

# NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

Press Release, August 9, 2010

*\* Demand Immediate Repeal of Land Acquisition Act and Special Economic Zone Act*

- *Peoples Movements Organise Rasta Roko (Road Blockades), Dharna, Public Meetings, Human Chains, Effigy Burning, Long Marches across the country and declare "We Want Development not Destruction".*

**August 9th 2010, Quit India Day** : 68 years ago on this day all across India people took to street and gave final ultimatum to the British Government and sought independence from their control and resolved to establish people's control over the resources of the country. Today in a bitter irony, the same Congress Party using the draconian and colonial law Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and SEZ Act of 2005 is handing over the land, rivers, forests, minerals to the corporations public and private (national and International) for mining, big dams, thermal, nuclear and other power projects, SEZs, highways, ports, airports etc. in complete violation of peoples' constitutional and natural rights. LAA and SEZ Act have not only displaced people across rural and urban India, ruined fertile agricultural lands, destroyed forests and fisheries, but also destroyed adivasi-dalit lives, livelihoods and their culture around the country. How can Indian law, the executive and judiciary side with these criminal corporations and private interests in this oppression and exploitation?

Our government is guilty of crimes and bloodshed in the process of establishing numerous colonies of Tatas, Birlas, Ambanis, Mittals, POSCO, Vedanta, Nagrajunas, L&T, NTPC, ONGC, Dow, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Infosys and many other corporations. They exploit these colonies, export ores and products to their factories in India or outside at dirt cheap rates, pocket the large profit in the name of serving public interest and enslaven a large working population and displace billion in this process from their homes and fields. And our government and the elected representatives have become their agents facilitating the process of colonization and exploitation and in turn filling their own coffers at a huge price to the nation.

**In continuing with the struggle against all forms of injustice, exploitation of human and natural resources by these capitalist and imperialist corporations peoples movements celebrate this day today with a nationwide call for challenging the might of the government and these corporations and launch a renewed struggle for freedom from Corporations.** The call was issued on April 20th from Delhi after carrying out social audit of SEZs in states of Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Northern region called for an all India action day on 9th August with the purpose of declaring ultimatum to corporations and to reclaim the rights of community over the natural resources.

In **Maharashtra** Jagtikikaran Virodhi Kriti Samiti (JVKS), Ghar Bahcaho Ghar Banao Andolan, Ekveera Gaon Bachao Andolan and National Alliance of

People's Movements (NAPM) organized rasta roko (road blockades), dharna, public meetings, human chains, effigy burning, long marches at Gorai Naka (Esselworld SEZ), August Kranti Maidan Mumbai, Vashi Naka, Pen , Raigad (Maha Mumbai SEZ), Karla phata, Lonawala (Karla SEZ), Nagpur, Sinner, Aurangabad, Bhiwandi, Rajguru Nagar against numerous SEZs and other projects. More than 1000 villagers gathered in a day long demo cum public meeting and burning of draconian laws was organized by Sirappu Porulaadhara Mandalam Edirippu Iyaikam and NAPM-TN in Dharmapuri District of Tamilnadu where 3 panchayats will loose their agriculture land to SIPCOT.

In **Uttar Pradesh** at Mau, Devariya, Kushinagar (where 1200 people gathered to opposed the Special Religious Zone under Maitrey project) and Mehndiganj (against Coca-Cola Factory) Aashaparivar and NAPM organized protest meetings and burned the copies of the LAA and SEZ Act and an effigy of Chief Minister Mayawati. In Madhya Pradesh too at Chutkha village, Dist. Mandla (against the proposed nuclear power plant) and at Jhansighat, dist Narsinghpur (against the proposed Today Energy Homes power plant) protest meeting was organized and copy of the Acts was burned by Chutkha Parmanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti and Kishan Sangathan respectively.

In **Mundra**, Gujarat Machimar Adhikar Sangharsh Sangathan (MASS), Gujarat also organized a meeting and burnt the said Acts. At Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh NAPM – AP organized a day long meeting, burnt the copies of the Acts and submitted memorandum to the District Collector opposing proposed power plants and chemical hubs in the region. In addition similar programmes have been held in Bhubaneshwar, Orissa, Rajasthan and other states of the country today.

In **West Bengal** members of NAPM – WB and other members of the Forum for Peace and Democracy movement groups, intellectuals marched to the Lalgah in defiance of the continued imposition of Section 144 and atrocities on their Adivasis of the Jangmahal region. There has been an ongoing repression in the region by the para-military forces in the name of combating the violence unleashed by Left-wing Extremist forces, but causing immense difficulties to the adivasis of the region. More than 10000 people assembled and appealed for peace from both sides. Medha Patkar led the march which also demanded repeal of the Land Acquisition Act.

In **Delhi** NAPM and Delhi Solidarity Group organised a protest and cultural evening at Jantar Mantar and also burned the copies of the Bills and in Kanjhawala villages famers under the banner of Bhoomi Bachao Andolan organized a day long protest meeting and challenged the Delhi government to acquire any further land for the DSIDC project.

An open challenge to the eminent domain of the government and authority of the corporations has been posed and with that a call and struggle for independence is launched. The movements have vowed that the struggle and sacrifice of the people in Kalinga Nagar, Kashipur, Nandigram, Singur, Narmada, Raigarh, Mundra, Sompeta and many other places will not be allowed to go waste.

**The immediate demands expressed from all over the country are :**

1. **REPEAL** Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and Special Economic Zone Act 2005.
2. **NOT** pass the proposed Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill and Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill in their current form in the Parliament. UPA attempted this towards the end of the 14th Lok Sabha and also on the last day of the Monsoon Session in 2009 in an extremely secretive manner without any debate and adequate prior information.
3. **ENACT** a National Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation Act based on the Draft National Development, Displacement, and Rehabilitation Policy passed by the National Advisory Council in 2006 and incorporating the progressive elements of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2007-08) enunciating the principle of least displacement, just rehabilitation and a decentralized development planning based on Article 243 of the Constitution, PESA 1996 and Forest Rights Act, 2006.
4. **ISSUE** a White Paper on all the land acquisitions, displacement caused and rehabilitation completed since independence. The White Paper must also make public the extent of land utilized, unutilized and land acquired for public purpose but remains occupied by sick and non-functional industries and other infrastructure projects.
5. **MAKE PUBLIC** the details of the MoUs signed by the Government of India and the state Governments with different private and public corporations, companies and others, which have land acquisition requirements and hold public dialogue - especially with affected people.

*We Shall Fight ! We Shall Win ! Ladenge ! Zeetenge !*

*Zindabaad ! Zindabaad Zindabaad !*

***Medha Patkar (in Lalgarh), Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey (in Rajasthan), Ulka Mahajan, Suniti S R and Mukta Shrivastava (in Maharashtra), Usha Seetalakshmi and Ramakrishna Raju (in Andhra Pradesh), Madhumita Dutta and Gabriele Dietrich (in Tamil Nadu), Arvind Murthy (UP), Rajkumar Sinha (in MP), Prafulla Samantara (in Orissa), Bhupendra Rawat and Vijayan M J (in Delhi) and Bharat Patel (in Gujarat)***

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