site. Police kicked Rita Patra, a twenty-one year old woman in advanced pregnancy, nor did they spare two-and-half year old Joy Paswan, whose head was hit with lathi. Many of the injured were taken to the Calcutta Medical College, where some of them were admitted. And the second demonstration on 8th April was nipped at its bud when police arrested majority of the protesters and whisked them away to Kolkata police headquarter (Lalbazar). ***Late in the night, the protesters were released except seven of them, who were produced in the court and charged with various false and ridiculous charges including illegal gathering, illegal possession of weapons etc. All of these seven people are from different democratic organizations and individuals who came in support for us.*** To make matters worse, a section of the media, especially the ones loyal to the ruling party, are continuously branding the protesters as 'Maoists' and cooking up entirely distorted stories, to the point of being preposterous. The arrested seven were remanded to three days of police custody till the 12th; in the next hearing, they were sent to jail custody up to 26th April. One of the seven has been charged under UAPA and sent to CID custody till 21st April. Surprisingly, about forty lawyers, allegedly having allegiance to the ruling party stood against the accused in the courtroom along with the public prosecutor. To add to the instances of virtual clampdown, unprecedented in recent times, police again arrested about seventy protesters on April 9th they were about to start their protest march from the College Street square. On 12th April, the Trinamool Congress goons again attacked a group of civil rights activists belonging to APDR when they tried to organize a protest rally from Hazra more to the Alipore court where the hearing session of the seven arrested were scheduled on that day. However, the police stood as a mute spectator and instead faithfully arrested the injured activists! The point here to be noted is that these are

Uchhed Pratirodh Committee – Nonadanga, Kolkata

common locations in the city for taking out processions of various political parties and none of them has Section 144 imposed on them.

Current State of affairs

We are fighting on resolutely against all the odds, even after our homes were razed to the ground and gutted with fire. We have built temporary shelters with tarpaulin sheets, set up a ***community kitchen*** for the displaced families, set up night vigilant groups to protect against sudden attacks by police and TMC goons. In protest against the continuous atrocities and virtual clampdown by the administration on every sort of protest activities, ***we finally resorted to an indefinite hunger strike in the demolition site***. Seven of us from Noanadanga along with one of our friends Amitava Bhattacharya are in an indefinite hunger strike since 10th April. The hunger strike is going on despite repeated threats of attack by the local TMC goons, who are taking out processions around the site making overt threats; there is also an impending threat of eviction by the police forces, who are maintaining an outpost nearby.

Extended your support

We know that our present Chief Minister's much hyped dream of turning Kolkata into London is nothing but the same policy of 'development' in the interest of the rich and well-connected in the garb of pro-people, populist rhetoric as that already practiced by the previous Left Front rule in Singur and Nandigram. The Land Revenue Department had acquired lands around the Nonadanga region about twenty five years ago to distribute them among the poor homeless people of the city, a small portion of which has been used to construct housing for the rehabilitation of people evicted from different areas. But we are daily reduced to desperation, seeing this meager land under our feet steadily sold off in phases to different companies and real estate companies for the last few years. And now, even the little we are left with is in the process of being snatched away from us, only so that the eastern metropolitan bypass behind glitzy corporate hospitals, offices and malls shines without the smell of our existence. Our struggle is then up against these well-connected big players who want to shape the metropolis according to their interests, and we find that the government is daily acting on their behalf with ever more repressive measures on us.

We need your support to continue our movement against eviction and also to provide legal support to the group of people arrested during the movement.

Contact: Parag (+91-9804468173), email: nonadanga.uchhed@gmail.com

Uchhed Pratirodh Committee – Nonadanga, Kolkata

People arrested

1. Samik Chakraborty
2. Partha Sarathi Ray
3. Manas Chatterjee
4. Avijnan Sarkar
5. Siddhartha Gupta
6. Debalina Chakraborty
7. Debjani Ghosh

People participating in hunger strike

1. Rajkumar Naskar
2. Buhuvusan Naskar
3. Sanjay Sarkar
4. Lakhindar Haldar
5. AnoyarMandal
6. Malabika Das
7. Amitabha
Bhattacharjee

Extend your support to Nonadanga anti-eviction movement