**Submission by the PAN Asia Pacific**

In Asia, repressive regimes create an environment of impunity, paving the way for the corporate takeover of lands and resources, and displacement of and violence against rural communities. The following are three of the cases that PANAP and our partners monitored and featured in our book ***"No Land, No Life! Land Conflicts and Struggles in Asia"*** (download [here](https://panap.net/resource/no-land-no-life-land-conflicts-and-struggles-in-asia/?wpdmdl=3543&refresh=637aba730235e1668987507)).

**Cambodia**

Land has been significantly changed in Cambodia due to the economic land concessions (ELCs) scheme. These pertain to government-awarded long-term leases for corporations and concessionaires for industrial or agricultural purposes.

Studies by the Coalition of Cambodian Farmer Community (CCFC) indicate that farmers who had been working the lands, with or without titles, experienced loss of control over their land and resources to ELCs owned and operated by local corporations.

Farmlands were reportedly bulldozed in the presence of local police and sometimes even military troops, such as in the case of the rice fields in Trapeang Cho and Orm Laeng communities upon the implementation of ELCs.

Villagers reported having completely lost their farmland and residential land to the ELCs in one fell swoop. According to community representatives, thousands of small-scale farmers in 38 villages lost their livelihoods. Similarly, around 1,500 families in 21 villages faced forced eviction. Villagers were subsequently relocated to areas lacking adequate infrastructure and productive land without proper compensation.

Over several years, rural Cambodian communities have organised their leadership structure to better struggle for the recognition of their land rights. In 2013 and 2016, the communities launched larger mass actions to oppose ELC operations, mobilising people from one village to another.

To gain international support, some community groups have also submitted petitions to international bodies, including the OHCHR, the EU, and ANZ Bank, purported funders of ELC-operated corporations.

Such complaints have led to the EU’s imposing of trade sanctions on sugar products from Cambodia as part of the 20% Everything but Arms (EBA) withdrawal, due in part to wide civil society support for campaigns against ELCs. The ANZ bank, meanwhile, has also stopped their financial support to local ELC-holding groups, agreeing to give out the gross profits it has earned from the loan interests to support efforts at the rehabilitation of some 1,200 families.

**India**

India’s Polavaram Project is a multi‐purpose irrigation and hydroelectric project located on the river Godavari in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The project belongs to the nation’s National River Linking Project, which is proposed to be the world’s largest water and dam project.

The Polavaram project is set to harness the waters of the river Godavari by building a massive dam to irrigate 291,000 hectares of land. The neighbouring states of Odisha and Chhattisgarh will also be affected by the dam’s creation, causing major submergence and interstate disputes.

According to social activists and local organisers, at least 371 villages would be submerged.

According to research by the Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU), a local farmworker union, the Polavaram Dam project has had devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of affected farmer communities. An estimated 70,000 people are set to lose their livelihood entirely or partially, including land-owning farmers, landless labourers, tenant farmers, and indigenous families.

Reports by APVVU found that the government took fertile lands and displaced communities under the pretext of the project; and, as compensation, relocated them to barren lands, depriving rural communities of eking out a living.

The construction of the dam has also had adverse effects on the local culture, traditions and faith of affected tribal and non-tribal communities, where traditional grooves, burial grounds and other places of worship have been completely devastated.

Between 2010-2016, hundreds of indigenous people and farmers organised marches across villages submerged in the West Godavari district due to the Polavaram Project dam.

Demands from these activities include calls for the government to provide forest “pattas” (land titles) for their lands, as well as proper resettlement and rehabilitation under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act, 2013.

A massive protest was likewise held in July 2016 by indigenous communities to call for their rights to land.

**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka’s National Physical Plan (NPP) 2050 is a development guide by the country’s National Physical Planning Department (NPPD) to establish a uniform development structure for the country.

As part of the NPP, the Trincomalee district, which contains a highly strategic port location in the country, is associated with two main projects of development: an international seaport and a domestic airport. Additional sub-projects include improvements in rail and road routes and plans to develop fisheries, agriculture, and urban infrastructure.

Over 4,441 families will reportedly be affected by the NPP in Trincomalee; those affected consist mainly of fisherfolk who derive income and livelihood from the area.

Reports from the National Fisheries Solidarity Movement of Sri Lanka (NAFSO) found that military, police, and other state forces were deployed to Trincomalee communities in the interest of the project. Government security personnel have reportedly harassed and intimidated local fisherfolk.

Research on the affected communities has found that fisherfolk have been threatened in various ways, with their livelihoods disturbed and security compromised. Community members have remained silent for the fear of facing adverse consequences from government authorities.

Through organised as well as spontaneous community mobilisations, communities of farmers, farm workers, indigenous people, fishers, rural women and youth, are able to defend their rights and aspirations.

Advocates of the people’s right to land and resources and for food sovereignty and genuine land reform continue to support and learn from these local struggles and build upon them to push for meaningful policy reforms both at the national and international levels.

To mobilise fisherfolk in affected areas, dialogues in Trincomalee were held among concerned CSOs and community-based organisations– leading to the formation of a mass movement which emerged as the *Citizen Voice of Trincomalee.* The mass movement, composed of fisherfolk, farmers, and concerned citizens, garnered 1,500 signatures to form a petition calling for immediate action on the NPP.