



- For Immediate Release -

EMPLOYEES OF ALCAN INDIAN VENTURE INTIMIDATE AND HARASS IN KASHIPUR
60 demonstrators gather in front of Montreal headquarters to denounce Alcan's outrageous activities

Montreal, December 16th, 2004

Today, a solidarity group called Alcan't in India held a demonstration in front of Alcan's Montreal headquarters to commemorate the killings of three anti-mining villagers four years ago. Meanwhile an independent report from India shows that goons, who have been on Alcan's payroll for the last three years, have attacked various delegations attempting to enter the region to observe and report on the commemorations occurring in Kashipur.

"Just before the Montreal demonstration, we received a report from Sudhir Pattnaik an independent journalist of Orissa who has been covering breaking news from Kashipur, that 7000 local peoples congregated to commemorate the December 2000 shootings and again proclaim their clear anti-mining stance," said Alcan't in India spokesperson Abhimanyu Sud. "This is despite a massive police presence, which has set up checkpoints throughout Kashipur restricting almost all movement and communications within, to and from the area. This police intimidation is a conscious program of the state in support of UAIL's proposed mine and refinery, in which Alcan has a 45% share."

From this same source, the group has learned that separate delegations of journalists, a sitting Member of the Orissa Legislative Assembly, other politicians and international observers from England and Spain had their jeeps stoned, were manhandled and were denied access to the areas by a crowd lead by Girish Patro and Damburu Naik, both of whom are on the payroll of UAIL. Joan Martinez-Allier, a professor of economics from Spain, as well as observers from England had their passports confiscated by the goons. This illegal harassment and intimidation occurred in front of the Tikiri Police Station in full view of the police.

"Alcan is obviously refusing to take responsibility in this nasty situation. While on the one hand claiming that they 'denounce' the violence in Kashipur, they are taking no proactive measures to mitigate violence. In fact, UAIL's employees, and thus Alcan's employees, have unambiguously been identified as perpetrators of additional violence and repression in Kashipur," said Patrick Cadorette, another spokesperson for Alcan't in India, from the snowy steps of Alcan's Montreal headquarters.

"It is very difficult to believe Alcan's persistent claims that the vast majority of the residents in Kashipur support the mine when, despite massive police repression and restrictions on movement, thousands have gathered in commemoration and have resolved to drive Alcan out of Kashipur, no matter what the price they may have to pay. Likewise, all the evidence Alcan has to demonstrate this so-called support has been procured under police repression and political corruption," added Mr. Sud. "For example, in recent interviews, Alcan spokesperson Anik Michaud has claimed that a pro-mining rally of 10 000-15 000 people on November 28 is a sign of general support for the mine. What she forgot to mention was that millions of rupees were spent shipping in at least 5000 peoples from outlying areas, and that the District Collector, who is supposed to be an impartial bureaucrat, has been identified as key organizer of this November event. It is clear that Alcan, with the support of the ruling Orissa government, is manufacturing support for their proposed project."

Alcan't in India and its supporters gathered in front of Alcan's headquarters to reveal these facts to the public, to the press and to Alcan representatives. "We demand that Alcan divest from this unjust, irresponsible, and troubled project," said one demonstrator. "It is far too long that they have remained quiet here in Canada, while their venture in India is being implemented by intimidation and violence."

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