

# URGENT ACTION

## TAMIL NADU DOCTOR NO LONGER AT RISK

**A community doctor from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, Dr V Pugazhendhi, who had warned people of the harmful effects of radiation from nuclear installations, now says he no longer faces a threat to his life from the police or the prospect of detention without charge.**

The local police at the Tamil Nadu town of Puduppattinam, 50 km from Chennai city, had summoned **Dr V Pugazhendhi** and threatened that he would either be killed in a staged encounter with the police or detained for a year under the National Security Act (NSA) if he continued to highlight the harmful effects of radiation on the health of local communities.

Amnesty International believes that these threats were meant to silence his campaign demanding more information on the Kalpakkam and Kudankulam nuclear installations, and the strict enforcement of national and international safety standards.

Thanking Amnesty International for issuing the Urgent Action, Dr V Pugazhendhi said he was able to continue his campaign.

For more than two decades, Dr V 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 (birth with additional fingers or toes). Dr V Pugazhendhi has said that such abnormalities are due to radiation releases which are above internationally accepted safety levels, constituting a violation of the local communities' right to health.

Dr V 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 now been protesting peacefully for seven months.

**No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**

This is the first update of UA 350/11. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/ASA20/049/2011/en](http://www.amnesty.org/ASA20/049/2011/en)

Name: Dr V Pugazhendhi  
Gender m/f: m

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