21 April 2015
New Delhi

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Ministry of Home Affairs
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प्राप्त किया/केन्द्रीय रजिस्ट्री
Received/CR Section
नॉर्थ ब्लॉक/North Block

Shri Rajnath Singh
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
Central Secretariat
New Delhi 110 001

Sub: **Letter of solidarity from members of civil society - the Government's actions against Greenpeace India are an attack on Democracy and Freedom of Speech**

The move by the central government to freeze Greenpeace India's bank accounts and block sources of funds is a blatant violation of the constitutional rights to freedom of expression and association. It also seems to be an attempt to warn civil society that dissent regarding development policies and priorities will not be tolerated, even when these are proving to be ecologically unsustainable and socially unjust. These are dangerous signs for the future of democracy in India.

Specific allegations of legal violation contained in the Ministry of Home Affairs' notice are aspects Greenpeace India needs to respond to. However, the notice also charges the organization with adversely affecting "public interest" and the "economic interest of the State". These charges give the impression that Greenpeace India is indulging in anti-national activities, using foreign funds. However, dissenting from the government's development policies, helping communities who are going to be displaced by these policies to mobilise themselves, and generating public opinion for the protection of the environment can by no stretch of imagination be considered anti-national, or against public interest. Quite the contrary, any reasonable policy of sustainable development (which the government claims to adhere to) will itself put into question quite a few of the mining, power, and other projects currently being promoted.

Civil society organisations in India have a long and credible history of standing up for social justice, ecological sustainability, and the rights of the poor. When certain government policies threaten these causes, civil society has a justified ground to resist, and help affected communities fight for their rights. This is in fact part of the fundamental duties enjoined upon citizens by the Constitution of India.

In two recent court judgments involving previous attempts by the government to muzzle Greenpeace India, the democratic principle of dissent has been upheld. In January 2015, the Delhi High Court observed: "Non-Governmental Organizations often take positions, which are contrary to the policies formulated by the Government of the day. That by itself...cannot be used to portray petitioner's action as being detrimental to national interest." In March, the Delhi High court observed that "contrarian views held by a section of people...cannot be used to describe such section or class of people as anti-national." The court also observed that there was nothing on record to suggest that Greenpeace India's activities "have the potentiality of degrading the economic interest of the country."

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It is shocking that despite these clear judicial pronouncements, the government has for a third time acted against Greenpeace India. We cannot but conclude that this is an attempt to divert attention from the serious issues that Greenpeace India and many peoples' movements and NGOs are raising, regarding the need to respect the rights of adivasis and others who depend on the forests, wetlands, coastal areas, and other ecosystems, and the need to move towards policies that are ecologically sustainable and do not cause further climate change. Large-scale mining, such as in the areas that peoples' movements are active, are a threat to forests and other natural ecosystems, to communities that depend on them including tribal peoples. These and other issues are highlighted by organizations such as Greenpeace India, which also generate significant information on the environment, crucial for taking the right decisions regarding sustainable well-being.

It is also shocking that while alleging violations regarding FCRA, the government ordered the blocking of even those accounts where Greenpeace India uses its domestic funding (and it is relevant here to note that the majority of its funds according to its audited accounts are from thousands of Indian individuals). It has even blocked its online donation facility.

The government should immediately take back these illegitimate, unfair, and repressive moves, and provide Greenpeace India a fair opportunity to respond. More generally, it must respect the freedom of speech that all Indian citizens have a constitutional right to, including the right to dissent, upheld by court judgments. The government's attempts to browbeat civil society will not make the issues of social and environmental injustice disappear. We assert that long as these issues remain unresolved, civil society actors will continue to do all that is necessary towards a just and sustainable society.

1. AchinVanaik, Retired academic, writer, and anti-nuclear campaigner, Delhi
2. A. Vaidyanathan, Former Member, Planning Commission
3. Achyut Yagnik &Ashok Shrimali, **SETU: Centre For Social Knowledge And Action**, Ahmedabad
4. Harsh Mander, Human rights worker and writer
5. ShripadDharmadhikary, **ManthanAdhyayan Kendra**, Pune
6. Aruna Roy & Nikhil Dey, **MazdoorKisan Shakti Sangathan**(MKSS), Rajasthan
7. Gautam Navlakha, **Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights** (PUDR), Delhi
8. Claude Alvares, Former Standing Committee Member MoEF, **Goa Foundation**, Goa
9. MedhaPatkar, **Narmada BachaoAndolan**
10. Madhuresh Kumar &Suhas Kolhekar, **National Alliance of Peoples' Movements**(NAPM)
11. Shailesh Rai, **Amnesty International India**, Bangalore
12. Ravi Rebbapragada & Ashok Shrimali, **Mines Minerals & People** (mmP)
13. Vinay Sreenivasa, **Alternative Law Forum** (ALF), Bangalore
14. Swami Agnivesh, **BandhuaMuktiMorcha**, Delhi
15. Kavitha Kuruganti, **Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture**(ASHA)
16. Rajesh Krishnan, **Coalition for a GM Free India**
17. Ashish Kothari and MeenalTatpati, **Kalpavriksh**, Pune
18. Sujit Patwardhan, **Parisar**, Pune
19. Madhuri Krishanaswami, **KisanAdivasi Dalit MuktiSangathan**, Badwani, Madhya Pradesh
20. Biswajit Mohanty, Conservationist, Bhubaneshwar
21. Bittu Sahgal, Conservationist, Mumbai
22. Justice H. Suresh, Former Judge, Mumbai High Court, Mumbai
23. Lakshmy Raman, **Sanctuary Asia**
24. Rajeev Dhavan, Senior Supreme Court Advocate, Delhi
25. Tapan Bose, **South Asian Forum for Human Rights** (SAHFR), Delhi
26. AneeshThillenkery, **EktaParishad**

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27. P.M. Bhargava, Supreme Court Nominee to Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)
28. Leo Saldanha, **Environmental Support Group** (ESG), Bangalore
29. Seema Kulkarni and K. J. Joy, **SOPPECOM**, Pune
30. Ramasamy Selvam, **Tamil Nadu Organic Farmers Federation**
31. Shabnam Hashmi, **ANHAD**, Delhi
32. Kuldip Nayar, Sr journalist and columnist, Delhi
33. Praful Bidwai, Sr Journalist & columnist, Delhi
34. N.P. Chekkutty, Editor, *Thejas* daily, Kerala
35. Neeta Chalke, **India Habitat Forum** (INHAF), Pune
36. Pratibha Sharma&Dharmesh Shah, **Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives** (GAIA)
37. Malati Gadgil, **Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat**(KKPKP), Pune
38. Aparna Susarla, **SWaCH**, Pune
39. Yogeshwar Y. Dudhapachare, **Green Planet Society,** Chandrapur
40. T.R. Shankar Raman, Sr. Scientist, Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)
41. Shubhranshu Choudhary, **CGNetSwara**, Chhattisgarh
42. Radhika Rammohan & SangeethaSriram, **reStore**, Chennai
43. Tarun Joshi, **VanpanchayatSangarshMorcha**, Nainital
44. Xavier Dias, Editor, Khan Kaneej Aur ADHIKAR (Mines minerals & RIGHTS)
45. K. Ramnarayan, **Himal Prakriti**, Uttarakhand
46. Malika Virdi, **Maati Sangathan**, Uttarakhand
47. S. Faizi, Ecologist / Board member, CBD Alliance, Trivandrum
48. Neeraj Jain, **Lokayat**, Pune
49. Ingrid Srinath, Hivos, Mumbai
50. V.B. Chandrasekaran, **Chatti Mahatma Gandhi Aashramam**, Andhra Pradesh
51. John D'Souza and J. John, **Centre for Education and Documentation** (CED), Mumbai/Delhi
52. Prasad Chacko, **Human Development and Research Centre** (HDRC), Ahmedabad
53. Mansoor Khan, Film-maker, author, climate activist, Coonoor, Tamil Nadu
54. Parineeta Dandekar, **South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People** (SANDRP), Pune
55. Sudha Bharadhwaj, Trade Unionist and Human Rights Lawyer, Chattishgarh
56. Rachna Arora, **Public Awareness on GM Food**
57. Henri Tiphangne, Chairman, **Forum Asia**, Madurai
58. Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, Sr Journalist, Political Commentator, Filmmaker, Delhi
59. Maja Daruwala, Human rights activist, Delhi
60. Sethu Das, Founder Chair, Friends of Tibet, Delhi
61. Sudha Reddy, **Eco-Foundation for Sustainable Alternatives**, Bangalore
62. Shankar Sharma, Power policy analyst, Delhi
63. Paul Divakar, **National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights**(NCDR), Delhi
64. K.Baburao, Advisor, NAPM, Andhra Pradesh
65. Anand Patwardhan, Filmmaker, Mumbai
66. Uttam Jagirdar, Filmmaker and social activist
67. Ashok Chowdhury, **All India Union of Forest Working People** (AIUFWP)
68. Souparna Lahiri, **All India Forum of Forest Movements**(AIFFM)
69. Chhaya Datar, Women's rights expert
70. Mira Shiva, **INES/ Diverse Women for Diversity**, Delhi
71. Joseph Xavier, Indian Social Institute, Delhi
72. Nityanand Jayaram, Writer, teacher, social activist, Chennai
73. Usha Soolapani, **Thanal,** Kerala
74. Dunu Roy, **Hazards Desk**, Delhi
75. D. Roy Laifungbam, **Centre for Organization Research and Education**, Manipur
76. E. Deendayalan, **The Other Media**, Bangalore
77. Ravi Nair, **South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre** (SAHRD), Delhi
78. Akila Balu, **Students' Sea Turtle Conservation Network**, Chennai
79. Debi Goenka, Executive Trustee, Conservation Action Trust (CAT), Mumbai
80. Sridhar Lakshmanan, Founder, **Basecamp Social Research Foundation**
81. **Organic Farmers Market**, Chennai
82. **Safe Food Alliance**, Tamil Nadu
83. Balaji Shankar, **ThalaanmaiUzhavarlyakkam**, Tamil Nadu
84. V.R. AnanthaSayanan, Founder, **Tharcharbulyakkam**, Tamil Nadu
85. **J.C. Kumarappa Foundation**, Tamil Nadu
86. **Tula India,** Chennai

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87. Amit M. & Sreedevi L., **Urban Leaves**, Mumbai
88. Uzramma, Handloom supporter, Hyderabad
89. Blaise Joseph, Freelance artist, Belgaum, Karnataka
90. Sajeed Khalid, Welfare Party of India, Kerala State committee
91. S.P. Udaykumar, Activist, Tamil Nadu
92. Tara Murali, Architect, Chennai
93. UshaRai, Development journalist, Delhi
94. AmalaAkkineni, Actress, Hyderabad
95. LalitaRamdas, Educator and activist, Maharashtra
96. Jai Sen, Researcher and editor, Delhi
97. GeethaIyer, Consultant - Education, Suchindram, Tamil Nadu
98. Gautama G., Educationist, Chennai
99. Nandini Oza, Researcher and activist, Pune
100. Seetha Ananthasivan, Educationist, Bengaluru
101. Sharad Lele, Researcher, Bengaluru
102. Seema Purushothaman, Academic, Bengaluru
103. Benny Kuruvilla, Researcher, Delhi
104. Rohit Prajapati, Environmental Activist, Ahmedabad
105. Anant Phadke, Health worker and activist, Pune
106. E. Theophilus, Conservationist, Uttarakhand
107. Asad Rahmani, Conservationist, Mumbai
108. Palla Trinadha Rao, Advocate, Andhra Pradesh
109. Rajni Bakshi, Journalist and author, Mumbai
110. Arindam Biswas, Photographer, trekker, wildlife enthusiast, Kolkata
111. Lavanya Suresh, Academic, Hyderabad
112. Bipasha Majumder, Freelance communication consultant, Mumbai
113. Lisa Fonseca, Organic farmer, Coonoor, Tamil Nadu
114. Dionne Bunsha, Journalist, Mumbai
115. Shivaji K. Panikkar, Ambedkar University, Delhi
116. Rana Roy, Student
117. Sagar Rabari, Activist, Ahmedabad
118. B.K. Manish, Tribal rights activist, Raipur
119. Cedric Prakash, Director, PRASHANT, Ahmedabad
120. Akhilesh, Academic, Bhubaneshwar
121. Aseem Shrivastava, Author and economist, Delhi
122. PalakAggarwal, Sustainable Development Practitioner, Odisha
123. Mohan HirabaiHiralal, Forest rights activist, Chandrapur
124. Harsh Kapoor, Human rights activist, sacw.net
125. Raj Kishore Das, Retd officer, teacher, Bhubaneshwar
126. ArunWakhlu, Training and leadership professional, Pune
127. SatyaRaiNagpaul, Filmmaker, Mumbai
128. Ghanshyam Shah, Social researcher, Delhi
129. PersisGinwalla, Ahmedabad
130. Shishir K. Jha, Academic, IIT Bombay
131. NagmaniRao, Academic, Pune
132. Chandrasekaran P., Software engineer, Chennai
133. Aparna Krishnan, Homemaker, Chennai
134. Suresh Lakshmipathy, Entrepreneur, Chennai
135. SandeepPattnaik, Researcher, Bhubaneshwar
136. HardikaDayalani, Program Coordinator, Hunnarshala Foundation, Uttar Pradesh
137. SabitaParida, Development professional, Delhi
138. Mona Mishra, Strategic Planning consultant UNDP, Sexual Health and Rights activist, Delhi
139. Snehal Shah, Research consultant, Delhi
140. Krishna Srinivasan, Social worker and Enviro-Legal Researcher, Pune
141. Neeraj Bhatnagar, Action Aid, Mumbai
142. Aravinda Maheshwari, Auroville, Tamil Nadu
143. Jasmin Maheshwari, Auroville, Tamil Nadu
144. Gajanan Khatu, Economist, Mumbai
145. David Selvaraj, Visthar, Bangalore
146. Gajanan Khatu, Economist, Mumbai

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147. Shreenivas Khandewale, Agronomist, Nagpur
148. Bindu Desai, Human rights activist, Mumbai
149. Balaji Shankar, Organic farmer and writer, Sirkazhi, Tamil Nadu
150. BalachanderSwaminathan, Software professional, Tamil Nadu
151. ShashankKela, Writer, Chennai
152. Subhayu Mishra, Member, Wild Orissa, Mumbai
153. Atul Gupta, Filmmaker, Dehradun
154. Venkat T., Researcher, Chennai
155. Suhas Paranjape, Water specialist, Pune
156. Louis Menezes
157. Joe Athialy, Activist, New Delhi
158. AvinDeen, Conservationist, Bengaluru
159. AnandaVadivelu, Institutional economist, Delhi
160. G. Chandrasekhar, Cardiac surgeon and sustainable farmer
161. SumitraPurkayastha, Researcher, Kolkata
162. Yatish Mehta, Businessman and activist, Mumbai
163. Sahba Fatima, Jr. consultant, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi
164. G. Baskaran, Ravi Kunjwal, Amritanshu Prasad, Rahul Siddharthan, SitabhraSinha, V.S. Sunder, & T. Vinod Kumar, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai
165. T.S. VijayaRaghavan, Advocate, Chennai
166. V.R. AnanthaSayanan, Activist, Chennai
167. VineethaBambasala, Environmentalist, Bengaluru
168. N.D. Hari Dass
169. Kiran Seth, Academic & founder, SPICMACAY, Delhi
170. Roy Jacob, Farmer, Kerala
171. Meera Rajesh, IT Consultant & environmentalist, Bengaluru
172. Walter Mendoza, Pune
173. RevaDandage, Educator, Udaipur
174. ShobanaRamkumar, Teacher, Chennai
175. J.R. Ganesh Babu, Chennai
176. Chithra V., Teacher, Chennai
177. Daya Lakshmi, Chennai
178. S. Annapoorni, Homemaker, Chennai
179. D.W. Karuna, Researcher, Chennai
180. Satyarupa Shekhar, Researcher, Chennai
181. Mahi Puri, Wildlife researcher, Bengaluru
182. Narasimha Reddy Donthi, Hyderabad

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