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|  | ***25 years journey of struggle and reconstruction***  **National Alliance of People’s Movements**  **National Office:** 6/6, Jungpura-B, New Delhi – 110014 **| Ph:** 011-24374535  **Twitter:** @napmindia **|** **E-mail:**  [napmindia@gmail.com](mailto:napmindia@gmail.com) **|**  **Blog:** [www.napmindia.wordpress.com](http://www.napmindia.wordpress.com) **|** **Web:** [www.napm-india.org](http://www.napm-india.org) |

**Free Akhil Gogoi, Bittu Sonowal, Dhaijya Konwar and Manas Konwar**

**NAPM Condemns 200 days of Unjust Arrest! Withdraw All Fake Charges**

**Uphold Right to Democratic Protest against Communal & Extractive Agenda of BJP!**

**29th June, 2020:** As we mark 200 days of the absolutely unjust arrest of the mass leader of KMSS-Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, Akhil Gogoi on draconian charges, National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM) demands his immediate release and withdrawal of all ill-conceived charges foisted against him. We also demand the release of young leaders Bittu Sonowal, Dhaijya Konwar and Manas Konwar associated with KMSS and its sister organizations. We salute the spirit of these young people of Assam who are fearlessly fighting a communal and fascist regime, and its divisive laws, in the face of intense repression.

As is well-known, Akhil Gogoi was arrested on 12th Dec 2019, from Jorhat, sent to NIA custody for 10 days in Delhi, and taken back and lodged in Guwahati Central Jail since 26th Dec. KMSS Secretary Dhaijya Konwar and Bittu Sonowal, President of Chatra Mukti Sangram Samiti, a popular democratic student org in Assam, were arrested on 13th Dec and lodged in Guwahati Central Jail. On 7th Jan, both of them were tagged in the same fake UAPA case with Akhil Gogoi and are currently in NIA custody in Kamrup district. Manas Konwar was arrested on 13th Dec, released later and re-arrested from NIA Court, Guwahati towards end of January, 2020 being slapped with similar charges under UAPA. Earlier, the NIA failed to file a charge sheet within the mandatory 90 days, which warranted Akhil's release but he was immediately arrested for other cases.

Akhil had secured bail in three other cases under Sivasagar PS, Dibrugarh PS and Guwahati Crime Branch, but to maintain his custody, frivolous charges are being pressed again, a recent one of 28th May where Akhil is charged of ‘torching a Circle office, a post office and a Bank in Chabua’ on 12th December. Such tactics have been going on, throughout these six months of incarceration, when the farce of ‘trial’ itself becomes the punishment! The gross abuse of the legal process and travesty of justice is all too obvious in these cases, as it is, in the state hounding of muslims and students in the ‘Delhi Riots investigation’ case or the Bhima Koregaon case, where 11 activists, some of them between 60-80 years are jailed, even in Covid-times !

The Government of Assam in cohorts with the Centre, has also tried its best to establish that Akhil and KMSS/SMSS leaders have had ‘Maoist links’ and were operating in Assam, ‘planning to wage a war against the nation’! The Govt and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has so far not been able to produce any substantive evidence or prove any of the charges against the arrested leaders. Akhil now has 5 cases under NIA and the three other persons are yet to secure bail for cases under different police stations.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, jail safety conditions have worsened and minimum liberties of prisoners are being sabotaged. Even with a prisoner in Guwahati Central Jail testing Covid positive, not much is being done by authorities, which looks like a deliberate attempt to severe the punishment of political prisoners. Akhil’s health has also been deteriorating. On 25th June, inmates of Guwahati prison staged a protest against the deplorable jail conditions during a pandemic and demanding release of Akhil Gogoi and his associates.

The Government, which was taken aback with the mass social dimension of the popular uprising against the blatantly communal Citizenship Amendment Act in Assam started targeting genuine voices and organisations who work on cross community lines, raise questions of federalism, state resources and against state repression, along with asking the State to address the migration question in a just and democratic manner.

The arrests of these activists is a brazen attack of the State on the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti, Chah Shramik Mukti Sangram Samiti, Nari Mukti Sangram Samiti and all democratic organizations that question the State’s failures and genuinely seek to address complex questions of inequities. It is shameful that despite wide-spread protests and even international condemnation from the United Nations, the Government continues to jail these activists.

Akhil and KMSS have been a strong and popular voice against incautious and destructive large dams, extraction of resources and development projects which can foster damage to local population and ecology, opening of the many unlawful toll-gates to harass citizens and thereby are potential targets of a fascist Govt, especially when Assembly elections are approaching and all failures and loopholes of Government are in light for everyone to see.

KMSS has also been at the fore-front of many struggles, effectively using RTI and in defending rights of landless peasants, rural and urban poor with its grassroot activists, mobilizing masses against Governments who have given in to their own and corporate profits over the lives of indigenous and tribal people. Even during the Congress regime, Akhil was involved in exposing many scams and launched anti-corruption mass movements in Assam. NIA while conducting raids at his home, was looking for many of such files which name political leaders and business tycoons.

**NAPM demands the immediate release of all Akhil Gogoi, Bittu Sonowal, Dhaijya Konwar and Manas Konwar and withdrawal of all false charges level against them. We call upon the Full Bench of the Guwahati High Court to immediately intervene in this case of gross delay and abuse of the legal process and free all the activists, unconditionally.**

**We stand in solidarity with the autonomous and democratic organizations and activists in Assam who protest against the communal & extractive agenda of BJP and other exploitative political entities, with a strong belief in constitutional values, peace and human rights.**

**We call upon the Government to put an end to this vicious episode of clamp-down and instead engage in a serious and meaningful dialogue with the people of the state to address some of the long-standing issues in an amicable way, upholding the rights of all sections, in particular the marginalized and disenfranchised communities.**

**Medha Patkar,** Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) and National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM); **Dr. Sunilam, Adv. Aradhna Bhargava,** Kisan Sangharsh Samiti; **Rajkumar Sinha**, Chutka Parmaanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, Madhya Pradesh;

**Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, Shankar Singh,** Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), National Campaign for People’s Right to Information; **Kavita Srivastava**, People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL); **Kailash Meena** NAPM Rajasthan;

**Prafulla Samantara,** Lok Shakti Abhiyan; **Lingraj Azad,** Samajwadi Jan Parishad & Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti, Manorama, Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti; **Lingaraj Pradhan, Satya banchor, Anant, Kalyan Anand, Arun Jena, Trilochan Punji, Lakshimipriya Mohanty and Balakrishna Sand, Manas Patnaik**, NAPM Odisha;

**Sandeep Pandey**(Socialist Party of India); **Richa Singh &** **Rambeti** (Sangatin Kisaan Mazdoor Sangathan, Sitapur); Rajeev Yadav & Masihuddin bhai (Rihai Manch, Lucknow & Azamgadh)**; Arundhati Dhuru & Zainab Khatun**(Mahila Yuva Adhikar Manch, Lucknow), **Suresh Rathaur**(MNREGA Mazdoor Union, Varanasi); **Arvind Murti & Altamas Ansari** (Inquilabi Kamgaar Union, Mau),**Jagriti Rahi**(Vision Sansthan, Varanasi); **Satish Singh**(Sarvodayi Vikas Samiti, Varanasi);**Nakul Singh Sawney**(Chal Chitra Abhiyan, Muzaffarnagar); NAPM Uttar Pradesh

**P. Chennaiah,** Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union-APVVU, **Ramakrishnam Raju,** United Forum for RTI and NAPM, **Chakri** (Samalochana), **Balu Gadi**, **Bapji Juvvala**, NAPM Andhra Pradesh;

**Jeevan Kumar & Syed Bilal** (Human Rights Forum), **P. Shankar** (Dalit Bahujan Front), **Vissa Kiran Kumar & Kondal**(Rythu Swarajya Vedika), **Ravi Kanneganti** (Rythu JAC), **Ashalatha** (MAKAAM), **Krishna**(Telangana Vidyavantula Vedika-TVV), **M. Venkatayya** (Telangana Vyavasaya Vruttidarula Union-TVVU), **Meera Sanghamitra, Rajesh Serupally**, NAPM Telangana;

**Sister Celia,** Domestic Workers Union; **Maj Gen (Retd) S.G.Vombatkere**, NAPM, **Nawaz, Dwiji, Nalini,**NAPM Karnataka

**Gabriele Dietrich,** Penn Urimay Iyakkam, Madurai; **Geetha Ramakrishnan,** Unorganised Sector Workers Federation; Suthanthiran, **Suthanthiran, Lenin** & **Arul Doss,**NAPM Tamilnadu;

**Vilayodi Venugopal, CR Neelakandan, Prof. Kusumam Joseph, Sharath Cheloor,** **Vijayaraghavan Cheliya, Majeendran, Magline,** NAPM, Kerala;

**Dayamani Barla,**Aadivasi-Moolnivasi Astivtva Raksha Samiti; **Basant Hetamsaria, Aloka Kujur,** **Dr. Leo A. Singh, Afzal Anish, Sushma Biruli, Durga Nayak, Jipal Murmu, Priti Ranjan Dash, Ashok Verma**, NAPM Jharkhand;

**Anand Mazgaonkar, Swati Desai, Krishnakant, Parth,**Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti; **Nita Mahadev, Mudita,**Lok Samiti; **Dev Desai, Mujahid Nafees, Ramesh Tadvi, Aziz Minat** and **Bharat Jambucha**, NAPM Gujarat;

**Vimal Bhai,** Matu Jan sangathan; **Jabar Singh,** **Uma**, NAPM, Uttarakhand;

**Manshi Asher** and **Himshi Singh,** Himdhara, NAPM Himachal Pradesh

**Eric Pinto, Abhijeet, Tania Deavaiah** and **Francesca**, NAPM Goa

Gautam**Bandopadhyay,**Nadi Ghati Morcha; **Kaladas Dahariya,**RELAA, **Alok Shukla** NAPM Chhattisgarh;

**Samar Bagchi, Amitava Mitra**, **Binayak Sen, Sujato Bhadro, Pradip Chatterjee, Pasarul Alam, Amitava Mitra, Tapas Das, Tahomina Mandal, Pabitra Mandal, Kazi Md. Sherif, Biswajit Basak, Ayesha Khatun, Rupak Mukherjee, Milan Das, Asit Roy, Mita Bhatta, Yasin, Matiur Rahman, Baiwajit Basa,** NAPM West Bengal;

**Suniti SR, Sanjay M G, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe,** Mukta Srivastava, Yuvraj Gatkal, Geetanjali Chavan, **Bilal Khan,** Jameela, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan; Chetan Salve, Narmada Bachao Andolan, NAPM Maharashtra; Pervin Jehangir.

**Faisal Khan,**Khudai Khidmatgar, **J S Walia,** NAPM Haryana;

**Guruwant Singh,** NAPM Punjab;

**Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan,** Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan; **Mahendra Yadav,**Kosi Navnirman Manch; **Sister Dorothy,**Aashray Abhiyan, NAPM Bihar;

**Rajendra Ravi**, NAPM; **Bhupender Singh Rawat**, Jan Sangharsh Vahini; **Anjali Bharadwaj** and **Amrita Johri**, Satark Nagrik Sangathan;  **Sanjeev Kumar**, Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch; **Anita Kapoor**, Delhi Shahri Mahila Kaamgaar Union; **Sunita Rani**, National Domestic Workers Union; **Nanhu Prasad**, National Cyclist Union; **Madhuresh Kumar, Priya Pillai, Aryaman Jain, Divyansh Khurana, Evita Das; Anil TV**, Delhi Solidarity Group, **MJ Vijayan** (PIPFPD)

For any further details, please e-mail: [napmindia@gmail.com](mailto:napmindia@gmail.com)