



Statement Condemning Detention of Ladakhi Padyatris (marchers) at Singhu Border

by
Vikalp Sangam General Assembly* & The Western Himalayan Vikalp Sangam

2nd October, 2024

We, over 85 organisations and movements across India, condemn the detention of nearly 200 peaceful climate marchers from Ladakh to Delhi who are raising valid demands of climate justice and 6th schedule status for Ladakh to the Government of India. Walking with principles of Mahatma Gandhi, padyatris (marchers) wanted to peacefully reach Rajghat to pay respect to Bapu on his jayanti and remind the government of their promise for re-opening dialogue. It is highly condemnable that after such a strenuous walk for many days through some rugged terrains of Himalayas, instead of welcoming them, the government chose to detain them like criminals. This is doubly shocking given that some of these steps were promised to them during the elections in 2019, like the granting of Sixth Schedule status to Ladakh, and secure jobs for local youth.

The primary demands by the citizens of Ladakh are inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, statehood, separate Parliamentary seats for Kargil and Leh, and a public service commission for Ladakh enabling its youth to get jobs. Such steps are crucial to safeguard Ladakh's ecologically and culturally unique and fragile status, especially against unrestricted and inappropriate land use, commercialisation, and excessive tourism. Protecting Ladakh's ecological integrity is also vital for the climatic and water security of South Asia as a whole.

Please see our previous statement on the Ladakh March and demands in detail [here](#).

Instead of opening a receptive dialogue with the Ladakh marchers and their supporters from all across the Himalayas and the nation, the union government chose to act in a dictatorial manner by imposing prohibitory orders across Delhi and illegally detain the peaceful climate marchers.

Vikalp Sangam and all the supporters of this democratic movement demand immediate release of all marchers, withdrawal of prohibitory orders and opening up of a genuinely sensitive dialogue with the Ladakh climate marchers.



People protesting against detention of Sonam Wangchuk in Leh on Tuesday. Source: Daily Excelsior

Several fraternal groups to VS and many others across the country will observe a 12 hours fast on 2nd October, in solidarity with the climate marchers.

Vikalp Sangam General Assembly & The Western Himalayan Vikalp Sangam

*The Vikalp Sangam General Assembly (VSGA) is the coordinating mechanism for the Vikalp Sangam process (www.vikalpsangam.org), which aims to network movements, organisations and individuals working on alternatives to unsustainable, iniquitous development. It contains about 85 organisations and networks across India, listed below.

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Vikalp Sangam General Assembly Members

Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development (ACCORD)
 AGRAGAMEE
 Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)
 Alternative Law Forum (ALF)
 Amhi Amchya Arogyasathi
 Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)
 Bhoomi College
 Blue Ribbon Movement (BRM)
 Canopy Collective
 Centre for Education and Documentation (CED)
 Centre for Environment Education (CEE)
 Centre for Financial Accountability (CFA)
 Centre for Pastoralism
 Chetna
 CGnet Swara
 Dakshin Foundation
 Deccan Development Society (DDS)
 Deer Park
 Development Alternatives (DA)
 Desert Resource Centre (DRC)
 Dhaatri Trust
 Dharamitra
 Ektha
 Equitable Tourism Options (EQUATIONS)
 Forest Rights Coalition - JK
 Fridays for Future – India
 Gene Campaign
 Goonj
 Greenpeace India
 Ideosync Media Combine
 Inner Climate Academy (ICA)
 Margshala Foundation
 Jagori Rural
 Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP)
 Kalpavriksh
 Khudai Khidmatgar
 Kriti Team
 Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO)
 Let India Breathe (LIB)
 Local Futures Ladakh
 Maadhyam
 Maati
 Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM)
 Mahalir Association for Literacy Awareness and Rights

(MALAR)
 Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)
 Movement for Advancing Understanding of Sustainability and Mutuality (MAUSAM)
 National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (NAPM)
 National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
 National Coalition for Natural Farming (NCNF)
 National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW)
 Nirangal Charitable Trust
 Non-timber Forest Products Exchange Programme India (NTFP-EP India)
 North East Network (NEN)
 Organic Farmers Market (OFM)
 People's Resource Centre (PRC)
 Peoples' Science Institute (PSI)
 Pipal Tree
 Regenerative Bihar Collective
 reStore
 Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network (RRA)
 Rythu Swarajya Vedika
 Sambhaavna
 Foundation for Economic and Ecological Development (FEED)
 Sahjeevan
 Sahodaya Trust
 Sangat
 School for Rural Development and Environment (SRDE)
 Shikshantar
 Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT)
 Sikkim Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association
 Social Entrepreneurship Association (SEA)
 Society for Promoting Participative Ecosystem Management (SOPPECOM)
 South Asian Dialogue on Ecological Democracy (SADED)/ Harit Swaraaj Samvaad
 The Himalaya Collective
 Titli Trust
 TN Women's Collective
 Travellers' University
 Tribal Health Initiative (THI)
 URMUL Seemant Samiti
 Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN)
 Women's Collective
 Youth Alliance
 Yugma Collective
 Yuva Ekta Foundation
 Individuals (Bablu Ganguly, Dinesh Abrol, Mohan Hirabai Hiralal, Ovais Sultan Khan, Sehjo Singh, SP Ravi)