

India: Canadian Rights Groups Hail Farmers' Victory Against Modi Govt's 'Pro-Corporate Reforms'

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The Samyukt Kisan Morcha on December 9 announced suspension of the yearlong protests after the Union government agreed to the farmers' pending demands.

New Delhi: Seven farmers' rights groups from across the world have issued a joint statement congratulating Indian farmers on their historic victory over the repeal of the three contentious farm laws.

On December 9, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella of over 40 farm unions, [announced](#) that it will call off the physical agitation after the Union government agreed to the farmers' pending demands including dropping police cases filed against farmers during the protest.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 19 November [announced](#) that the three controversial farm laws passed in September 2020 stand repealed by the Union government.

"The protesting men and women from different communities, including marginalised Adivasis and Dalits, braved a bitter winter, a scorching summer, and torrential monsoons. We salute their tenacity and steadfast resolve underpinned by a belief in non-violence and peaceful resistance," the statement said.

Farmers' leaders have said they will again meet on January 15 to see if the government has fulfilled their demands. In the meeting, they will prepare for their next steps which could include returning to the protest sites if the government does not fulfil its commitment.

The statement also addressed various issues in the agricultural sector which need to be addressed by the government. "While the demands of the protestors have been met and there are celebrations at this fantastic victory, there are outstanding issues that are yet to be addressed. For example, an agricultural growth model long past its sell-by date which rather than prosperity, now generates inter-generational debt traps and often leads to farmer and worker suicides - on average 28 per day since 1995 when India first joined the WTO.

It further added, "Agribusiness corporations that plan to take control of Indian markets are continuing their lobbying efforts. At COP26, the US and UAE, backed by most of the so-called developed states, called for an increased involvement of Ag Tech and Big Tech in agriculture, with so-called developing countries expected to "open up" their markets to corporations, which already control more than 70% of the global agricultural markets."

In their statement, the groups praised the farmers' efforts of fighting against the Modi government which had been promoting pro-corporate reforms.

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Here's the full joint statement.

December 12, 2021

Congratulations to Indian Farmers and Workers on their Historic Victory

We congratulate Indian farmers and workers on their historic victory!

After 378 days of continuous non-violent, peaceful protest, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha—SKM (United Farmers Agitation) that represents over 40 farm unions formally announced the suspension of their protest on 9 December 2021. A written document from the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was received by SKM on Thursday stating that the government had agreed to their pending demands: withdrawal of cases lodged against protesting farmers and compensation to over 700 farmers and workers who died during the protest. Earlier, on 19 November PM Modi had announced that he was repealing the three farm laws thereby acceding to the foremost demand of the protesting farmers and workers.

This has been a historic protest by hundreds of thousands of farmers and workers against the three farm laws—called black laws by farmers—that would have deprived them of land and livelihood. The government failed to break the protest despite resorting to violence and demonizing the farmers and their unions. The protesting men and women from different communities, including marginalized Adivasis and Dalits, braved a bitter winter, a scorching summer, and torrential monsoons. We salute their tenacity and steadfast resolve underpinned by a belief in non-violence and peaceful resistance.

The SKM expressed gratitude for the international solidarity they have received during the protest. Many Canadian unions, including the Canadian Labour Congress, supported the farmers' and workers' movement; several Canadian cities and municipal councils passed resolutions in support of the farmers and workers. As with the protesting farmers and workers, the supporters in the diaspora were also vilified by the Indian government.

Dismantling their temporary hutments from different sites, protesting farmers in convoys of tractor trolleys and other vehicles began leaving Delhi border sites on 11 Dec in a "Fateh [Victory] March" to return home. The protest is "suspended" keeping in view how their demands are fulfilled in accordance with the written statement by the government. With elections looming in some of the pivotal states in February 2022, it appears, the government has backed down. The leaders of the SKM will meet on 15th January to review the situation and prepare their next steps which could include returning to the protest sites if the government does not fulfill its commitment.

While the demands of the protestors have been met and there are celebrations at this fantastic victory, there are outstanding issues that are yet to be addressed. For example, an agricultural growth model long past its sell-by date which rather than prosperity, now generates inter-generational debt traps and often leads to farmer and worker suicides—on average 28 per day since 1995 when India first joined the WTO. Agribusiness corporations that plan to take control of Indian markets are continuing their lobbying efforts. At COP26, the US and UAE, backed by most of the so-called developed states, called for an increased involvement of Ag Tech and Big Tech in agriculture, with so-called developing countries expected to "open up" their markets to corporations, which already control more than 70% of the global agricultural markets. Unlike what the Modi government had been promoting—that the farmers are opposed to reforms—the farmers had been opposing the pro-corporate reforms that the government had tried to legislate; their struggle continues and we stand in solidarity with them.

CERAS (Centre sur l'Asie du Sud), Montreal

Indian Farmers & Workers Support Group, Edmonton

Secular Peoples Foundation, Edmonton

Indian Farmers & Workers Support Group, Vancouver

Indian Farmers & Workers Support Group, Winnipeg

Punjabi Literary and Cultural Association Winnipeg

SANSAD (South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy), Vancouver

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