

Greenpeace provokes India's ire: Crumbling credibility and waning power of global activist power

*Editor's Note: Greenpeace has led an aggressive campaign against GMOs in India, demanding that they be [banned](#). It's mounted high profile [campaigns](#) against the recent decision by the Environment Ministry to allow field trials of GM crops. GMO's are one of many issues in which the controversial NGO has butted heads with the Indian government. Greenpeace has also invoked the ire of government leaders in Peru, Russia, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Australia's *The Guardian* profiles the crumbling credibility and waning power of the world's most high profile environmental NGOs.*

Since May 2014, Prime Minister Modi's administration has cancelled the licences of nearly 9,000 NGOs receiving some measure of foreign funding, on the grounds that they filed their accounts irregularly. Modi has never hidden his distaste for NGOs and their "five-star activists", as he once labelled them. These NGOs, India's Intelligence Bureau believes, don't just happen to have objectives that conflict with the government's plans for development; rather, at the behest of foreign donors, they exert every sinew to slow the velocity of India's economy.

According to Sudhanshu Trivedi, a Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson, Greenpeace was "selectively targeting those projects that were of great national importance for industrial growth and development. It's a very thin line between creating environmental awareness and creating social unrest."

Greenpeace has never been popular with governments; its activists stop aircraft from taking off, bust into power stations, or break the law in other ways. In 2013, [Russia arrested Greenpeace activists](#) for trying to board a Gazprom oilrig. Last year, Greenpeace [damaged the Nazca Lines](#), an ancient set of etchings in the Peruvian desert, during an ill-judged protest. In Australia, Greenpeace may lose its tax-deductible status, as it has done in Canada and New Zealand. The rationale behind these disqualifications is similar to the Indian government's grouses with Greenpeace. A New Zealand judge found that Greenpeace's "political activities ... cannot be regarded as 'merely ancillary' to Greenpeace's charitable purposes". Canada's prime minister, worried that "significant American interests" were pouring money into environmental groups to stop projects including an oil pipeline.

I asked Priya Pillai, a Greenpeace India campaigner, if she thought Greenpeace's activities were political. "Every issue on this earth is political," she said. "But we don't get engaged in mainstream politics, party politics."

The intransigence of Greenpeace India's positions can spark some doubt about how it makes decisions. This doubt, said Ambuj Sagar, a professor at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi, has nothing to do with the paranoid perception of a global plan to derail India's economy. Rather, Sagar, who studies environmental policy issues, worries that Greenpeace International formulates a plain, one-size-fits-all agenda, without considering the needs of different countries.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [India's war on Greenpeace](#)