



## NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR SMALL SCALE FISHWORKERS

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NPSSF/Convener/ 003-24

March 27, 2024

**Sri Praful Patel,**  
Hon'ble Administrator,  
Lakshadweep.

Sub: Withdraw the unjust and illegal eviction notice served upon the small scale fish workers of Agatti island, Lakshadweep.

Sir,

Greetings from the National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (NPSSF).

We are shocked by the news that the Lakshadweep administration has issued eviction notices to several residents of Agatti island and is forcefully taking over coastal land measuring 5000 sq metre (1.23 acre) that extends northwards from the western jetty and is inhabited by fishing community. The fishers were served an emergency notice by the Deputy Collector, Agatti, asking to remove "all encroachments" from the coast including boats, canoes, sheds and equipment used for drying fish within three days or face action by the Revenue Department. If the boats and sheds are not voluntarily removed, revenue officials would remove them and impose the cost on the "encroachers."

We are given to understand that the eviction notice has been precipitated by the Lakshadweep administration's decision to let the said land be used for a **Tent City** proposed for **luxury tourism** by Gujarat-based Praveg Ltd. It is well known that Praveg Ltd has installed Tent Cities at Narmada, Varanasi and recently Ayodhya. Praveg has also been given the nod to establish Tent Cities in the Union Territories of Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

It is reported that the fishing community leaders requested the authorities to shift the site of the Tent City to the other side of the island leaving their habitat and fishing area. This was because their ancestors had chosen the area where the sea was relatively calm and they could moor their boats and land their catches there with less risk. The Lakshadweep administration, presumably deafened and blinded by the prospects of Luxury Tourism for the rich, did not listen to the requests of a poor community threatened by imminent eviction.

**The impugned eviction notice is totally unjust and blatantly illegal.**

It is a **crime against humanity** to evict fishing communities from a coastal area where they have been fishing from ancestral times and that too for promoting Luxury Tourism to fill up the coffers of a few destroying the traditional livelihood of many. The Government has no moral right to privatise the coastal commons - the coastal land and waters traditionally used by the fishing communities. This violates the **public trust doctrine**. The Government is not the owner of the natural resources like land, water, forest or air that are traditionally used by the communities. The Government is the custodian of these resources and responsible to ensure and protect that use.

It is a **crime against nature** as it is going to replace a sustainable livelihood activity by a commercial activity having much larger environmental footprint in an eco-sensitive area like Lakshadweep.

**The eviction notice is illegal** as it is in violation of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951 read with the Scheduled Areas (Part A – States) Order 1950. The orders state that Lakshadweep is a scheduled area and the islanders are treated as scheduled tribes.

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The eviction notice also violates section 41 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

**Section 3 of the Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands (Protection of Scheduled Tribes) Regulation, 1964** states that 'No land held or occupied by a member of the Scheduled Tribes shall be liable to attachment or sale in execution of any decree or order of a civil or revenue court. Any transfer, attachment or sale of any land made in contravention of this section shall be void'.

**The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notifications of 2011 & 2019 and the Island Protection Zone (IPZ) Notifications of 2011 & 2019** uphold and protect the right of fishing activities and fishers' habitats on the coast.

The persons involved in this unlawful eviction drive stand to be booked under the **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (POA), 1989**.

The Administration of Lakshadweep is out to sell the islands to companies by snatching it away from the indigenous people of Lakshadweep that include the fishing communities by large proportion. The National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers vehemently protests the sale out and condemns the utterly anti-people and anti-environment drive of the Lakshadweep administration.

We urge upon you to immediately withdraw the unjust and illegal eviction notice served on the small scale fish workers of Agatti island, Lakshadweep.

**Save Water, Save Fish, Save Fisher People.**

Yours truly,

Pradip Chatterjee,  
National Convener,  
NPSSF.

NPSSF/Convener/ 003-24/1(4)

March 27, 2024

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to the –

1. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
3. Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
4. Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Pradip Chatterjee,  
National Convener,  
NPSSF.

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