



NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR SMALL SCALE FISHERWORKERS (INLAND)

June 11, 2020

Shri Narendra Modi,
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
South Block, Raisina Hill
New Delhi-110011

Sub: Baghjan Blowout is a Corporate Crime Against Nature and People – Need Immediate Action

Sir,

On 27th May 2020 a massive blow out happened at the drilling oil well site (BGR No 5) of Oil India Limited (OIL) near the village of Baghjan followed by a fountain of spewing crude oil with massive blaze as a result of failure of pressure control systems.

The fire has already killed two fire fighters and has forced evacuation of about 3,000 residents. The oil spill has already affected the world famous **Maguri-Motapung** wetland. It is going to flow into the **Dangori** and **Dibru** rivers which, in their turn flow into river **Brahmaputra** through the **Lohit** river. Soon after the event of the 27th May, dense particles or condensates from the blow-out have turned the local atmosphere misty. Rain-like droplets have fallen on vegetation leading to the formation of a sticky layer of oil. The Baghjan oil spill poses a serious threat to the rich biodiversity of **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park**.

As a result of the spillage, aquatic species have died in large numbers. For most of the families in and around the oil exploration site, fishing/fish farming is the primary source of livelihood and oil residues suspended on the water bodies are already leading to disastrous impacts.

We take this opportunity to remind you that, thanks to the irresponsibility of OIL, oil spills or blowouts are recurrent in Assam. On September 15, 2005 there was an oil well fire at Dikom. On July 14, 2011 there was a massive gas leakage at Deohal. On February 3, 2020 there was Burhi Dihing river fire due to gas pipeline burst.

The Baghjan oil well blowout due to the failure of pressure control system and the failure to arrest the oil spill from contaminating the air, water and soil of a large area along with the recurrence of such incidents have proved beyond doubt that OIL suffers from basic shortcomings and has miserably failed to comply with the conditions, including the installation of Blow Out Prevention mechanism, laid down under the environmental clearance certificate provided for its operations. OIL stands fully responsible for the disaster.



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Sir, the Government of India in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas holds direct responsibility not only in its failure to stop the recurrent accidents associated with oil exploration and extraction in the eco-sensitive area but also in allowing such activities to continue. By devastating the flora and fauna and by degrading the air, water and soil of the area OIL has spoiled our rich natural wealth. They have ruined livelihood of thousands of fishers and farmers. It is a violation of basic environmental and human rights guaranteed by the constitution of the country.

We demand –

- 1. Immediate capping of the blown out well spewing oil and dousing the blaze;**
- 2. Immediate clean up of the oil spill with associated pollutants and restoration of water bodies;**
- 3. Compensation of Rs. 20 lakhs to the family of each of the persons killed by the blowout fire;**
- 4. Compensation and rehabilitation of affected people to be planned and implemented with the participation of the affected people;**
- 5. Stoppage of oil exploration and extraction in ecologically sensitive areas of the country, especially in ecologically sensitive areas of the North-East.**

Sincerely,

Pradip Chatterjee,

Convener, NPSSFW(I)

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