**Protest Call and Statement against the Kaziranga Police Killings, Assam**

**Delhi Action Committee Against Kaziranga Police Killings, Assam**

**Protest Demonstration**

 **Against Kaziranga Police Killings**

**2pm, 23rd September, Assam Bhawan, Sardar Patel Marg, Chanakyapuri**

After the BJP came to power in Assam in May 2016, the state government has unleashed a reign of terror to execute its fascistic agendas. Within 2 months into power, the government opened fire and killed a 25 year old man Mintu Deuri, during a protest organized in Raha against the transfer of the site for a proposed AIIMS in the state on 15th July 2016. Now on 19 September 2016, just 34 days after the Raha incident, the police has again opened fire and killed two people - Anjuma Khatun and Fakhruddin, at a demonstration led by the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) at Banderdubi revenue village near the Kaziranga National Park. The protestors were demanding resettlement and adequate compensation against an eviction drive carried out by the mandate of [the Gauhati High Court order dated 9 October 2015](http://ghconline.gov.in/Judgment/PIL662012.pdf) which was supposed to happen two days later, i.e. on 21 September 2016 but had been preponed to avoid protests. The villagers, belonging mainly to the Muslim community of erstwhile East Bengal origin, have been residing in the village for more than half a century.

Out of the 198 displaced families from Banderdubi, around 40 have moved in with their relatives and the rest have been compelled to seek shelter in Baghmari, a nearby village under the open skies. The Deputy Commissioner of Nagaon has not yet allowed any relief measures to reach them. It must be mentioned here that the 7 Hindu families that lived in the village were informed before and were reportedly asked to move into safe places before the commencement of the forceful eviction drive, which highlights the communal agenda of the state administration. One of the most powerful ministers in the Assam government, Himanta Biswa Sarma, posted on his official Facebook page after the eviction drive that the new government would never compromise on "*Jati, Mati, and Bheti*" [Nationality, Land, and Home], a rhetoric of the homeland creating a paranoia against the Muslim inhabitants of erstwhile East Bengal origin, with which the BJP came to power. Thus in a true fascistic form, the repression has been accompanied with a parallel mobilisational drive, pitting one section of the society against another. Through electronic, print and social media, gross misinformation and falsehood has been consciously spread and we are told, this is a struggle to recover the Assamese nation from the outsiders – the Bangladeshis.

During the hearing of the case, the Advocate-General acknowledged and supported the contention of the applicants that as per the revenue records, Banderdubi and Deochur Chang are two villages that have been declared as revenue village by the government (in 1961) and therefore are not part of the Kaziranga National Park which makes the eviction of any villager from the said areas illegal (GHC Order, pp. 21). However the Gauhati High Court ordered fast eviction of inhabitants in the second, third, fifth and sixth additions of the Kaziranga National Park (GHC Order, pp. 36-37). [Reportedly](http://thewire.in/67104/kaziranga-firing-two-killed/) a total of 198 families from Banderdubi, 160 from Deochur Chang and 12 from Palkhowa were evicted in this drive. These villages have been in those areas even before official recognition of Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary as a National Park, it's inhabitants are not encroachers but revenue-paying villagers.According to records these villages (Banderdubi and Deochur Chang) came into existence in 1951 and the government granted *patta* (land entitlements) in 1961. The names of the villagers were inserted into the voters' list in 1965 for the assembly election, and a government school was established there in 1966. On the other hand, Kaziranga was declared as a National Park by the central government on 11 February 1974.

Section 144 had already been in place in the said areas since Saturday, 17th of September. It must be mentioned here that the villagers were willing to abide by the Gauhati High Court order and evict the land voluntarily for the cause of conservation of the national park but were simply demanding resettlement and adequate compensation and enough time to comply with the court's order. In the consequent clash between the police and the local people, the police blatantly resorted to extreme brutality, first with tear gas and then with live bullets. Apart from the casualties, five more people have been severely injured.

The rapidity and force with which the current government has deployed its fascistic agenda by using state mechanisms must be read as clear signs of impending trouble for the already much troubled people of Assam. The targeted and brazen use of police force to kill citizens in order to craft a 'nation' and society as per its skewed wishes may soon turn into an irretrievable situation. As in other parts of the country, the Assam government has been acquiring land to serve the interests of the big capital or pursue its 'developmental' policies but it has no patience to listen to toiling people when it comes to their requirements for livelihood. And to repeat an age long political cliché, nowhere in the rest of India, or the national media have we seen any reactions or responses to this incident.

 In any case, why is it legitimate to kill, even if he or she is a Bangladeshi?

*We demand:*

1. Immediate action against the concerned security and state officials who approved the decision to open fire on unarmed and peaceful protestors.

2. Immediate compensation and rehabilitation of all the evicted people of these villages.

3. An unconditional apology by the Chief Minister and the Home Minister of Assam to the people of these villagers and the country.

4. The Government of Assam must ensure and guarantee the safety and human rights of all people, irrespective of caste, creed, sex and religion, as laid out by the Constitution of the Union of India.

*We also intend to*:

1. Submit a petition to the National Human Rights Commission appealing that a show-cause notice be served to the Government of Assam asking for the rationale behind the live bullet firing upon protestors.

Sd/-

Biswajit Bora, Shalim M. Hussain, Jyotirmoy Talukdar, Sukruta Alluri, Bonojit Hussain, Mayur Chetia, Nayan Jyoti , Lokesh, Kislay Gonsalvez, Amrapali Basumatary, Usman Jawed, Apoorva Gautam.