



## PRESS RELEASE ON CHITTAGONG INCIDENCE OF PEOPLE'S PROTEST AGAINST COAL PLANT CONSTRUCTION HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016.

"Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### Chittagong Violent Deaths Must be Investigated

#### Coal Projects the Real Cause of Unnecessary Death and Damage

Yesterday at least four people, including two brothers, were killed when police opened fire on protesters who were reportedly marching in opposition to a proposed coal plant in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), a national network of groups working to protect Bangladesh's environment, condemns the actions of police, which resulted in at least four deaths and severe injuries to hundreds of people.

It is simply unacceptable for police to open fire on protesters and shoot to kill. We demand an immediate, full and independent inquiry into yesterday's events to hold those responsible to account for the unnecessary murder of at least four people.

Up to 15,000 protesters were reported to be marching in opposition to the seizure of their land by Bangladeshi conglomerate S. Alam, who is planning to build the two coal plants with backing from two Chinese firms -- SEPCOIII Electric Power and HTG. The project is one of 20 coal plants planned for Bangladesh.

It is time for government to stop the death and destruction caused by coal projects in Bangladesh and show real leadership through redirecting investments away from coal to renewables like wind and solar. In India, solar power is now cheaper than coal plants using imported coal, and there is no reason why this can't occur in Bangladesh. Coal plants are causing a reckless loss of life for Bangladesh citizens and ruining some of the most beautiful places in the country.

This is the worst overall loss of life in anti-coal protests worldwide since the [killings of six people](#) in Jharkhand, India, at two protests in April 2011. There have been three following coal projects in Bangladesh to have resulted large-scale protests, violence and deaths:

1. The Phulbari Coal Mine is proposed by Asia Energy Resources, a wholly owned subsidiary of the British GCM Resources. After three people were killed at a protest in 2006, the government halted the project. In 2010 Wikileaks released a [secret cable](#) which revealed that U.S. government diplomats were secretly pushing the government of Bangladesh to revive the project.
2. The Rampal coal plant near the Sundarbans is a joint venture between the Bangladesh Power Development Board and the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India. Indian-owned BHEL was awarded the construction contract earlier this year, the Export-Import Bank of India is expected to provide financing and NTPC will operate the plant. According to [South Asians for Human Rights \(SAHR\)](#), "due process was not followed in land acquisition and relocation," and "local people and activists ... have been constantly harassed by powerful quarters through threats, intimidation, assaults and filing of false cases."

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3. The Chittagong coal plant is proposed to be built by S. Alam group and SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation of China. The price tag for the massive 1,320 MW plant is \$1.8 billion, making it enormously expensive to operate and likely to drive up electricity costs for Bangladeshis.

Coalplants necessitate large-scale land acquisition and result in massive amounts of air and water pollution. Even more importantly, coal is the number one source of carbon pollution that is driving climate change and sea level rise.

Let the tragic deaths in Chittagong be the last Bangladeshi lives sacrificed to enrich foreign and local corporations whose projects would cause 50 years of further harm by fueling global warming. Therefore we call the Government to embrace a clean energy future.”

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