

URGENT ACTION

TWO ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTORS IN INDIA DETAINED

Two people detained for participating in ongoing protests against a Russian-built nuclear power plant project in Kudankulam, in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, have been served with additional orders which could result in their detention up to a year.

On 3 November, police went to Vellore Central Prison in Tamil Nadu and served orders to **Lourdesamy** (68) and **Nazarin** (40) under a state security legislation, which provides for their detention without charge or trial up to a year. Both protestors are from the coastal village of Idinthakarai, which has been at the centre of 18-month-long protests, and have been detained since 10 September. They face several charges including defying restrictions on size of gatherings, rioting with deadly weapons, and attempting to assault public servants.

During the latest round of protests on 9 and 10 September, the police responded with force when hundreds of protestors marched towards the project site. They reportedly fired tear gas shells at peaceful protestors and baton-charged them. Some 60 protestors were injured, including a child. Some protestors reportedly responded to the police violence by throwing sand and stones. Additionally, one person was shot dead by police firing on protestors in Manappad village; three media workers sustained injuries during the subsequent police action in Idinthakarai, from which the police evicted 500 protestors after burning their vehicles and looting their property.

In all, the police have arrested 49 male and seven female protestors. Charges against them included defying restrictions on size of gatherings, rioting with deadly weapons, and attempting to assault public servants. Local courts ordered the release on bail of 13 men and four women; five have now been released on bail.

Of the more than 1,000 protestors who have been charged with various offences during 2011–2012, 53 face sedition charges and imminent arrest. This includes **Dr S.P. Udayakumar** and **M. Pushparayan** – key leaders of the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) which is spearheading the peaceful protests. If convicted of these charges, they could face life imprisonment.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Expressing concern that Lourdesamy and Nazarin are arbitrarily detained in violation of international human rights treaties which India is obliged to respect;
- Calling on the Indian and Tamil Nadu authorities to release Lourdesamy and Nazarin, unless they are charged with internationally recognisable offences, remanded by an independent court and tried in fair proceedings;
- Calling on them to not arrest peaceful protestors, including PMANE leaders Dr S.P. Udayakumar and M. Pushparayan, and to drop any unsubstantiated charges against them.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 DECEMBER 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 seventh update of UA 367/11. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/033/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PMANE 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 set up by the Indian authorities to conduct a safety assessment, which declared the site safe, has failed to satisfactorily address several site and safety concerns raised by an independent group of experts.

The protests intensified after the March 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan and the protestors believe the project threatens local communities. They fear that the site will affect at least 15,000 people living nearby.

Name: Lourdeswamy, Nazarin, Dr S.P. Udayakumar, M. Pushparayan
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 367/11 Index: ASA 20/038/2012 Issue Date: 6 November 2012