

# **No to Government Crackdown at Koodankulam**

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No to Government Crackdown at Koodankulam

The Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), India strongly condemns the arrests and repression in and around Koodankulam of the activists involved in the entirely peaceful and non-violent mass agitation against the installation of two Russian built nuclear reactors. That the Tamil Nadu government has decided to collude with the Central government is deeply disappointing and will destroy the hopes that were held by the people of southern Tamil Nadu that the state government would respect their democratic rights and their concerns.

Earlier the Centre made untenable allegations of foreign funding against a longstanding peoples' movement that is based on genuine fears concerning the safety and environmental hazards of nuclear power. It is now clear that those allegations as well as the revocation of a visa to a Fukushima survivor to visit India was done with the purpose of not only seeking to divert attention away from the strong need for a prolonged public debate on the pros and cons on nuclear energy towards a discourse of 'foreign conspiracies', but also to lay the grounds for physically repressing and assaulting an indigenous mass movement in order to assuage the concerns of foreign suppliers of nuclear power equipment and materials.

Not only is such anti-democratic behaviour deeply shocking, it is also extraordinary that this should happen at a time when over 80% of the Japanese public have repudiated nuclear energy demanding that their country's nuclear plants be completely phased out, and when an official German Ethics Commission on Nuclear Safety said "Fukushima has shaken people's confidence in expert's assessments of the 'safety' of nuclear power stations. This is also and particularly true of those citizens who have until now relied on such assessments. Even citizens who do not reject nuclear power categorically are no longer prepared to leave it to committees of experts to decide how to deal with the fundamental possibility of an uncontrollable, major accident."

The CNDP demands that those arrested be immediately released and that

a) before any commissioning of reactors takes place, the 'Expert Committee' set up by the Tamil Nadu government, which has so far refused to even meet the public or their representatives and experts, do so and fully address to their satisfaction their concerns and questions.

b) That the Central government, in the light of the worldwide disillusionment with nuclear energy, put a moratorium on all nuclear power plans, until a full and proper public debate without any intimidation on its part is carried out on the pros and cons of nuclear energy in India.

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