

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a threat to democratic values, indigenous people and environment, not welcome by Indian People

New Delhi, January 25: The Brazilian President, Jai Bolsonaro is on a four day visit to the country, starting January 24th. He has been invited by the Indian government to be the chief guest at the 71st Republic Day celebrations. This is a special day that we cherish and reassert the values of freedom, equality, plurality and diversity, the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution, adopted after a long fight for Independence and firmly defended by us ever since. As we mark this day, millions across the country are on the streets protesting the divisive agenda being pushed in the name of rabid nationalism and the process of 'othering' being planned through new citizenship laws.

We the signatories of this letter would like to state that President Bolsonaro is the guest of the Indian State and as Indian people we are opposed to his misogynistic, homophobic and anti-people views and actions as witnessed in his term as President of Brazil. We condemn the actions of the Brazilian President and many regressive measures he has undertaken since the time he became President in January, 2019.

Mr Bolsonaro has been openly homophobic, racist, made crude jokes about rape and over the time been responsible for targeting environmental and human rights NGOs and have attacked the freedom of expression and dissent. He has denied climate change and changed the Brazilian environmental laws owing to his pro-business policies, and allowed Amazonian forest fires in June – August 2019 and only acted after huge international pressures. His actions have only contributed to already worsening climate crisis.

It also needs to be noted that Brazil's Human Rights Advocacy Collective (CADHu) and the Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns Commission for Human Rights (Arns Commission) including six former government ministers are seeking to indict the far-right president Jair Bolsonaro at the International Criminal Court for encouraging genocide against Brazil's indigenous people. The briefing note to the ICC notes that since taking power in January, Mr Bolsonaro has repeatedly denigrated Brazil's indigenous people – comparing them to animals in zoos and "prehistoric men" – and overseen efforts to dismantle Funai, the already underfunded agency supposed to protect Brazil's more than 300 tribes. As part of his Global neoliberal agenda, he has also pushed to open up indigenous reserves to mining companies. As a result the living conditions and lifestyles of the indigenous peoples are being destroyed by massive river pollution and invasion of their lands by wildcat miners, loggers and land-grabbers, noting the recent 29% increase in annual deforestation – the highest rate in a decade. Mr. Bolsonaro said after those devastating numbers emerged that Amazon fires and deforestation were cultural and would never end.

The invitation to the Brazilian President by the Government of India is outrageous too because as the President Mr Bolsonaro has dragged India to the World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) dispute settlement body, contending that India's commitments to some binding rules in the WTO have been violated. If the dispute panel upholds the complaint of Brazil (and other countries which have joined subsequently), Indian sugarcane producers' future looks bleak. Already reeling under the agrarian crisis Indian farmers are feeling indignant that by inviting Mr Bolsonaro as the chief guest, the Indian government appears to be giving a message to them that their lives and livelihoods do not matter much for the government.

It is no coincidence that current BJP led government at the centre finds common cause with the Brazilian President because on many of the issues they have similar views. The current Indian government is following similar anti-people policies, is promoting discrimination against minorities, attacking the freedom of expression and association, criminalizing dissent and weakening environmental and labour laws. Coming together of these two similar fascist and anti people leadership is determinantal to the progress of a progressive politics and democratic values which advocates building of mutual solidarity and people's power.

We extend our solidarity to the struggling indigenous people of Amazonia, the Brazilian working people and the environmental and rights groups in Brazil who have been protesting against these policies of Mr Bolsonaro. The rise of the right wing forces in our country and in Brazil is detrimental to democratic norms and we vow to continue fighting against this and build real people to people solidarity between India and Brazil.

Issued Jointly by Organisations and Individuals below :

Organisations

1. All India Kisan Sabha
2. All India Union of Forest Working People
3. Bargi Bandh Visthapit Evam Parbhavit Sangh
4. Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha
5. Bhumi Adhikar Andolan
6. Centre for Financial Accountability
7. Chutka Parmanu Virodhi Sagarsh samiti
8. Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), Chennai
9. Coalition for Environmental Justice in India
10. Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch
11. Delhi Solidarity Group
12. Environment Support Group
13. Financial Accountability Network, India
14. Focus on the Global South
15. Fridays for Future, India

16. India Climate Justice
17. MAUSAM Network
18. Mines, Minerals and Peoples
19. National Alliance of People's Movements
20. National Domestic Workers Union
21. Teachers Against Climate Crisis
22. Trans Rights Collective
23. Working Group on International Financial Institutions

Individual Endorsements

1. Afzal Anish
2. Aloka Kujur
3. Altamas Ansari
4. Amitava Mitra, NAPM West Bengal
5. Anand Mazgaonkar, Swati Desai, Krishnakant, Parth, Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti, Gujarat
6. Anant,
7. Anil TV, Delhi Solidarity Group.
8. Anita Kapoor, Delhi Shahri Mahila Kaamgaar Union
9. Anjali Bharadwaj and Amrita Johri, Satark Nagrik Sangathan
10. Arun Jena
11. Aruna Rodrigues, Activist, Mhow, MP
12. Aruna Roy, Shankar Singh, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)
13. Arundhati Dhuru, NAPM India
14. Arvind Murti
15. Aryaman Jain
16. Ashalatha, MAKAAAM
17. Ashish Kothari, Pune
18. Ashish Ranjan, Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan
19. Ashok Verma, NAPM Jharkhand
20. Aziz Minat
21. Balakrishna Sand,
22. Balu Gadi, Bapji Juvvala, NAPM Andhra Pradesh
23. Basant Hetamsaria
24. Bharat Jambucha, NAPM Gujarat
25. Bhupender Singh Rawat, Jan Sangharsh Vahini
26. Bilal Khan, Jameela, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan
27. Binayak Sen, Kolkata
28. Chakri, Samalochana
29. Chetan Salve, Narmada Bachao Andolan
30. CR Neelakandan
31. Dayamani Barla, Adivasi-Moolnivasi Astivtva Raksha Samiti
32. Dev Desai, Gujarat
33. Divyansh Khurana
34. Dr. Leo A. Singh
35. Dr. Sunilam, Adv. Aradhna Bhargava, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti
36. Durga Nayak
37. Evita Das

38. Faisal Khan, Khudai Khidmatgar,
39. Gabriele Dietrich, Penn Urimay Iyakkam, Madurai
40. Gautam Bandopadhyay, Nadi Ghati Morcha
41. Gautam Modi, General Secretary, New Trade Union Initiative
42. Geetanjali Chavan, Maharashtra
43. Geetha Ramakrishnan, Unorganised Sector Workers Federation
44. Gurwant Singh, NAPM Punjab
45. Hannan Mollah, All India Kisan Sabha
46. Harsh Mander, Rights and Peace Activist, New Delhi
47. J S Walia, NAPM Haryana
48. Jabar Singh, Rashtra Seva Dal
49. Jagriti Rahi
50. Jeevan Kumar, Hyderabad
51. Jipal Murmu
52. K Ramnarayan, Uttarakhand
53. Kailash Meena, NAPM Rajasthan
54. Kaladas Dahariya, RELAA
55. Kalyan Anand
56. Kamayani Swami
57. Kaushika Draavid, IIT Kanpur
58. Kavita Srivastava, People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)
59. Kiran Kumar Vissa & Kondal, Rythu Swarajya Vedika
60. Krishna, Telangana Vidyavantula Vedika-TVV,
61. Lakshimpriya Mohanty
62. Lalita Sharma
63. Linda Chakchuak, Journalist
64. Lingaraj Pradhan
65. Lingraj Azad, Samajwadi Jan Parishad & Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti,
66. M. Venkatayya, Telangana Vyavasaya Vruttidarula Union-TVVU,
67. Madhuresh Kumar NAPM
68. Magline, Kerala
69. Mahendra Yadav, Kosi Navnirman Manch
70. Maj Gen (Retd) S.G.Vombatkere, NAPM Karnataka,
71. Majeendran, NAPM Kerala
72. Manas Patnaik, NAPM Odisha
73. Manesh Gupta
74. Manorama Khatua, Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti
75. Mashiuddin, NAPM, Uttar Pradesh
76. Medha Patkar, Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)
77. Meera Sanghamitra, NAPM India
78. Mujahid Nafees, Minority Coordination Committee
79. Mukta Srivastava, Roji Roti Adhikar Abhiyan
80. Nakul Singh Sawney, Chal Chitra Abhiyan
81. Nanhu Prasad, National Cyclist Union
82. Nidhi Jain, Concerned Indian Citizen
83. Nikhil Dey, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)
84. Nita Mahadev, Mudita Vidrohi, Lok Samiti
85. P. Chennaiah, Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union-APVVU,
86. P. Shankar, Dalit Bahujan Front

87. Pasarul Alam, TASO
88. Pradip Chatterjee, NFF
89. Prafulla Samantara, Lok Shakti Abhiyan
90. Prasad Bagwe, Mose Khore Bachao Andolan
91. Prasad Chacko, Gujarat
92. Priti Ranjan Dash
93. Priya Pillai
94. Priyanka Singh
95. Prof. Kusumam Joseph, NAPM Kerala
96. Radhika Menon, All India People's Forum
97. Rajeev Yadav, Rihai Manch
98. Rajendra Ravi, Institute for Democracy and Sustainability
99. Rajesh Serupally, NAPM Telangana
100. Rajkumar Sinha, Chutka Parmaanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti
101. Ramakrishnam Raju, United Forum for RTI and NAPM,
102. Ramesh Tadvi
103. Ravi Kanneganti, Rythu JAC,
104. Richa Singh, Rambeti, Sangatin Kisaan Mazdoor Sangathan
105. Samar Bagchi, NAPM West Bengal
106. Sandeep Pandey, Socialist Party of India
107. Sanjay M G, NAPM Maharashtra
108. Sanjeev Kumar, Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch
109. Satya banchor
110. Shabnam Hashmi, social activist, Anhad
111. Sharanya, Nayak, Farmer and activist, Koraput, Odisha
112. Sharath Cheloor, Dynamic Action
113. Sister Celia, Domestic Workers Union
114. Sister Dorothy, Aashray Abhiyan
115. Srikanta Aguan
116. Suhas Kolhekar, NAPM
117. Sujato Bhadro, Kolkata
118. Sunita Rani, National Domestic Workers Union;
119. Suniti SR, NAPM Maharashtra
120. Suresh Rathaur, Mahendra, MNREGA Mazdoor Union, UP
121. Sushma Biruli
122. Suthanthiran, Arul Doss, NAPM Tamilnadu
123. Syed Bilal, Human Rights Forum
124. Tapas Das, River Protection Forum
125. Tara Murali, Chennai
126. Trilochan Punji
127. Uma, NAPM, Uttarakhand
128. Vijayan M J, General Secretary, PIPFPD
129. Vijayaraghavan Cheliya, NAPM Kerala
130. Vilayodi Venugopal, Activist Kerala
131. Vimal Bhai, Matu Jan sangathan
132. Xavier Dias, Editor, Khan Kaneej Aur ADHIKAR, (Mines minerals & RIGHTS)
133. Yuvraj Gatkhal, Pune
134. Zainab Khatun