



**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT
WORKERS'
FEDERATION**

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Shri Sushil Kumar Singh
Chairman
Deenyadal Port Authority

Via email: chairman@deendayalport.gov.in

Our ref: OGS/SMC/MD/ab

16 September 2024

Dear Honourable Chairman of the Deenyadal Port Authority,

Deenyadal Port

I write to you from the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the global trade union federation representing nearly 16.5 million workers from more than 150 countries around the world.

We have been made aware by the ITF-affiliated union, Shree Kutch General Mazdoor Sangh, that, on 5 September 2024, the Deenyadal Port Authority and local government mobilised demolition equipment and hundreds of local law enforcement officers to forcibly destroy the informal settlement, Banna Mazdoor Basti, located near the port. This shocking act, justified by what our affiliate believes to be spurious claims of security concerns, has left thousands of people homeless.

As you will know, many of these people are workers servicing the port and fishermen who have lived there for generations, and many are from a minority Muslim community.

We have heard alarming reports that residents were not given sufficient time to collect their belongings and were subjected to violence in the process of their eviction. We are also deeply troubled by reports that this demolition was carried out in violation of Indian law, which we understand specifically calls for prior notice to be given and for the resettlement of residents *before* the eviction of informal settlements.

We are deeply concerned about the wellbeing of the displaced residents, many of whom have been integral to the operation of what is India's largest public sector port. We also recognise that the very existence of such settlements is itself directly tied to the informalisation of the port labour force following the revision of the Dock Labour Act in 2007. These port workers play a role that is essential to the rapidly growing Indian economy, and we believe that is a basic duty of the Deenyadal Port Authority and the Indian Government to protect their

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dignity and fundamental human rights.

We have been told of considerable fear among workers in the port area that demolitions of other, similar settlements are planned. Given the questionable legality of evictions such as that seen in Kandla, and the human rights abuses and social crises that they generate, we urge you to desist in executing any such plans and to instead put to rest the fear, anxiety and uncertainty that is prevalent among the port workforce and local community.

We strongly urge you to support the immediate implementation of the following measures:

- The Government of India must provide compensation and resettlement for displaced workers, in accordance with Indian law.
- The Deenyadal Port Authority and local government should stop all plans for further demolitions of worker settlements and must instead develop a plan for the rehabilitation of workers.
- The Deenyadal Port Authority and local government should meet with ITF affiliated-unions in the region to consult on a proper humanitarian response and sustainable solution.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Cotton
General Secretary, International Transport Workers' Federation

Cc:

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