

**URGENT ALERT** – Families of workers are blockading all 3 gates of the new expansion plant of ACC-Holcim at Jamul, District Durg, Chhattisgarh (India) demanding absorption and permanency of contract workers working for decades in the old plant. They may face repression any time.



Please support the brave struggle of the Pragatisheel Cement Shramik Sangh against giant cement multinational Holcim-Lafarge. And the efforts of the contract workers of Chhattisgarh under the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (Mazdoor Karyakarta Samiti) to build a New Chhattisgarh for a New India.



Send your protest: by mail to [willie.smit@holcim.com](mailto:willie.smit@holcim.com);

by Fax to Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh at 0771 2221306, 2331001;

by Fax No. 0771-2443515, (M): 07587263280, and mail to [Jkumar58@rediffmail.com](mailto:Jkumar58@rediffmail.com) Dr Jitendra Kumar, Labour Secretary cum Commissioner;

by phone +91 788 2322655, +91 788 2322005 (O) to Ms R. Shangeeta, IAS, Collector Durg

Widely disseminate news of our struggle through print and electronic media, and social media.

#### **Our demands:**

- **Tripartite agreement at the highest level to ensure that 1500 contract workers of the old ACC-Holcim, Jamul plant are reabsorbed in the new expansion plant.**
- **Holcim must regularise all contract workers working in the old Jamul plant for long periods of time. Two Indian courts have held so-called contracts sham and bogus and a paper arrangement to avoid permanency of workers, Holcim wants to tire out workers in litigation.**
- **Holcim must pay cement wage board wages to all workers in ACC-Holcim, Jamul and Ambuja-Holcim, Bhatapara as per long standing norms of Indian cement industry. It has repeatedly stated that finance is not the constraint.**
- **Holcim must reinstate workers of Ambuja-Holcim victimised only because they formed a union or carried out union activities of the Pragatisheel Cement Shramik Sangh. Holcim should withdraw all malicious prosecutions lodged by its employees against union leaders and activists in Ambuja-Holcim at Bhatapara and ACC-Holcim at Jamul.**
- **Holcim must give permanent jobs to a family member of every land loser in Ambuja-Holcim Bhatapara and ACC-Holcim Jamul. It should provide accurate information and negotiate with farmers representatives of affected villages regarding future proposed acquisitions for mining and other works related to the new expansion plant at Jamul.**

#### **Background**

With its recent merger with Lafarge, the cement multinational Holcim has now become the world's top cement manufacturer. The company had taken over the Indian cement groups ACC and Ambuja in the year 2005. While the management salaries increased four-fold, and Holcim made 12% on investment as compared to 1.3% globally, the workers did not benefit at all out of the takeover, as Holcim has refused to implement the Cement Wage Board applicable to the Indian cement industry which prohibits contract labour in cement production. The ACC Company was also a signatory of this arbitration process.

Today more than 80% of the workers in the old plant of ACC-Holcim at Jamul are contract workers and a majority of them members of the Pragatisheel Cement Shramik Sangh. Despite doing the work of cement manufacture in hazardous conditions they are paid only a third of what permanent workers doing the same work receive. After a long standing industrial dispute ending in a police firing a Reference case was filed. In 2006 the Industrial Court judgment held that the so-called contracts were sham and bogus, a mere paper arrangement by the company to avoid permanency, and directed regularisation of 573 contract workers. This included about 350 workers who had been coerced into taking so-called Voluntary Retirement during the pendency of the case because they were refused work. In an appeal by the company, the High Court did not accept the regularisation of these "retired" workers, but upheld the finding of sham and bogus contracts. Again the company has refused to implement the High Court order

In Ambuja-Holcim, the situation was even worse where even minimum wages were not paid, the company even deducted the rent of safety shoes and helmets from the wages. Militant struggles under the PCSS leadership gave the gains of minimum wage and bonus for the first time bonus, but the management lashed back to remove more than a hundred union members. Taking advantage of a spontaneous scuffle with a security guard, Ambuja-Holcim filed malicious prosecutions against union leaders and activists. Union leader and elected Janpad member Bhagwati Sahu remained in jail for 13 months. ACC-Holcim and Ambuja-Holcim have seen several serious and fatal industrial accidents.

The communities surrounding Ambuja-Holcim have suffered in numerous ways from this multinational with deep pockets. Villagers of Bhadrपाली are fighting against encroachment of their communal lands while the houses of Village Pounsari bear cracks from blasting activities at the limestone mines. Even today landlosers from Village Rawaan have not been provided permanent jobs as promised decades ago.

The Pragatisheel Cement Shramik Sangh had preferred a complaint before the OECD in the year 2011 raising all these serious violations of labour rights and the rights of affected communities. The OECD provides for a mechanism of dispute resolution however the attitude of Holcim has been incredibly arrogant. It has refused to resolve any of the serious issues raised by the union. Hence this struggle.