



5<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**NGO Forum on ADB statement on Phulbaria killing**

On August 26, 2006, at least five people were killed and about 50 others were injured when Bangladesh police and the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) opened fire on demonstrators who were protesting the Phulbari Coal Project. The project is being led by the Asia Energy Corporation Pvt Ltd, a United Kingdom-based multinational company that signed a deal with the Bangladesh government for mining coal in Phulbari, 271 kilometers north-west of Dhaka.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) issued the Summary Environmental Impact Assessment for the project last August. The ADB is considering whether to finance the project through a direct loan, equity grant or a political risk guarantee under its private sector operation.

The people of Phulbari, most of whom are indigenous, have claimed that the open pit mining would displace some 40,000 – 50,000 people, decorticate their farmlands and destroy their livelihoods.

On August 27, a day-long shutdown was observed in Phulbari Upazila, a day after the violent dispersal of demonstrators. Communications in Phulbari and nearby Birampur, Nawabganj, Hakimpur and Ghograt Upzillas remained snapped since the August 26 violence. The situation remains tense in those areas.

Meanwhile, a half-day hartal in protest of the violent killing and injuring of anti-Phulbari Coal project demonstrators was observed in Dinajpur town last August 30. A day-long national strike was also held the following day.

In view of this disturbing series of events, we the members of NGO Forum on ADB express our full solidarity with the people of Phulbari. We condemn the brutal action against the Phulbari people who are fighting for their social and environmental rights.

We demand that the Asia Energy Corporation leave Phulbari. At the same the company must satisfactorily compensate the family of the killed and injured activists.

We strongly urge the Asian Development Bank to stop all of its dealings with AEC.

On the other hand, we unilaterally support the decision of the Government of Bangladesh to pull out of its agreement with AEC and stop the Phulbari Coal Project. Nonetheless, our network shall be vigilantly monitoring every development of this case to ensure that the Bangladesh government and AEC fulfill their moral and financial obligations and responsibilities to the people of Phulbari.

**Signatures**

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