

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ನಾಗರಿಕರಾದ ನಾವು | WE THE PEOPLE OF BENGALURU

TO:
Dear Mrs. Sonia Gandhi,
President, INC, New Delhi

AUGUST 11 2016
BANGALORE

Dear Madam,

THE CLENCHED FIST OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS BENGALURU (BBMP in context)

We the People of Bengaluru (WPB) is an anti-corruption forum comprising of Doctors, Lawyers, Business Leaders, retired Judges and other concerned citizens.

"The ongoing demolition of lake encroachments in Bengaluru raises the inevitable question: Who should bear the blame for hapless citizens going through the agony of seeing their dream houses coming down like ninepins? Were these citizens conned or did they merely trust a system where 'A' khata carry no weight? It is hard to believe that the authorities failed to notice the glaring fact that that the houses were being built on rajakaluves when the plans were brought to them for approval. Did those authorised to give the nod for building plans turn a blind eye just because their palms were greased all the way? The demolitions may in future save the city from a Chennai like flood but they have also exposed the sad truth that realtors and greedy bureaucrats have destroyed the faith of the common man in the civic administration."
Deccan Chronicle, 9th August, 2016.

WE DEMAND FOR A REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

We the People of Bengaluru write this letter hoping that the sanity of the Congress government revives.

As Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the author and perfecter of the 1975-77 distressing Indian emergency, who curbed our civil liberties, stated, "You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist." In hindsight, she was rather prophetic about what the future of the Congress holds in its clenched fist.

In an episode when Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India, we have seen the release of Warren Anderson who was arrested on a written order, was released on an oral one from the executive. To refresh your memory, In 1984, Warren Anderson was the chairman of Union Carbide Corporation when an estimated fifteen thousand people were killed and half a million were injured in a lethal gas leak accident at the pesticide plant of Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) in Bhopal in 1984.

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Likening to the above stated facts, we have a State that is in emergency where civil liberties have been hijacked and the perpetrators - the preceding and present governments, have shielded themselves, using the doctrine of double affect against Bengalureans.

As you may be aware, the Congress government of Karnataka have been on a hysterical demolition drive, razing down the homes of it residents who have obtained all legal sanctions, have paid their dues, followed the due diligence process, obtained all permissions and have built their houses on that land. Now the BBMP, Bengaluru's municipal corporation has stated that their land is "illegal" by the definition that their houses were built on "feeder drains." However, the house owners have proven that they have followed all legal procedures with 'A' khata certificates establishing their bonafide ownership. The government has claimed that due to "corrupt" officials who sanctioned the land, the land owners have to bear the brunt of the law.

As an analogy, if a customer, let's call him Rahul, walks into a branded pen store, purchases a branded pen that comes with a box and a manual while a receipt has been issued to him. After two days, the not so young Rahul, realized that the pen is a fake and takes it back to the store. The store acknowledges that yes; the pen is a fake and confessed that a rogue employee had swapped the original pen with a fake. However, the store management advises Rahul that the store cannot be held responsible for the action of their employee and that he has to bear the brunt and his money is dead. The store then takes the fake pen and destroys it as it is their brand that was illegally replicated.

This is the story of the city of Bengaluru, ruled with a clenched fist. A clenched fist is a sign of corrupt, non performing government and that it is not being in harmony with its citizens. If the Congress had an open fist, it would demonstrate a willingness to reach out to its citizens who are paying the salaries of the government officials to "serve" us.

We are mindful that the BBMP has a right to demolish any structures that were constructed on arbitrarily and that too, over feeder drains. But the fact of the matter is, the government, whether previous or present have "legally" sold they land to its citizens. Now, the residents had no clue that the land they had purchased were on the feeder drains. Therefore, how are we to trust the government for all our future land purchases?

The agonizing question is, what is the sanctity of this khata now? Why did the astute BBMP approve the building plan and why were the land buyers supplied electricity and water by the present Congress government? Why has the present BBMP been collecting property tax for their houses if they were illegally built? How is the common man to know that he is being cheated by his government when it swears by the law?

Our main contentions are:

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1. Why did the Congress, state government NOT implement a rehabilitation programme in advance for the "victims" of the scams that have stemmed from within the government? After all, it is not their fault; they only followed the advice of the ruling government.
2. Why didn't the government, in good faith implement an Act similar to The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (also Land Acquisition Act, 2013). This is an Act of Indian Parliament that regulates land acquisition and lays down the procedure and rules for granting compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement to the affected persons in India. The Act has provisions to provide fair compensation to those whose land is taken away, brings transparency to the process of acquisition of land to set up factories or buildings, infrastructural projects and assures rehabilitation of those affected.
3. Why did the Congress, state government NOT initiate action against the officials that were involved into the sanctioning of the land in context, BEFORE demolishing the houses?

It is the plea of the citizens of Bengaluru, that you will drive sense into this incompetent party of yours that has left Bengaluru as a city of ruins.

Congress claims to be pro people and secular and now is the time to prove your mettle and integrity.

CC:

The President of India
The Prime Minister of India
The United Nations Human Rights Commission

Thanking you,
We the People of Bengaluru (WPB)

Dr. Dominic F Dixon, Chairman, Ethos Institute/ Activist 98805-36501
Mr. Kumar Jahgirdar, President CRISP/ Social Activist 9845264488
K.V. Dhananjaya Advocate -Supreme Court
Shaji Verghese -Advocate -High Court