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MEMORANDUM TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR BY CITIZENS PARTICIPATING IN THE  
DHARNA AGAINST LAND GRABBING

*Corruption will go when the larger numbers of persons given to the unworthy practice realize that the nation does not exist for them, but that they do for the nation. It requires a high code of morals, extreme vigilance on the part of those who are free from the corrupt practice and also have influence over corrupt servants. Indifference in such matters is criminal.*

-M. K. Gandhi, 01-02-1948([http://www.mkqandhi.org/articles/political\\_corruption.htm](http://www.mkqandhi.org/articles/political_corruption.htm)).

7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014

Sub: Requesting H.E. the Governor of Karnataka to intervene and direct the Government to take suitable action on powerful people who have grabbed Government land and officials who have connived with them.

Respected Your Excellency,

Land is a limited resource which has to be fairly distributed and utilized for the common good. But today land is being held by few powerful people who are incessantly torturing the mother earth for their own greed. The alarming situation in Karnataka is that very large area of Government land has been/is being grabbed by creating false documents with wilful connivance from officials.

We are sure that Your Excellency is aware of the large-scale land grabbing that has taken place in Karnataka over the past few decades. Karnataka State, especially Bangalore district, both Urban and Rural is a heaven for land grabbers as there are absolutely no constraints whatsoever. In Bangalore Urban, the extent of land grabbed is about 20,000 acres and an equal extent has been grabbed in Bangalore Rural district. In the entire State of Karnataka, false documents have been created for about 4,00,000 acres of Government land worth about Rs. 2,00,000 crores which has gone into the hands of land mafia. This is a very big scam in the whole country which needs to be tackled with lightning speed. In fact, the Joint Legislature Committee under the Chairmanship of Sri AT Ramaswamy submitted a report to the Government in 2007 itself about the government land encroached/grabbed in and around Bangalore district. That report on land grabbing which has been accepted by the Government exposes only a miniscule part of the huge land grabbing confined to Bangalore district only. Further investigation would have revealed thousands of cases of Government land grabbing by powerful people. Unfortunately, the government chose to sit on the report

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and has been allowing further grabbing of Government land and has allowed the erring officials to go scot-free with no action taken on them and has instead rewarded many of them. A mere search of Government of Karnataka's own website's letter monitoring system of major departments(Office of Chief Secretary, Revenue, DPAR etc) for corruption complaints would give an idea about the extent to which those indulging in corrupt and criminal activities are being protected.

Eventhough the entire scam is in the notice of the Government, suitable action to contain the scam is not being taken. Instead the Governments since 2007 have turned a blind eye to this huge land grabbing and are continuously protecting the land grabbers and the officials who connived with the land mafia. Innocent citizens are continuously being cheated and it would not be surprising if many of them lose their life-long hard earned money.

The Karnataka Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Bill, 2007 which was passed in both the Houses of Karnataka in 2007 itself is awaiting H.E. the President's assent till today due to the lack of political will of both the State and the Central Governments. Many representations have been given to all Governments since 2007 to take action to enact the Karnataka Land Grabbing(Prohibition) Bill, 2007, get back the grabbed government land and punish those who supported in grabbing. If the Act had been passed, special Courts would have been constituted, the cases would have been decided within 6 months and Order passed by that Court would have been final. Since this is a very powerful Act which will be a strong deterrent to the land mafia, all efforts are being made by all those involved in land grabbing to put pressure on the Government not to enact this legislation. Since creating false documents and grabbing government land is a criminal offence, the Government had every option to punish the culprits in land grabbing and those who facilitated land grabbing under the existing Goonda Act i.e. *The Karnataka Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug-offenders, Gamblers, Goondas, Immoral traffic offenders and Slum-grabbers Act, 1985*. Unfortunately, till today, no action has been taken even under this Act against anyone involved in land grabbing. Further, proper property registers are not maintained in the government departments which has only helped the land grabbers. Government is only clearing land encroachments made by poor people for their livelihood under the guise of taking action as per *AT Ramaswamy Report*. No action has been initiated on specific cases mentioned in the same report about huge land grabbing by powerful people. Poor people who have encroached land do not claim ownership of the land while land grabbers establish ownership by creating false documents which is certainly a criminal offence. Thus, encroachment by the poor for livelihood has to be dealt in a more humane approach as there is no criminality involved.

Your Excellency may be aware of the fact that a *dharana* is taking place in front of Bangalore Town Hall continuously since 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2014 demanding action to be taken against Government land grabbers and officials who connived with them. A 98 year old veteran freedom fighter Dr. HS Doreswamy is leading the *dharana*. Sri AT. Ramaswamy, who submitted the report on land grabbing is himself sitting in this *dharana* demanding action against land grabbers. Many likeminded organisations have joined hands to strengthen the movement. We the undersigned citizens have been actively participating and will continue to do so till the protest reaches a logical end. We are also aware that a letter jointly signed by Dr. HS Doreswamy and Sri AT. Ramaswamy protesting the Government's inaction against land grabbers was given to Your Excellency about a month back, as soon as we started the *Dharna*. The people sitting there have no selfish motive whatsoever as the *dharana* is being staged to get back the Government land for utilization for public purposes. Some of us have started an indefinite hunger strike since 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014 to awaken the conscience of the Government.

Unfortunately, till today, the Government has totally failed to take genuine action by keeping its eyes and ears conveniently closed. The Government willingly succumbing to the pressure from the land grabbers and those who facilitated land grabbing is very glaring to go unnoticed. On the other hand, newspaper reports reveal that Government has tried to repeatedly mislead the general public by giving statements based on wrong information given by officers. Since very powerful people are involved in this scam of unprecedented dimension, the Government which is in the clutches of the land mafia is sitting like a mute spectator to favour the land mafia. Appropriate action will ensure that some very senior Ministers in the State Cabinet, some sitting and former MLAs and MLCs, many senior IAS, IPS, IFS and other officers (some retired), very big builders and real estate agencies and most importantly some sitting/retired Justices and others, will be behind bars.

As the Government has not responded appropriately till today, we humbly request Your Excellency to intervene and direct the State Government to take immediate appropriate measures to get back the valuable Government land grabbed and punish the culprits. The measures we are demanding are as follows:

1. Take all appropriate actions in respect of each specific case of Government land grabbing mentioned in the *AT Ramaswamy Report*.
2. Take steps to investigate land grabbing cases in a time bound manner by entrusting the investigation to the CBI as very powerful ministers in the State Cabinet and very senior officers are involved.

3. Take back the Government land which has been grabbed and punish all those involved (however powerful they may be) in the criminal act of grabbing under the existing Goonda Act i.e., *The Karnataka Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug-offenders, Gamblers, Goondas, Immoral traffic offenders and Slum-grabbers Act, 1985*
4. Take steps to publish on each department website details of Government land grabbed to prevent innocent citizens from being further cheated with a view to protect their hard earned life savings.
5. Make all efforts to get H.E. the President's assent to the Karnataka Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Bill, 2007.
6. Once the Act comes into force, to immediately set up special Courts to hear land grabbing cases.

We are extremely hopeful that Your Excellency would be immediately directing the Government (as each Government order is signed on behalf of the Governor) to take action on the above demands. If the Government continues with this callous attitude and refuses to take genuine action, then, we would be forced to approach Your Excellency again seeking sanction under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, to criminally prosecute all those in the Government (including the Chief Minister) who are duty bound to take action against land grabbing.

With Regards,

Yours Respectfully,

(Extremely worried citizens of Karnataka)

H.E. Sri Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala,  
Governor of Karnataka,  
Raj Bhavan, Bangalore.

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ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಿ

ಪ್ರಾಚಾರ್ಯ & ಆಡಳಿತಗಾರ  
R. Srinivas

P. Ramesh (Amr. Secy only) R. Srinivas  
S. Raghavane Sidda Gowda Srinivas

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