



Petition

APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDIA AND JHARKHAND

Open-cast Coal Mining Threatens Indigenous Villagers of Kusum Tola, Karanpura Valley, Jharkhand, India

We, the undersigned, want to express our deep concern about violations of the human right to food and the threat of extinction of village Kusum Tola and other indigenous villages in the Northern Karanpura Valley due to massive expansion of open cast coal mining in this area.

Kusum Tola is one village out of 200 villages affected by the big number of 23 present and planned coal blocks in a small area, that cannot but lead to violations of the people's right to adequate food, irreversible environmental devastation, social upheaval, as well as an eclipsing of a precious cultural heritage.

We consider the State of Jharkhand, which was newly established in the year 2000 with the aim of recognizing tribal identity – as indigenous people form about one fourth of its population - to be a state, in which the respect for the Right to Cultural Self Determination is held in particular high regard, and this should be upheld. The State of India is duty-bound under national and international law to respect its citizens' right to adequate food, right to information, right to self determination, among other rights. Before it is too late for the inhabitants of Kusum Tola, we would like to ask you to

- order a complete stoppage to the expansion of mining operations at the Purnadih mine site and
- undertake a thorough and integrated social, human rights and environmental impact assessment of all proposed mining projects in the Karanpura Valley.

This appeal will go to:

Central Indian Government:

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India
Mrs. Pratibha Patil, President of India
Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister for Environment and Forests
Mr. Jairam Ramesh, Ministry of Rural Development
Mr. Sriprakash Jaiswal, Minister of Coal
Mr. S.M. Krishna, Minister of External Affairs

Jharkhand Government:

Mr. Arjun Munda, Chief Minister of Jharkhand
Mr. Kateekal Narayanan, Governor of Jharkhand

International:

UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter
UN special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya

June 9, 2011

India: Open-cast Coal Mining Threatens Indigenous Villagers of Kusum Tola, Karanpura Valley, Jharkhand

The expanding operations of mining company Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) are posing an immediate threat to the survival of 1,000 indigenous people facing eviction from the village of Kusum Tola located in the North Karanpura region in the Indian State of Jharkhand. Heavy blasting in adjacent villages is already producing clouds of harmful dust and cracks in house foundations in Kusum Tola. The eviction is a gross violation of the villagers' human right to food. Meanwhile, the impact of the mining operations on regional watersheds will deprive them of access to water and is therefore a violation of their right to water. The mining operations negatively affect people's ability to maintain their livelihoods, with consequences including hunger and malnutrition.

Signature Petition – Action to take

Please collect signatures for the petition addressed to the above mentioned authorities in India.

Please send filled in signatures lists for forwarding and handing over to the respective recipients

by 31 December 2011 to

- **FIAN International Secretariat** (address see letterhead), attention of Ms. Pabst, and

- **FIAN India Delhi office**, attention of Ms. Suman, 7/37 B (Top Floor) Janpura – B, 110014 New Delhi fax: 0091-11 24374437; email: fiandelhi@yahoo.co.in; fianindia@yahoo.com

Background

The expansion of open cast coal mining in the North Karanpura Valley directly impacts on about 200 village communities that rely on the region's fertile basin and forest produce to maintain their subsistent lifestyles. The indigenous people of the region, the Adivasis, grow crops including rice, wheat, wild seeds, mustard and lentils, while supplementing their incomes with minor forest produce and seasonal labor work in the off-season. More than 1,000 sq km of their land has been allocated to over twenty mines under the new plans. Kusum Tola is one of the numerous villages to be threatened by the expansion of mining operations

CCL has mined coal in the region for over thirty years in projects including Dakara, Ray, Chura, Bachara, Manki, Piparwar and Ashoka. The Purnadih mine, which affects Kusum Tola and adjacent villages, officially opened on August 21, 2009. Eviction of the hamlets of Dembua and Baseriya has already been carried out and Kusum Tola faces threat of eviction.

Kusum Tola is currently feeling the effects of explosions in the vicinity. In addition the mining activities are causing the pollution of rivers and the destruction of precious water sources, including the Upper Damodar catchment watershed.

While the mining operations jeopardize the role of Karanpura Valley as one of the richest rice and vegetable producing areas in India, the region is also environmentally and culturally significant. Once famous for its wildlife, the valley still contains important elephant corridors. The indigenous people possess a rich cultural heritage and maintain artistic traditions that link back to prehistoric rock art designs found in the area.

The local administration generally supports the company against the people. It has become common for those who protest against land acquisitions and human rights violations to be criminalized by the police in a clear violation of their civil and political rights.

Women are particularly affected by the consequences of the mining operations; economically, socially and psychologically. Their roles change dramatically when families lose land and paid jobs are given as compensation. Women are typically less likely than men to receive compensation for the loss of their land, in terms of money or jobs.

The continuation of the mining is a clear violation of the provisions of national laws and international treaties including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

FIAN has already intervened in this case with Open Letter s0916IND dated 7th July 2009, and Urgent Action 0915UIND dated 9th November 2009.

FIAN Mandate

India is a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Therefore India and the state of Jharkhand are duty-bound under international law to respect the human right to food and the human right to water. The plans to expand mining activities at Kusum Tola and the broader Karanpura region pose a severe threat to the Adivasi communities' livelihoods. If these plans are implemented, India and the state of Jharkhand will violate their obligations to respect and protect basic human rights, including the human rights to food and water, of the affected people.