

URGENT ACTION

ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTORS ARRESTED IN INDIA

The police in Tamil Nadu state, India are cracking down on those engaged in year-long peaceful protests against a nuclear power plant project in Kudankulam. Since 9 September, more than 25 protestors have been arrested, and many others face imminent arrest.

The police in Tamil Nadu have responded to peaceful protests against the commissioning of the nuclear power station with force. Of the more than 1,000 protestors, 53 face sedition charges and imminent arrest (including the key leaders of the movement **Dr S.P. Udayakumar** and **M. Pushparayan**). If convicted of these charges, they could face life imprisonment. More than 25 protestors including four boys (under 18 years of age) have been arrested and charged with offences including sedition and rioting.

For more than a year, local residents have protested against the commissioning of the nuclear power station because they believe the power plant poses a danger to local communities. They fear that the site will affect at least 15,000 people living nearby. On 9 September, the protest intensified. Protestors began to march towards the site of the nuclear reactor, in response to which the police fired tear gas shells and beat protesters with *lathis* (batons). Eyewitnesses said that on 10 September, more than 1,500 police officials beat unarmed protestors in Idinthakarai, Tamil Nadu, resulting in injuries to about 60 protestors including a child. Some protestors responded to the police violence by throwing sand and stones. One person was killed when police fired at protestors at Manappad, Tamil Nadu and three media workers sustained injuries during the police action at Idinthakarai and neighbouring villages. Authorities have issued fresh warrants for the arrest of Dr S.P. Udayakumar and M. Pushparayan.

On 11–12 September, police continued to assault more protestors in at least three coastal villages and forcibly evicted at least 500 protestors from the protest venue at Idinthakarai. They also desecrated the St Lourdes Church at Idinthakarai, burned boats and motorcycles belonging to residents of the village, and looted property.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on the Indian authorities to not arrest peaceful protestors, including the leaders of the movement Dr S.P. Udayakumar and M. Pushparayan, and to drop any false charges against them;
- Calling on the Indian authorities to release all peaceful protestors currently in detention;
- Calling on the Indian authorities to respect the protestors' rights to freedom of expression and assembly in accordance with India's obligations under international law.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 OCTOBER 2012 TO:

Prime Minister of India
 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
 South Block, Raisina Hill
 New Delhi 110 00, India
 Fax: +91 11 2301 7931
 Email through website:
<http://pmindia.nic.in/feedback.php>
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

Solidarity messages may be sent to:
People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy
 Dr S. P. Udayakumar
 Idinthakarai PO 627104
 Tamil Nadu, India

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the sixth update of UA 367/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/021/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The People's Movement against Nuclear Energy has been leading the protests against the commissioning of the nuclear power plant since July 2011. Kudankulam's neighbouring villages were hit by the tsunami that struck South and South-East Asia in December 2004, and local residents are fearful of a radioactive leak if such a disaster strikes again.

Dr S.P. Udayakumar states that the expert panel established by the Indian authorities to conduct a safety assessment for the project has failed to respond satisfactorily to several site and safety concerns raised by an independent group of experts.

Name: Dr S.P. Udayakumar, M. Pushparayan

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 367/11 Index: ASA 20/033/12 Issue Date: 19 September 2012