

URGENT ACTION

DOCTOR AT RISK FOR WARNING OF RADIATION HARM

A community medical doctor from Tamil Nadu in southern India, Dr V Pugazhendhi, is facing detention without charge and trial and death threats from the police, because he has warned people of the harmful health impacts of radiation from nuclear installations.

On the evening of 1 December, **Dr V Pugazhendhi** was summoned to the police station in Puduppattinam, a town in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, 50 km from Chennai city. The police informed him that they were investigating a complaint against him made by the chief of a local elected body. The chief had complained to the police that Dr Pugazhendhi had threatened to murder him if he did not join ongoing protests against nuclear installations in Tamil Nadu. When Dr Pugazhendhi denied this allegation, the police bluntly told him that, if he continued to highlight the harmful effects of radiation on the health of local communities, he would either be killed in a staged encounter with the police or detained for a year under the National Security Act (NSA).

For more than two decades, Dr Pugazhendhi has been highlighting the potential harmful effects on the health of local marginalized communities of radiation from India's nuclear power plants and installations in Kalpakkam, a town near Puduppattinam. His surveys brought to light higher incidences of various types of cancer among the area's population and of genetic disorders among the area's children including polydactyly (presence of more than five fingers/toes in each hand/foot). Dr Pugazhendhi has stated that such abnormalities are due to radiation releases which are above the internationally acceptable safety levels, constituting a violation of the local communities' right to health. Dr Pugazhendhi is also a part of a "people's expert panel" demanding more information on two Russian-built nuclear power plants at Kudankulam, 450 km south of Chennai city, against which local communities have organized a three month long peaceful protest. He says India's nuclear authorities are perturbed by his persistent campaign and are unwilling to release this information in full.

Amnesty International believes that the threats faced by Dr Pugazhendhi are meant to silence his ongoing campaign demanding more information on the Kalpakkam and Kudankulam nuclear installations and the strict enforcement of national and international safety standards.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urging the Indian authorities to immediately halt the threats against Dr V Pugazhendhi and ensure his safety;
- Calling for them to take all necessary measures to guarantee that those campaigning for Tamil Nadu's marginalized communities' right to health and information are able to carry out their legitimate and peaceful human rights activities without fear of harassment and intimidation.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JANUARY 2012 TO:

Prime Minister of India
Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
South Block, Raisina Hill
New Delhi 110 00, India
Fax : +91 11 2301 7931
+91 11 23019545

Email: Through the site:

<http://pmindia.nic.in/feedback.htm>

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister
Ms.J. Jayalalitha
Fort St George
Chennai 600 009
India
Email: cmcell@tn.gov.in
Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

Name: Dr V Pugazhendhi

Gender m/f: male

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