INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY STATEMENT FOR COMRADES AND FRIENDS IN INDIA

Third International Marxist Feminist Conference,

Lund University,

SWEDEN

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Participants at the Third International Marxist Feminist Conference express deep concern at the manner in which writers, professors, democratic and civil rights activists, anti displacement activists and activists working for the rights of political prisoners are being increasingly targeted by the Indian state. The Right to Free Speech and Expression along with the more fundamental Right to Dissent for a just and democratic society has in recent times come under severe threat in India, a country that has been known as the world's largest democracy. The country is facing one of the most repressive times since Independence.

Those opposing repressive draconian laws are being arrested under the same, those fighting for rights of political prisoners are being made into political prisoners and worse, lawyers and advocates who support those implicated for being involved in mass movements against dispossession are themselves being hurtled into the prison system. The fear and panic of capitalism and state is evident to all showing on the other hand the laudable spirit of the growing resistance of people's struggles in India!

The government, armed with acts like Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), is curbing the freedom of expression of all those standing up for the rights of economically and socially marginalized sections of people. In the wake of the neo-liberal economic reforms, the Act was amended several times to curb dissent against the policies and projects rolled out by the economic reforms in order to facilitate global capital. We fear that the Indian state by criminalizing such work and such interventions by people of conscience who are heralding a vision for a more humane and civilized society is taking the work of all such democratic and progressive forces back by many years. We therefore join the voices in India demanding an immediate repeal of the UAPA.

Global capital in its single minded pursuit of mining of mineral resources, deforestation, big dams, steel plants and mega projects has sounded the death knell of a vast majority who live on subsistence still and had been neglected by the state since decades. By doing so, global capital is threatening the constitutional rights of dalits and adivasis, forest dwellers and fisher folk, workers and women, and subsistence producers and small peasantry as citizens. These people are fighting a decisive battle and thus inspiring many people across the country to stand up for their collective rights that is guaranteed under the Indian Constitution.

As a result, the Indian state has put under home arrest since August 28 people's advocate Sudha Bhradwaj, revolutionary poet Varvara Rao, human rights activists Vernon Gonsalvez and Arun Fareira. Democratic rights activist and writer Gautam Navlakha was also under home arrest for a

month. As they stand accused, they also challenge the provisions of the UAPA that they have been questioning on behalf of struggling people.

Those incarcerated since June 6 include Professor Shoma Sen, people's advocate Surendra Gadling, political prisoners' rights activist Rona Wilson, dalit activist Sudhir Dhawale and anti-displacement activist Mahesh Raut.

Languishing in jail since March 2017 are Professor G N Saibaba who is being denied bail despite being over 90% disabled; political prisoners' rights activist Prashant Rahi; student activist Hem Mishra; and three adivasi activists Vijay Tirki, Pandu Narote and Mahesh Tirki. Vijay Tirki as been given 10 years of rigorous imprisonment too. They have been alleged to be associated with the CPI ML (Maoist) party that was banned by the Indian government in 2009.

As Marxist Feminist participants at the Third International Marxist Feminist Conference, we stand in solidarity with the demands being made by our comrades and friends in India:

- Repeal the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)!
- Unconditionally release those arrested under the UAPA!