

To
Mrs Sonia Gandhi
Chairperson
National Advisory Council
10, Janpath
New Delhi 110 011

28th July 2005

Re. Andaman & Nicobar Islands 1: Violation of Supreme Court Orders and
'Marginalisation of the Jarawa

Dear Mrs. Gandhi,

We the undersigned are concerned individuals who have been following events in the Andaman Islands for decades. We are writing this urgent letter to draw your attention to the rapidly deteriorating situation in several respects in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These pertain to the disregard of Supreme Court Orders of May 2002 and the continued marginalization of the extremely threatened indigenous Jarawa community.

I. Ongoing Violation Of Supreme Court Orders

The Supreme Court of the country had, in May 2002, passed landmark orders aimed at protecting the fragile environment and vulnerable indigenous communities of these islands. Unfortunately, more than three years later, some key parts of these orders continue to be blatantly violated by the A&N Administration. These include, among others:

- a) Non-implementation of an inner line area (I.L.A) regime, which is vital for restricting further influx and population growth in the islands. Note that almost two decades ago, in 1987, the Island Development Authority under the leadership of Sri Rajiv Gandhi had concluded: "the recent level of population of 2.5 lakhs and its increase due to natural growth had already been at the limit of the carrying capacity and any significant growth beyond natural growth would be totally inadvisable." Accordingly, the IDA formulated a scheme to check "population explosion in A&N Islands." The Honorable Supreme Court's order on 7th May, 2002 is identical to the IDA plan given above, which was not implemented because of the tragic demise of the PM. Like the IDA, the court orders recognized the crucial fact that the carrying capacity of the islands has been far exceeded, and reducing the influx of immigrants is the first vital step toward ensuring the long term security of the Andamans' inhabitants.

- b) The Supreme Court had ordered the closure of those parts of the Andaman Trunk Road (ATR) that run along and through the forests of the Jarawa Tribal Reserve. This order was hailed by many experts as an extremely important step toward ensuring the long-term survival of the threatened Jarawa community, who now

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