



Speaker: **Shri Prakash**  
**/ Jharkhandi Organisation Against Radiation (JOAR)**

JOAR, the Jharkhandi Organization against Radiation, is situated in Jadugoda, Jharkhand in India. The organisation has been struggling for many decades against uranium mining, raising awareness of its impact on health and the environment and raising voices to get justice for radiation victims in this area. JOAR was selected for the prestigious Nuclear Free Future Award in 2005.

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Johar greetings from Jharkhand, India.

As you know, we are Jharkhandi Organisation Against Radiation situated in Jadugora, Jharkhand in India. And struggling for many decades against uranium mining, its impact on health and environment, and raising voices to get justice for the radiation victims in this area.

As you know, India is situated in a very critical geographical location where at its northern border the Chinese and Indian Armies are in a war-like situation. Last year itself many casualties happened on both sides. Even in this coldest winter and in that inhospitable situation, a number of troops on both sides of border are increasing, and the media is reporting that the Chinese are rapidly expanding their nuclear arsenal and also developing and making nuclear silos in that area. And on the Western front the volatile situation of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and on the southern side, the Chinese are again building ports in the Indian Ocean in Sri Lanka.

For the last seven years, we have a right-wing Hindu Nationalist party in power. For them it is a very favourable situation for their aggressive policies and propaganda. There is no political party who can raise voices against the injustice done by the uranium company in this area. Also, there is no match between the mighty uranium company and its powerful lobby and us. Their human and economic resources are limitless. On the other hand, we have just our culture and traditions to fight with. We tried all possible ways to resist and get justice for many decades. We tried all possible ways - protest on the street, going to the higher judicial court, going to international conferences, asking a reputed international institution to do studies here. But, all failed.

Yes, we are able to save our land, traditional land. But, not able to get justice for the suffering of the people in this area. On the one side, the company replace their aging employees with new recruits and they continue with their dirty politics and propaganda. On the other side our people, our community and our youth are not equipped or not updated with the new information which is required to fight them. So, there is a need to have a group or a platform where mining-affected communities, who are mostly indigenous people all around the world, they can come together. They discuss their strategies, their suffering, their experiences, and make a strategy for strengthening the grassroots movement.

As I said, we are lacking information with new research and findings in the field of health, environment, and other aspects of the nuclear industry. Because in India, it is almost impossible to have independent research, because all research institutions either run with government funding or they are afraid to tell the truth. So at last we are left with our own experiences, our sad



stories. That is the only weapon we have to fight with because there is no scientific data which supports our claims why our people are suffering from mysterious diseases. And we are just a silent spectator watching everything in front of our eyes. If I talk about the vulnerability of our community, and how the uranium company is exploiting our vulnerability. Take the example of unemployment and lack of opportunities. They will... they hire people from the community to casual and construction work in a temporary manner. After a certain period of exposure they are... they just leave them and recruit new people. And there is no health data, there is no health check up. And there are no records, so they can't claim about their health and other kinds of diseases.

Yes, we are not able to win against the tactics and the propaganda of this mighty uranium company and its powerful lobby. But our experience is our only weapon or only tool to tell the world. So there is a need to spread such stories to the national and international level. And in this age of digital communication, there should be a way where we can share our stories on a regular basis and then we make our strategies for future actions. And also this right-wing nationalist government, under their regime, atrocities against grassroots movements are increasing every passing day.

So there is a need for strong solidarity and a better understanding of the situation. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to tell our stories. Johar.

#### Disclaimer

This transcript is at the responsibility of Peace Boat and may not be completely the same as the original testimony. The original testimony was presented online at the World Nuclear Survivors Forum 2021 on December 2-3, where over 30 nuclear survivors from five continents around the world shared their voices with more than 1000 people. The Forum was hosted by Peace Boat in partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The stories and panel discussions are all available for viewing on demand via Youtube or on our website here: <https://nuclearsurvivors.org>