

Global Solidarity Petition for Narmada

India Urgent Call - Stop the Watery Massacre of 32,000 families in Narmada Valley

Friday 30 August 2019, by [Petition / Sign-on Letter](#) (Date first published: 30 August 2019).

Please sign up this Open Letter from Concerned Individuals and Organizations to the President, Chief Justice and Prime Minister of India. And share widely.

Friends of Narmada

To,
The President of India,
New Delhi

To,
The Hon'ble Chief Justice,
Supreme Court of India,
New Delhi

To,
The Prime Minister,
Government of India,
New Delhi

Sirs,

We the undersigned concerned individuals and organizations write to you from across the world today, as more than 32,000 Sardar Sarovar Project Affected families in the Narmada Valley are facing an unprecedented existential crisis, threatened with uprootment from their homes, farms and villages, without the lawfully guaranteed rehabilitation having been provided to them.

We have been witness to one of the longest civil resistance movements, the Narmada Bachao Andolan, in post-independent India that has over the past 35 years been raising extremely pertinent questions of developmental injustice, social inequity, participative democracy, inspiring many people's movements across the world to challenge the paradigm of 'development', where almost always the indigenous, rural and self-reliant communities are expected to pay a heavy and disproportionate toll.

Even as we write to you, Medha Patkar, social activist and former member of the World Commission on Dams and many other affected women of the valley enter the 6th day of their indefinite hunger strike, calling upon the Government of India and Govt. of Gujarat to immediately halt this colossal

calamity of wiping away 2 lakh people, as if they were 'dispensable insects'. We have also received tragic news of the deaths of at least 3 persons belonging to the indigenous and marginalized communities ever since this drive to forcibly evict people started a few weeks back!

As per a recent letter written by the Chief Secretary of the State of Madhya Pradesh to the Narmada Control Authority (NCA), dated 27th May, 2019, a total of 6,000 families from 76 villages are residing in the submergence area. Upto 8,500 applications, of which up to 2,952 are for farmlands and other entitlements for compensation of Rs. 60 lakh, as directed by the Apex Court are still pending.

However, the Narmada Bachao Andolan under which the project affected people have organised, estimates not less than 32,000 families awaiting various entitlements including alternative land / compensation for land acquired from adivasis and farmers, house plots, a range of amenities at the resettlement sites, rehabilitation grants and livelihoods especially for the multitudes of Dalits and landless workers, fisherpeople, potters, boatspeople, small traders and artisans. A massive Rs. 1,000+ crore scam in the rehabilitation process even after investigation by a high level judicial commission indicting the government for grave violations is being ignored to shield the mighty and powerful while the people on the ground bear the brunt of it!

It is indeed a cruel and unjustifiable irony that despite a robust legal framework that exists with the Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal Award, 1979 and the multiple judgements of the Supreme Court, especially that of 2000 & 2005 to ensure complete rehabilitation of the residents of the submergence area before impoundment of reservoir, even the minimal rehabilitation that has happened so far has been only after protracted and relentless struggle and to this day a whopping 32,000 families are awaiting rehabilitation. Meanwhile dam waters have already entered the houses and farms of thousands of them! Is this how the 'Right to Life' under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, of which rehabilitation was upheld as an integral part by the Supreme Court time and again, would be protected ?

We are also aghast to note that the Prime Minister tweeted a couple of days back to say he is 'thrilled' at the 'breathtaking' sight of the Sardar Sarovar Dam filling upto 134 metres, and that he would like the people of the country to come and see it, along with the 'iconic' Statue of Unity. He did not utter a word about the 2 lakh indigenous, farmer, fish worker and other families who are paying the real cost of this terror packaged as tourism and development. Is 'scenic beauty' more important than the lives and livelihoods of thousands of people?

While the Government of Madhya Pradesh has taken a welcome stand to consider the precarious situation and written to the Centre to reconsider its decision, the Union Government, prompted by Gujarat appears to be unrelenting and keen on permanently inundating the valley within a few weeks. This would be a monumental injustice heaped on an entire region and needs to stop forthwith. It also needs to be highlighted that this entire region is located within the V-Schedule Adivasi area which has a special protection as per the Constitution of India and the President has a mandate to safeguard the interests of people in the region.

As the highest judicial and executive authorities in India, who have a Constitutional mandate to uphold rule of law and ensure the rights of citizens, we call upon you to immediately:

- a) Direct the Narmada Control Authority to maintain the water level in the SSP reservoir at 122 metres.
- b) Halt the hasty decision to close the dam gates until complete, lawful and fair rehabilitation of all the 32,000 families is ensured.

- c) Provide interim relief to the thousands of families already affected by the inundation.
- d) Constitute an independent high-powered committee to assess the scale and status of compliance on rehabilitation and environmental measures, before proceeding further with the dam work, in terms of the judgement of the Apex Court of Oct, 2000.

We look forward to judicial fairness and statesmanship from you all in this moment.

Thanking you,

To signe go to [here](#)

View online : [to sign](#)