

## PPSS call to Observe "Black Day" on June 22, 2014

Dear Friends,

We call for all people's movements and organizations, political parties, activists, intellectuals and people at large to commemorate the "**Black Day**" on June 22, 2014. As you may know this is the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day when the MOU was signed between Government of Odisha and POSCO.

For the last nine years, the POSCO and the state government has employed end number of tactics to sabotage our peaceful democratic movement. It started influencing our people through declaring packages as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), continuous atrocities on our peaceful protesters, uncalled for and illegal arrests, false police cases, unleashing of a reign of terror by using private goons and so on. They want our people and solidarity groups to get tired and leave up the struggle. We are determined to continue our fight till POSCO withdraw the project. To make this struggle a success, we earnestly request you to support our cause despite continuous and misleading propaganda made by POSCO.

As we have shared with you on the last update, the water resource department has given an unwarranted permission to POSCO to draw water from Hansua River for construction of steel plant. Villagers of Hansua Bachao Sanghrash Samiti are organising a mass demonstration before district collectorate office at Jagatsinghpur office on 21 June 2014 against this unjust and illegal declaration. We also came to know from the media that the officials are planning to convene the meeting with few villagers for discussion on compensation package. PPSS is strongly determined to oppose such illegal and arbitrary move and to fight in tooth and nail for any such attempt of the administration of the Government.

Yesterday (on 5<sup>th</sup> June) at village Budhabhui, Lahunipara block, thousands of tribal communities including the Paudi Bhuiyan and Munda, PVTGs coming from far-flung villages, gathered under the aegis of Khandadhar Suraksha Sangram Samiti (KSSS) daring the baking heat, with their traditional weapons. They pledged to save the bio-rich Khandadhar from mining and vowed to lay down their lives to save their ancestral land from POSCO. The head of Paudi Bhuiyan Adima Janajati, Bilua Naik administered the oath in this regard and the World Environment Day was observed as Save Khandadhar Day. A protest march was taken to the venue and all the members gathered determined to end the struggle by protecting their motherland, natural resources and the ancestral territory and habitat of the *Paudi Bhuyan Adima Janajati* and other forest dwelling populations.

The leaders of various anti-displacement movements in Odisha were also joined in solidarity like Abhay Sahoo, Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti, Parfulla Samantara President, Lok Shakti Abhiyan and Lingaraj, Convener, Western Odisha Farmers Organisations' Coordination Committee besides, Talsara Congress MLA Prafulla Majhi and Banamali Dhupal, Secretary, CPM Sundargarh attended on behalf of its Bonai legislator Laxman Munda. In the meeting, members have appealed to the Central and State Governments to ensure that mining

operation is not allowed in 25 km radius of the waterfall and accord national natural heritage status to the site. Besides, it also demanded strict implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the region to recognise the forest dwellers' community ownership and habitat rights of Paudi Bhuyan and Munda (PVTGs).

This is high time for which we request you to express your voice of protest by joining with our villagers or by taking the initiative to organize at your own place, if you think you should do, a protest march on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014.

We realize that it's not just fighting for our land and for our livelihoods; it's all about fighting for Democracy itself. We take courage from all the various movements and groups from around the world that continue to support us and for whom, in turn, we have come to represent the struggle for democracy.

Kindly circulate this mail widely.

Hoping for solidarity,

Prashant Paikary

Spokesperson, POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti

Mobile no-09437571547

E-Mail - [prashantpaikary@gmail.com](mailto:prashantpaikary@gmail.com)