

URGENT

To,
Cardinal Oswald Gracias
Archbishop of Bombay,

CC
Bishop Bosco Penna
Our Lady of Salvation Church, Dadar

Date: 24/03/2010

Sub: Unresolved Issues, Inspite of You Agreeing to Restarting Dumping Ground

It may be recollected that I had given notice for an indefinite fast outside Bishop Bosco's office, however Justice Kolse-Patil urged me to withdraw it assuring that talks would be conducted with MLA Gilbert Mendonca and Municipal Commissioner Shivmurti Naik in a weeks time.

Please note that Yourself seems to have been misled into allowing the restart of the dumping ground by politicians with vested interests. But, it is unfortunate that neither were any of the protestors consulted - 5500 of who signed a memorandum in 2003. Since then the authorities have not been able to find an alternative dumping site and they are only hoodwinking all concerned to break the people's agitation, supported by many prominent persons.

Our people have been suffering ill health and related problems, ordeals which will now have to be faced for at least another year, more and forever, if the politicians have their way. The villagers have not even been given a hearing and are left feeling let down by their shepherds, which now needs to be urgently addressed, so that they do get the wrong impression.

Super-speed in restarting the dumping ground by the authorities is understandable, for obvious reasons. But what is very unfortunate is that such a crucial decision from the Eminence, has impacted our livelihood including our lives, without ensuring the basic guarantees and resolving important related issues:

- 1) How can one be sure that removed permanently out of Uttan after one year? No letter from the authorities says so.
- 2) A morcha was taken on MBMC on 8th October 2008 and we were assured the problem would be solved. Instead it only got worse. So how can you trust such promises?
- 3) A signature campaign of about 17500 signatures were given on 4th September 2009 and the authorities resorted to merciless lathicharge and expired tear gas shells and with false cases against the innocent villagers. These have not yet been withdrawn.
- 4) Our public service has been rewarded by externment notices, which if implemented would extern us for a period of two years from Thane, Mumbai, Pune, Raigad and Nasik. Even though the dumping ground has been started, these have not been withdrawn.

To your update, the restart of dumping ground has started its stink and is taking our breath all the twenty four hours. ***PLEASE HAVE MERCY ON US.***

We should have concrete action in terms of withdrawal of cases and externment notices, besides a specific undertaking in court, that the MBMC will stop the site latest within a year. This will also enable us consider us withdrawing the PIL filed by us. Thousands of residents get the feeling that instead of being involved in a permanent amicable solution, their representatives are being sent from pillar to post by the agents of the Church and our respected MLA - a wrong impression, which we want to clear for lasting peace in the area. The media - press and television is also sending out an incorrect message, which we need to clarify, in the interest of all of us concerned.

Therefore, on behalf of the people of the Dharavi Island, specially the Uttan-Dongri belt, we seek an appointment, to resolve the above issues at the earliest, at your convenience. We are confident that, if the authorities, do not accept these requests, you would be comfortable in supporting the people's just agitation, as it would be clear to you that the MBMC does not have any good intentions. We would also then be free to resume the agitation, beginning with the said indefinite fast, notice for which will be given to all concerned, as we would not like to be held responsible for the consequences.

Thanking you, with regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Roney Corriea (9892914878)
Vice President
Civic and Political Cell
Bhayandar Deanery