

# URGENT ACTION

## TAMIL NADU PROTESTORS FACE IMMINENT ARREST

**At least 330 people who have been on hunger strike in protest against a nuclear power plant project in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu face imminent arrest, after police issued orders prohibiting the protest and surrounded their village.**

The peaceful protestors, including more than 300 women, have been on hunger strike against the Kudankulam nuclear power plant project since 1 May. This is part of ongoing protests against the project during the past 10 months. They could be arrested at any time after the Tamil Nadu police issued orders prohibiting the assembly of more than four people within seven km of the project site and surrounded their coastal village of Idinthakarai.

In March 2012, more than 180 people were arrested for protesting against the nuclear power plant and all but two were released within a month. Some of the protestors, led by teacher **Dr S P Udayakumar**, already face charges of sedition (crimes against the state), waging war against the state, conspiracy and rioting with deadly weapons for their involvement in the protests, and if convicted of these charges they could face sentences as high as life imprisonment. Amnesty International believes the charges are false, and constitute a deliberate attempt by the authorities to silence the protests.

The protestors are members of the People's Movement against Nuclear Energy (PMANE). They have been campaigning against plans for commissioning a Russian-built nuclear power plant next to the coastal village of Kudankulam, because they believe it poses a danger to local communities, especially after the serious problems caused by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami at the Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan. They fear that the site will affect at least 15,000 people living nearby.

Dr Udayakumar informed Amnesty International that the police, who have surrounded Idinthakarai village, were not allowing visitors to enter the village and meet with the protestors or allowing the villagers to leave.

### **Please write immediately in English or your own language:**

- Calling on the Indian authorities not to arrest the peaceful protestors and drop any false charges against them;
- Calling on the Indian authorities to release the two remaining peaceful protestors currently in detention;
- Calling on the Indian authorities to immediately end restrictions on the freedom of movement of those seeking to enter or exit Idinthakarai village and respect the protestors' rights to freedom of expression and assembly in accordance with India's obligations under international law.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 JUNE 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](mailto: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 fourth update of UA 367/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/016/2012/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 for 10 months. 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 Udayakumar states that the expert panel established by the Indian authorities to conduct a safety assessment for the project had failed to respond satisfactorily to several site and safety concerns raised by an independent group of experts.

Name: Dr S P Udayakumar (m), and at least 330 others

Gender m/f: Around 30 male and 300 female

Further information on UA: 367/11 Index: ASA 20/020/2012 Issue Date: 11 May 2012