

# VEDANTA MUST BE STOPPED

Pollution, looting, killing and communities fighting back..

Everywhere Vedanta operates in India and Africa they are being opposed for the same reasons: illegality, looting, displacement, pollution, illness, injustice, exploitation and corruption. Vedanta is a British company and the second most tax evading mining company in the FTSE 100. It is 50% owned by five members of the Agarwal family and company chief Anil Agarwal is one of the richest men in Britain with a £20 million home in Mayfair. Vedanta is a debt based company, currently owing \$10 billion, and dependent on more big loans to keep the business growing. Agarwal has told his shareholders and investors not to worry because he knows how to manipulate the Indian, Zambian, Liberian and UK systems to force his projects through. His success depends on his ability to build and operate without permission, influence politicians and judiciary, and weaken affected communities to prevent damaging mass protest. He does this by threatening families with hired thugs, police and private security, by paying them to stay silent, by coercing people with Corporate Social Responsibility schemes and self help groups, and by making them wait through years of lengthy court processes while they are forced to live in appalling conditions in polluted areas. But many communities do not give up. In Niyamgiri, Orissa, years of resistance to Vedanta's bauxite mine has rendered their subsidiary Vedanta Aluminium (VAL) a loss making company, starving it's refineries of local bauxite and causing the whole Vedanta corporation to restructure!

Vedanta can be stopped! To fight a unified global company we must also unite! By sharing our stories, struggles and successes we can find the strength and the strategy to resist. This leaflet tells the story of six Vedanta affected communities in India and brings recent news on Vedanta to help you in your fight – including the 2012 Annual General Meeting in London, and the demonstrations against it.

**SESA GOA.** Vedanta subsidiary Sesa Goa is the largest iron ore miner in Goa. One of it's mines is 15km long affecting 8 villages. 8% of the state of Goa is currently being mined and 18% is affected by mining. 50% of the ore is for export to China. More than Rs 2000 crore worth of ore has been illegally extracted, and Sesa Goa is being investigated for large scale fraud and illegal mining by the Shah Commission and the Supreme Court. Very few local people are employed, while thousands of trucks spread dust in villages, killing crops and sometimes people. Water is polluted and wells are drying. In June 2009 a Sesa Goa pit wall collapsed drowning Advapal village in toxic mine waste. Following the disaster 9 year old local boy Akaash Naik filed a petition to stop the mine and mass protests were held, successfully halting it later that year. Two more major mine waste floods occurred in Mulgao and Bicholim in 2011. In South Goa a 90 day road blockade by 400 villagers succeeded in stopping another iron ore mine. Sesa Goa are paying villagers silence funds of between Rs.2000 and Rs.5000 per month at their South Goa mine to prevent similar action.



## **STERLITE, Tuticorin.**

The Sterlite copper smelter in Tamil Nadu has one of the worst records of all Vedanta's projects. The second hand plant imported from Chile was turned down by four states before settling in Tamil Nadu. Sterlite has flouted laws without remorse, operating and expanding without consent, violating environmental conditions, and illegally dumping toxic effluents and waste. In 1997 a toxic gas leak hospitalised 100 people sparking an indefinite hunger strike by a local politician and a 'siege on Sterlite' that led to 1643 arrests. Later that year a kiln explosion killed two. 16 workers died at the plant between 2007 & 2011. Police recorded most workers deaths as suicides. Pollution Control Boards, judges and expert teams have on several occasions reversed damning judgements of the company, demonstrating large scale corruption and bribery. Activists are waging a court battle which has stopped operations at the plant for several short periods. Local water is undrinkable due to contamination, and high toxin levels have been found in the blood of villagers. The plant's imported ore is heavily tainted and generated 2.2 tonnes of uranium and 441 tonnes of arsenic waste between 2009 and 2010 which is poisoning the residents of Tuticorin.

Foil Vedanta

[www.foilvedanta.org](http://www.foilvedanta.org)

**MALCO, Tamil Nadu.** Vedanta bought MALCO 's aluminium complex at Mettur 2 years before permission for their Kolli Hills bauxite mines expired but continued to mine illegally for 10 years. Five adivasi villages were disturbed and a sacred grove destroyed before activist's petitions stopped mining in 2008. MALCO abandoned the mines at Kolli and Yercaud without any reclamation, leaving polluted red scars across the mountains. Without local bauxite and with protests preventing bauxite coming from Niyamgiri in Orissa the factory at Mettur was also forced to close. Activists had proven in court that the factory also had no license to operate, and a thermal power plant and coal yard had no permissions at all. The refinery and smelter complex had polluted water and air and caused widespread illness in Mettur. A huge red mud dump at the edge of the Stanley reservoir still pollutes drinking water depended on by thousands of people and blows caustic and toxic dust into the village. The community around the plant are demanding justice despite Vedanta's CSR efforts, including giving loans to women through Self Help Group's, creating tension in families affected by the factory.

**BALCO, Korba, Chhattisgarh.** Vedanta bought BALCO's alumina refinery, smelter and bauxite mines from the Indian government for Rs 551.5 crores in 2001 when it was worth between Rs 3500 and Rs 5000 crores. 7000 workers opposed the sale by holding a landmark 61 day strike. Since privatisation work conditions have worsened - wages have been slashed, unionised workers are losing jobs in favour of contract labour and there are more accidents. In 2009 a factory chimney collapsed during construction. BALCO claimed 42 were killed, but evidence later revealed that 60 – 100 people are still missing. Witnesses claim these workers from poor families in neighbouring states are buried underground in the rubble, which was bulldozed over immediately after the collapse. Their families have no idea where they are. Their names are not even known.



### **Vedanta Aluminium, Jharsuguda, Orissa.**

Vedanta plans to make its Jharsuguda aluminium complex into the world's biggest smelter, producing 1.7 million tonnes per year. The factory stretches more than 2km and includes four coal power plants and energy from the Hirakud dam. The plant was constructed illegally and 100 goondas with guns were employed to stop protest. The public hearing was only advertised a week before it was held, and protesting voices were silenced. 10,000 displaced people living around the plant want to be rehabilitated as they are suffering pollution, water shortage, landlessness and illness. Many people who were co-opted by the company through short term employment and Self Help Groups now seek justice. Their villages are constantly patrolled by company security and goondas. Local men are paid Rs 130 per day to work in the plant and often get sick. Nonetheless the company is losing money as the factory is dependent on Niyamgiri bauxite which is held up by protests!

### **Vedanta Aluminium, Lanjigarh, Orissa.**

Vedanta bulldozed 12 villages to illegally construct its Lanjigarh refinery in 2003-4, planning to extract 73 million tonnes of bauxite from the Niyamgiri mountain above it. For 15 years the local Dongria and Kutia Kondh tribes, plus dalits and farmers have resisted the mine and six fold expansion of the refinery, at great cost to the company. They have lain in front of bulldozers, blockaded and rallied, for which they have been beaten, harassed and jailed. Local activist's Sukru Majhi and Arsi Majhi were killed by the company in 2005 and 2010. In 2009 10,000 people formed a 17km long human chain around the mountain. Some have suffered illness, pollution and repression too long and have accepted compensation and given up the fight.



**WE MUST STOP THIS LOOTING, KILLING, LAW-BREAKING COMPANY**

**Keep Vedanta out of your community before it's too late! People's action works!**

**Get connected and know each other's strengths! Together we are many and they are few!**

**Don't let them get away with murder, exploitation, pollution and corruption...**