



Greenpeace India Society
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Date: October 30, 2014

Hon'ble Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh
Union Minister of Home Affairs,
Government of India,
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Singh,

Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace. Greenpeace is present in 40 countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Pacific. To maintain our independence, we do not accept donations from governments or corporations but rely on contributions from individual supporters and foundation grants. Our commitment to non-violent civil disobedience in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi is one of the founding principles of our organisation. Greenpeace has been operating in India since 2001.

We write to you concerning recent statements by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Delhi High Court (Greenpeace India Society vs Union of India, WP(C) 5749 of 2014). The MHA has stated in its affidavit dated October 9, 2014 that Greenpeace India is working against national interest, by often opposing government policy. This pretext has been used to justify blacklisting Greenpeace International and blocking them from transferring funds to any entity in India.

We would appreciate an opportunity to meet you to discuss Greenpeace's work in India, as the MHA's statement in court is false and, we believe, has dangerous implications for free speech and the environmental and justice discourse in India at this crucial juncture.

Over the last ten years, Greenpeace India has played a key role in, among other things:

- Promoting decentralized renewable energy systems as a cost-effective way to improve energy access to areas currently without electricity. The government of Bihar recently inaugurated a solar power micro grid in the village of Dharnai, bringing electricity to a village that has been “off grid” for the last 30 years.
- Raising awareness on, and advocating the shift to an energy infrastructure that is sustainable, takes into consideration environmental and social impacts, is secure and can provide energy access much faster than the current centralised electricity system. We have highlighted the true cost of coal in terms of its impacts on water diversions, health, forest destruction and air pollution.
- Protected the rights of forest communities enshrined under the Forest Rights Act (Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Recognition of Forest Rights Act), and highlighted the violations in this respect in the Mahan forests of Madhya Pradesh.
- Researched the impact of coal mining on forest areas in central India and have provided inputs to the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change on the inviolate criteria and process to determine the same.
- Promoted Ecological Agriculture (EA) which relies on and protects nature by making use of natural ecosystem functions and agro-biodiversity integrating these into agro-ecological systems that ensure agricultural resilience, food security and food sovereignty and sustainable farmer livelihoods.
- Challenged the spread of corporate controlled, genetically modified food crops, propagated by companies like Monsanto, by raising awareness about the issue among all stakeholders so as to ensure these controversial crops are not released into the environment until its safety is proved beyond doubt as once they are released they cannot be called back.
- Supported the victims of the Bhopal gas disaster in their claims for justice from Dow Chemical, another US-based multinational.
- Supported the rights of India’s artisanal fishing communities against foreign fishing fleets operating in India’s EEZ.
- Pushed for safer conditions for Indian workers in the shipbreaking industry. Successful in ensuring that France did not dump its toxic aircraft carrier – Clemenceau – in Alang and adhered to the International Basel Convention

- Highlighted the constitutional discrepancy in the Nuclear Liability Bill with regard to 'unlimited liability' and ensured that the Act enforced complete supplier liability. We continue to monitor developments on the dilution of this principle in the Act.
- convinced the IT industry to come together with civil society groups and experts to formulate E-Waste management Rules.

I am sure you will agree that none of the above can be considered against India's national interest in any way. On the contrary, Greenpeace India's work is strongly rooted in India's legislative framework, and involves ensuring that existing laws to protect India's environment and communities are upheld and strengthened.

Greenpeace is completely transparent about its objectives and its way of working. This often involves us criticizing governments and corporations if we feel they are not doing the right thing. This is part of a healthy debate in any free, democratic society. The MHA's statement in court risks undermining informed debate and stifling dissent – both of which are crucial in any democracy.

Greenpeace India gets approximately 60% of its funds from within India, and relies for the rest on funding from Greenpeace International. India is currently throwing open its doors to billions of dollars in foreign investment – money that often entails destruction of the environment and the loss of livelihoods. Blocking foreign funds meant for the NGO/development sector while seeking foreign investment in manufacturing, agriculture and extractive industries is unreasonable, and does not reflect the values of inclusiveness and progress for all that your government claims to espouse.

We would appreciate an opportunity to meet you in person and discuss this issue further to clear up any mutual misunderstandings we might have.

Sincerely,



Kumi Naidoo
Executive Director, Greenpeace International



Samit Aich
Executive Director, Greenpeace India