



STATEMENT OF CONCERN AND MOURNING WITH PEOPLE OF LADAKH

by
Vikalp Sangam General Assembly*

26th September 2025

The Vikalp Sangam General Assembly stands in solidarity with Ladakhi people and grieves the loss of lives lost on 24 September 2025. We express strong concern about the use of armed force by the local administration that led to the loss of four people and left several dozen injured. We also protest the arrest of Gandhian educationist and activist, Sonam Wangchuk on 26th September, reportedly under the stringent National Security Act, with patently false allegations of inciting violence.

Ladakh has been an exemplar in leading a peaceful protest with clarity of demands to safeguard their lands, rights, culture, and environment, seeking Constitutional provisions of 6th Schedule and statehood. The movement has had other key demands, including a parliamentary seat each for Leh and Kargil districts (rather than the current situation of one for both), and clarity on who has domicile status so that most jobs created in Ladakh could go to Ladakhis. They have been raising voices on behalf of mountains, rivers, lands and wildlife that are facing the threat of destruction in the face of inappropriate 'development' and climate change.

All these years, the movement has been explicitly peaceful. However, the turn of events yesterday have led to serious concerns. Leaders of the movement have expressed shock at the police action, but also disappointment at the violence. They have repeatedly appealed to people to remain non-violent, consistent with the history of commendable restraint that Ladakhis have shown.

We are also concerned about the use of violence by a section of Ladakhi protestors, and like the leaders of the movement, do not feel it is justified. But in the context of continued recalcitrance of the central government, we understand the frustration and hopelessness that Ladakhis feel. For four years, the central government has been dragging its feet in considering the key demands for Constitutional safeguards. This is especially so given that



6th schedule status and reservation for jobs were amongst the promises made by the current ruling party in 2019 and again in 2020.

We mourn with Ladakh for the lives lost. We stand in solidarity and affirm their peaceful struggle for justice, safeguard and protection of lands, culture and ecology. Their movement remains an inspiration for the rest of India, as there is no future for us to preserve if we don't preserve our lands, waters, cultures and environment.

* The Vikalp Sangam General Assembly (VSGA) is the coordinating mechanism for the Vikalp Sangam process (<https://vikalpsangam.org/about-us/>), which networks movements, organisations and individuals working on alternatives to unsustainable, iniquitous development. It contains about 85+ organisations and networks across India. The views in this statement are not necessarily endorsed by all member organisations. Previous statements on Ladakh issued by VSGA are available at:

<https://vikalpsangam.org/vikalp-sangam-statements/>