



**Franciscans International**  
A voice at the United Nations

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**TO: Mr. Calin Georgescu**

Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of  
The movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous  
products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights

Geneva, 5 October 2011

### **URGENT APPEAL**

**Franciscans International is seriously concerned that the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) will endanger the lives and livelihoods of the local communities in the vicinity of the nuclear site of Kudankulam, Trinelveli District, Tamil Nadu, India.**

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP), currently under construction on the coastal area of the Trinelveli District (southern Tamil Nadu), is only 10 km away from Kudankulam village, where the main occupation of local people is on shore and deep-sea fishing.

The local population has strongly opposed the development of the KKNPP since its planning due to its closeness to Kudankulam village. Issues of particular concern are the possible displacement of people, the radiation hazards which will cause the contamination of the food chain through the consumption of fish and other sea products, the discharge of toxic waste into the sea.<sup>1</sup>

The residents of Kudankulam held a hunger strike protest against this project from 11 to 22 September 2011, supported by the nearby villages. It ended only when the Tamil Nadu Government confirmed that *"the Cabinet will be convened on September 22 and it will adopt a resolution (urging the Centre) to not to go ahead with the works on the plant site till the people's fears are removed."*<sup>2</sup>

The KKNPP is a development of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)<sup>3</sup> and it was approved by an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) signed by the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988. According to the NPCIL,<sup>4</sup> one reactor is expected to be commercially operative in November 2011, and the other two in July 2012.

Notwithstanding the official reassurances, Franciscans International is seriously concerned that the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project will have a strong negative impact on the surrounding environment because of the pollution of water and land, and the devastation of the livelihoods of the population of the Trinelveli and neighboring districts.

<sup>1</sup> P. Srikant, *Koondankulam Anti-Nuclear Movement: A Struggle for Alternative Development?*, Working Paper 232, The Institute for Social And Economic Change, Bangalore, 2009, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Jagran Post, *Fast against nuke project withdrawn after assurance by Jaya*, 21 September 2011, available at <http://post.jagran.com/fast-against-nuke-project-withdrawn-after-assurance-by-jaya-1316592167> (last visited 26 September 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is a Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India, available at [http://www.npcil.nic.in/pdf/Profile\\_Eng\\_low.pdf](http://www.npcil.nic.in/pdf/Profile_Eng_low.pdf) (last visited 23 September 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Kudankulam Atomic Power Project, available at <http://www.npcil.nic.in/main/ConstructionDetail.aspx?ReactorID=77> (last visited 27 September 2011).

**In addition, Franciscans International would like to draw attention to the following issues**

- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the KKNPP offers weak assurances about how radiation doses will be kept within the limits when the reactors are operative, and it shows “*much smaller radioactive discharge rates compared to other reactors of similar type and did not collect data on people’s milk and food consumption levels.*”<sup>5</sup>
- The relevant authorities have to conduct public consultations for the purpose of sharing the EIA of the project and considering the concerns of the people affected by it. However, the community has not been informed of the findings of the EIA and public hearings have not been conducted. On 2 June 2007, the authorities held a public meeting which was abruptly ended before the locals could express their concerns.<sup>6</sup>
- The nuclear plant will discharge high temperature waste water into the sea which will deplete the fish stocks near the seashore and be detrimental to the livelihood of fishing villages such as Kudankulam.<sup>7</sup>

Franciscans International is therefore seriously concerned that the KKNPP will have severe repercussions on the right to health and to adequate standards of living of the local communities of the Trinelvei and neighboring districts.

**Recommendations:**

Franciscans International calls on the Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights, to ask the Government of India to:

- Suspend the operation of the KKNPP until it is given environmental clearance on the basis of a proper EIA process for nuclear facilities, which should include: the EIA study itself, public consultations, and the expert committee’s appraisal.
- Set up an independent inquiry commission to examine the human rights impact of the KKNPP in conjunction with the IAE, the finding of which should be made public and accessible to concerned communities
- Abide by international laws aiming at the protection the environment and the affected communities, such as Articles 7, 11, and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

For further information, please contact **Ms. Francesca Restifo**, International Advocacy Director of Franciscans International, [f.restifo@fiop.org](mailto:f.restifo@fiop.org).

Thank you in advance for your attention.

Sincerely in peace,



Sr. Denise Boyle,  
Executive Director

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<sup>5</sup> M.V. Ramana, D.B. Rao, *The environmental impact assessment process for nuclear facilities: An examination of the Indian experience*, in *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 30 (2010) 268-271, 269.

<sup>6</sup> P. Srikant, *Koondankulam Anti-Nuclear Movement*, note 1, 7-10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.