



CALL FOR JUSTICE

To the Sardar Sarovar Dam Oustees in India

An Appeal to the Government of India, the United Nations, & its allies to review the Narmada mega-dam project & adhere to binding human rights norms

We, the undersigned recipients of the Right Livelihood Award, (*also known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize"*) stand united in our opposition to the unlawful submergence of 244 villages and one township by flooding caused by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. We firmly uphold the inviolable human rights and environmental justice for thousands of families in the Narmada Valley.

For over two decades, we have been observing with immense concern the developments around the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), which has disastrous implications for the sustenance of indigenous communities in the Narmada Valley and that of other riverine populations, which have, for centuries, built flourishing lives and livelihoods around the Narmada River.

We have also expressed serious concern over the colossal harm caused, and to be caused, by the SSP and other dam projects on the rich, yet fragile, ecosystem of the Valley, in particular, submergence of the most fertile agricultural land, dense forest, and tree cover, and the destruction of cultural monuments and archaeology of this oldest of civilizations in the world.

We have watched and welcomed the withdrawal of the World Bank from the Project in 1993, owing to a comprehensive review and a realization that mitigation of environmental losses and rehabilitation, on the scale required, is next to impossible. That assessment has come true, warning the world, including us, about the great human tragedy set to unfold in the Narmada.

We have also witnessed the people's resistance to the progressive raising of the height of SSP, without adhering to the binding commitments under Indian and international law to safeguard and rehabilitate the affected farmers, fish workers, and potters from unlawful submergence, displacement, and pauperization. The resultant rehabilitation of about 10,000 families has been welcome, but the scale of the still pending R&R of more than 40,000 families is massive, as cultivable farm land, house sites, civic amenities, fishing rights, livelihood sources, and so on, are yet to be ensured.

We are therefore appalled that while the glaring backlog of rehabilitation of thousands of families remains unattended, the Indian government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has always championed the Dam height increase and never the cause of the displaced, has taken a decision to increase the height of SSP by 17 meters up to its final height of 138.68 meters, posing grave threat to the lives and livelihoods of all these families.

We are also deeply concerned that the dilution of R&R norms and cash payments in the past decade has not worked out in the interest of a majority of oustees, the indigenous, and the non-literate. Rather, an ensuing saga of corruption has been unearthed. The in-depth investigation by a Judicial Commission is revealing; it serves as a reminder of the 'go-slow' tactic of the government, which is simply awaiting the Commission's findings.

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We hold that the decision to raise the height of SSP and displace thousands of families, without lawful rehabilitation and recognition of their land and livelihood ownership and livelihood rights under the recently enacted Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 is not only a serious violation of the law of the land and the judgments of the Supreme Court of India, but also a transgression of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention, 1989, of ILO.

We are also deeply disturbed by reports that the canal-work in Gujarat is lagging far behind, indicating that there is no urgency in reservoir filling. However, the decision to prioritize allocation of dam water and beneficiary land to national and international corporations is a deviation of the Award, project-commitments, as well as public interest.

- **We, therefore, call upon the Government of India to immediately halt the ongoing construction of the Project, and not to put up gates on the Sardar Sarovar Dam, since the urgency for a review of the actual status of rehabilitation and environmental compliance seems more necessary at this stage. Such a review must involve all the concerned government agencies, the UNHRC, representatives of the people's movement in the Valley raising the cause of displaced over the past 3 decades, member of the civil society, experts, & independent social & human rights bodies.**
- **We, being aware of the rising water levels, and that hundreds of people are ready to face the waters, appeal to the conscience of the concerned citizens and organizations to immediately recognize the grave violations and ensure that the Constitution of India, and national and international law, is not transgressed.**
- **We urge the United Nations, and in particular the UNHCR, International Labour Organization, and various UN human rights bodies to facilitate a comprehensive review of the Project, especially the social and environmental impacts and compliance, at the earliest, in the human interest. We urge these agencies to send their Special Rapporteurs on Housing Rights, Human Rights, Internal Displacement, Rights of Indigenous Communities and UNWOMEN to visit the affected areas of Sardar Sarovar Project in three western states of India, i.e. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat immediately to assess the situation.**
- **We warn the Indian authorities concerned that the world has not taken its eyes off the Narmada Valley; we are aware of the 30 years of people's struggle in Sardar Sarovar areas by indigenous people, plain-area farmers, landless, and others, and have been receiving alarming reports of grave human rights violations and internal displacement perpetrated by the**

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State. We shall continue to raise our voices at various global fora and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by international law and binding on both the Indian Government and the United Nations.

Signed on this the 14th day of August 2015

We are,

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, Founder, SEKEM, Egypt (RLA 2003)

Swami Agnivesh, India (RLA 2004)

Uri Avnery, Founder, Gush Shalom, Israel (RLA 2001)

Dr. Maude Barlow, National Chairperson, Council of Canadians, Canada (RLA 2005)

Dipal Barua, Former Managing Director, Grameen Shakti, now at Bright Green Energy Foundation, Bangladesh (RLA 2007)

Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, South Korea (RLA 2003)

Dr. Tony Clarke, Executive Director, Polaris Institute, Canada (RLA 2005)

Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury, Gonoshasthaya Kendra, Bangladesh (RLA 1992)

Erik Dammann, Future in Our Hands, Norway (RLA 1982)

Prof. Dr. Anwar Fazal, Director, Right Livelihood College, Malaysia (RLA 1982)

Basil Fernando, Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong (RLA 2014)

Dr. Fernando Funes-Aguilar, Grupo de Agricultura Orgánica, Cuba (RLA 1999)

Ina May Gaskin, USA (RLA 2011)

Dr. Hans Herren, Founder of Biovision Foundation, Switzerland (RLA 2013)

Bianca Jagger, Founder and Chair, Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, Nicaragua/UK (RLA 2004)

Asma Jahangir, Pakistan (RLA 2014)

Augusto Juncal, Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (MST), Brazil (RLA 1991)

Bishop Erwin Kräutler, Brazil (RLA 2010)

Dr. Katarina Kruhonja, Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights-Osijek, Croatia (RLA 1998)

Ladakh Ecological Development Group, India (RLA 1986)

Birsel Lemke, Turkey (RLA 2000)

Hunter Lovins, Natural Capitalism Solutions, USA (RLA 1983)

Prof Dr. h.c. (mult.) Manfred Max-Neef, Director, Economics Institute, Universidad Austral de Chile, Chile (RLA 1983)

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Bill McKibben, Founder of 350.org, USA (RLA 2014)
Prof. Dr. Raúl A. Montenegro, President, Fundación para la defensa del ambiente, Argentina (RLA 2004)
Helen Mack Chang, Fundación Myrna Mack, Guatemala (RLA 1992)
Frances Moore Lappé, Co-Founder, Small Planet Institute, USA (RLA 1987)
Jacqueline Moudeina, Chad (RLA 2011)
Evaristo Nugkuag Ikanan, Instituto para el Buen Vivir, Peru (RLA 1986)
Juan Pablo Orrego, President, Ecosistemas, Chile (RLA 1998)
Physicians for Human Rights, Israel (RLA 2010)
Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative, Japan (RLA 1989)
Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan (RLA 2012)
Dr. Vandana Shiva, Navdanya, India (RLA 1993)
Suciwati, widow of Munir, Indonesia (RLA 2000)
Dr. Hanumappa Sudarshan, Karuna Trust & VGKK, India (RLA 1994)
Survival, International (RLA 1989)
Shrikrishna Upadhyay, Executive Chairman, Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal, Nepal (RLA 2010)
Janos Vargha and Judit Vásárhelyi, Hungary (RLA 1985)
Dr. Paul F. Walker, Director, Environmental Security and Sustainability, Green Cross International, USA (RLA 2013)
Alyn Ware, Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, New Zealand/Switzerland (RLA 2009)
Chico Whitaker Ferreira, Brazil (RLA 2006)
Alla Yaroshinskaya, Russia (RLA 1992)
Angie Zelter, Trident Ploughshares, United Kingdom (RLA 2001)

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