

# THE RIGHT TO SAY NO! CAMPAIGN



The Right to Say No campaign is a network of communities and popular formations fighting in defence of their land. It is a campaign that is active in across the country where communities and popular formations are organising themselves to resist the onslaught of extractivism – the extraction and exploitation of natural resources on a massive scale for profit. The Right to Say No campaign is mobilising against the systematic dispossession of our land, the grabbing of our natural resources and the super-exploitation by transnational corporations in their thirst for profits.

## COMMUNITIES ARE SAYING :

- **NO to mining and extractivism!**
- **NO to land and water grabbing!**
- **NO to top-down development!**
- **NO to seismic testing!**
- **NO to the Bantustans Bill!**
- **NO to exploitation!**
- **NO to corporate capture!**



# WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO SAY NO?

1. The right and power to say NO! comes from the **struggles of communities on the ground**. It is born when a community stands up and says that **we have the final say about our land and its use**. It comes alive and takes root when we take responsibility for our futures.
2. Right to Say NO is a call by communities for **democratic, community-centred development** – respect for our human right to a decent life; for health, wellbeing and wellness, to continue producing food on our terms, to living in harmony with nature in defence of our way of life and the environment, for a self-defined and self-determined development path and redistribution of power and resources so that we can shape our development without external intervention.
3. Right to Say NO is for **direct forms of democracy, democratic decision-making and the redistribution of power**. It is important for poor, marginalised and working class communities to achieve direct democracy to determine their destinies – **power must lie with those most and directly affected**. Consent rights (the right to say no) for communities – represents a major shift in undermining the massive, global power corporations have unfairly acquired and rolling back the rate of dispossession of land, resources and livelihoods.

## BUT WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY MEAN WHEN WE SAY COMMUNITIES' HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO?

- Right to Say NO is founded on **collective resistance, mostly led by women**, and so it is very centrally about **POWER** and directly challenging the dominant power of governments, the political elite and transnational corporations. Saying NO is deeply political as it challenges systems of power and asserts the right of communities to define their own interests and determine their own futures.
- The Right to Say NO **CHALLENGES** the capitalist drive to make profit at the expense of people and the environment. It is in **DEFENCE** of the commons, land and livelihoods. By **RESISTING** the drive by corporations and government to make everything, (land, water, essential services, even life itself) a thing to be bought and sold for profit, the Right to Say No is an important step towards reversing the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few.
- The Right to Say NO **reinforces the YES** – If a community can say no, it means that it can also say yes to protecting the commons (what people have), defending a way of life that is indigenous and traditional and closer to nature from which people and nature cannot be separated. A community's YES also embraces a vision of what they want for their families and communities and more broadly, **the kind of world they wish to live in and the future they want to build**.

# WHO CAN SAY NO?

## COMMUNITIES:

The Right to Say NO has relevance with a broad array of current struggles and movements and is a campaign that can unite struggles. It brings together those living in desperation and those whose rights and livelihoods are under threat, by helping to build movements and intensify alternatives and solutions. It affirms and reinforces choice and the right of people to defend their ways of living and producing. It is a call to action from people, by people and led by people to ensure self-determination and resist extractivism.

The Right to Say NO applies to any community, including self-defined communities, affected by extractives, and is not an individual right.

## MORE BROADLY:

This is a demand for both rural and urban communities, for women and men, for workers and the unemployed, for young and old. It can be taken up by trade unions, peasant organisations, social movements and for the support organisations such as NGOs and public law bodies.

The Right to say NO has application at national, regional and international level and does not only apply to indigenous people.



# THE RIGHT TO SAY NO: A DEFENSE STRATEGY AGAINST CORPORATE IMPUNITY

The Right to say No – is a defence strategy:

- Against corporate impunity;
- Against corporate slave labour;
- Against women having to bear the costs of care; and
- Against making communities pay for their pollution of the air, water and the soil.

We are fighting to have the right to say no recognised in law. We are fighting for laws and regulations that stop the violations and abuses by corporations of the rights of people and nature. We want a binding Treaty at the level of the United Nations preventing corporate abuse, which recognises the right to say no based on principles of free, prior and informed consent.

**Communities are fighting back!**  
**NO to Corporate Capture!**  
**YES to the Right to Say No!**

