

Challenges to Indian Democracy: Nuclearisation, Militarisation, State Violence

August 30-31, New Delhi, INDIA

With the political compass in India shifting decisively to the right, apprehensions about dangerous rise of militarisation, exacerbation of nuclear tension, and spread of violence against minorities, dalits, women and other vulnerable sections are not unfounded. In fact these trends were already on the rise and even during the previous government, the divisive and diversionary methods had become the rule of the day. In this sense, the recent shift can be seen as an extension, albeit dramatically more aggressive in its strength and scope.

Revising the minimalist nuclear doctrine of India and reversing the no-first-use posture was one of the key points in the right-wing's manifesto in the recent general elections. This is extremely unfortunate in the face of the fact that elections in Pakistan were fought this time on the promises of improving relations with India. India has become the world's largest importer of arms, with its biggest supplier being Israel. It's recent participation in the joint naval exercise in the Indian ocean against China has raised the tensions in Asia. Such militarist moves must be opposed as they don't only imperil our security and collective peace, but the politics of jingoism effectively silences the important concerns and struggles over livelihood, justice and equality. Further escalating the military onslaught on the tribal areas in India has been one of the most initial steps of the new regime.

Such consolidation of a militarised state is accompanied with brutal repression on people's protests and demonisation of dissent, particularly on the anti-nuclear, anti-GM and anti-land acquisition fronts. Neoliberal model of development is now securitised and its discontents are regarded as national security threats.

Acquitting the six innocent men who were implicated falsely in the Akshardham incident in Gujarat, the Supreme Court has strongly criticised the then Home Minister of the state for the cruel bias. Such structural denial of justice prevails in other states as well and citizens groups have been raising their voice in the previous union government and with various state governments. Dalit rape-victims and their families from Haryana are awaiting justice at Jantar Mantar for several weeks now. Ensuring justice to the minorities, dalits and vulnerable sections is the litmus test for a democracy. Consolidating our struggles on issues like AFSPA, Section 377, Green Hunt and ensuring basic human rights should be on the top of our collective priority.

In the above scenario, consolidation of the forces of democracy, harmony and justice is a pre-requisite for a long-term struggle and deeper change.

The 2-day National Convention will be held in New Delhi on 30th and 31st of August 2014. Concerned citizens and movements from all over the country will be invited to raise their voice for justice and peace. We are reaching out to democratic organisations and people's movements to come together and among other matters help work out a programme that will include opening and closing plenaries, parallel workshops and evening cultural activities and in this way make a public statement of some importance before the new government.

Venue: Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi

Organisations -

Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace(CNDP)

Popular Education and Action Centre(PEACE)

Indian Social Action Forum(INSAF)

National Alliance of People's Movement(NAPM)

NoMore Campaign

People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy(PMANE)

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons(ICAN)