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Auroville Bulletin 19

Ex-Working Committee members try to pursue their agenda by force, AV Foundation Office takes over the administration of Auroville's digital communication tools, FIRs filed against 6 Aurovilians

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

22nd May, 2022

Letter from ex-WCom to Government Officials

On Sunday, 15th May, the ex-Working Committee (comprised of the four ex-WCom members and three self-appointed interim members) have sent [an alarming letter](#) to several Government Officials, including the Hon'ble President of India, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, the Hon'ble Home Minister, the Hon'ble Minister of Education and the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, among others.

The letter claims “very strong obstructions by three of the previous Working Committee members and the Auroville Council” and a “vicious campaign ... by the Resident [sic] Assembly Service team”. The letter “condemn[s] the way the Auroville process has been hijacked with all kinds of unacceptable and unreasonable justifications and actions” and the fact that “no reasoning nor collaboration will be accepted by this tight grouping which does not recognize anyone else except themselves”, ironically the same reasons why the ex-Wcom members were voted out. The letter ends by requesting advice “on the next steps [they] can expect”.

The ex-WCom members have repeatedly bypassed the Residents' Assembly and yet in this letter they claim to speak on behalf of the Auroville community.

Ex-WCom attempt to take over the WCom office by force

On Wednesday, 18th May, the Inspector of the Auroville Police Station along with an officer of the CB-CID (Crime Branch - Crime Investigation Department) entered Auroville's Town Hall building at the request of the Auroville Foundation Office (AVFO). They arrived at 11 am and met with the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly (WCom), requesting them to hand over the keys to the WCom office and meeting room. The WCom members explained the results of the recent RAD, and the rights of the Residents' Assembly as per the Auroville Foundation Act. The officials left around 12.30 pm.

The Police Officials returned in the afternoon, at around 2.30 pm, accompanied by the ex-WCom members who were recently removed from office by RAD vote, but who are still illegitimately claiming to be the acting Working Committee. The Police Officials and ex-WCom members strongly pressured the WCom of the Residents' Assembly to hand over keys and records. Despite the intense pressure, the WCom calmly and repeatedly refused to give the keys to the officers in the absence of the necessary legal order and justification. Around 100 residents were present to peacefully observe the events as they unfolded. The Police Officials and the ex-

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Around 4.30 pm on the same day, the spokesperson of the AVFO, Joel van Lierde, came back to the WCom office with a hired locksmith to change the locks. Some of the residents who had remained, together with Working Committee members, stood in front of the door so that the lock could not be changed. A Police Officer was called back and along with the ex-WCom members insisted once again for the keys to be handed over. Since access to the office was categorically refused, the police shut down the entire Town Hall office, including all services of the Town Hall for the rest of the day. The police officer stated that the police would return the next day. Several Aurovilians maintained a presence at Town Hall throughout the evening and overnight.

The following morning on Thursday, 19th May, over 300 residents [gathered](#) at short notice on the Town Hall front lawn to show their support for the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly. There was no police presence that day as anticipated. There are reports that, in addition, the AVFO are resorting to other methods to gain control of the office of the WCom.

Administrator hands over Auronet admin console to the AVFO

Despite announcements from both [FAMC](#) & the [Working Committee](#) responding to the Under Secretary that his [request](#) for the Sysop (systems operator of auroville.org.in) and Auronet administrators to hand over their admin rights was invalid, on the 18th May, one of the ex-Auronet administrators and developers (Manoj) acted single handedly in deciding to give the Auronet controls to the AVFO. In an [email](#) to the FAMC & the WCom, Manoj stated that his suggestion “would have been to collaborate with the Secretary”. The community was informed about this serious breach of security and trust via Mass Bulletin & Auronet, through an [announcement](#) from the AV Council.

Immediately after the controls were relinquished by Manoj, Lieve (Secretary to the ATDC) [took control](#) of the Working Committee Auronet group and changed [the description](#) to state that the “Continuing Working Committee Members as of 6th May 2022 are: Anu, Arun, Partha, Srimoyi, and interim members are Joseba, Selvaraj and Tine”. On the 20th May, a [joint statement](#) from AV Council, WCom & FAMC confirmed that “In the current situation, we cannot guarantee that any of the posts and content you will see on Auronet are authentic”. On 21st May, the Ex-WCom 4 [posted](#) an update via the Working Committee Auronet account.

Admin Control of auroville.org.in is also with AVFO

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longer with Sysop (systems operators of auroville.org.in). It is not yet entirely clear how the Auroville Foundation Office took control but it seems likely that it was linked to the information handed to them by the Auroville administrator. The Sysop team were alerted to the breach when they found themselves locked out of their administrator email accounts. The WCom and Council later made a joint [statement](#) regarding the matter, and the WCom released a further [announcement](#) to say that they were looking into 'alternative communication methods'. The domain of the Auroville Financial Services was also changed to <https://avfs.org.in> to ensure the safety of Aurovilians' accounts. Please use this new address to connect to your Financial Service accounts.

If you do not already have a non-Auroville mailbox through Gmail, Protonmail or another service, it is advisable to sign up for one as soon as possible and to transfer your data to your new email ID.

To transfer your data from your auroville.org.in email to another Google account, you can use Google Takeout to download all data (from all your Google Services). This will include your emails and Google Drive documents. Go to takeout.google.com and login with your auroville.org.in account (top-right) and follow the instructions.

Police complaint filed against Aurovilians by Under Secretary

Also on May 20th, three members from the WCom (Sauro, Hemant, and Chali (ToS)) as well as Suryan from the Auroville Council, and Renu and Wazo found that an FIR (First Information Report) was filed against them based on a complaint made by the Under Secretary, Mr. Srinivasmurthy. The complaint claims that there was "obstruction of Working Committee members from entering office, illegitimate seizing and tampering of mail accounts by Auroville individuals - who are against Auroville Foundation and wrongfully having the keys of the Auroville Working Committee office." It goes on to state that they "suspect that these persons are engaging in deletion of incrimination and official [sic] data" and request the police to "take appropriate legal action against the above mentioned persons who are indulging in criminal activities against Auroville Foundation and restore the office and mailbox in the hands of the lawful WCom for continuing regular duties".

The Auroville Foundation Act states "The manner of choosing the members of the Working Committee and their term of office shall be such as may be decided by the Residents' Assembly" - and residents in Auroville are in their full right to have a WC that they trust to respect the collective decision-making processes. To read the full FIR complaint details, click [here](#).

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The RAS [has announced](#) that the nomination phase of the next selection process for working groups is now open, and will run until Thursday June 2nd. This leaves about ten days for residents to apply for the working group of their choice by filling in the nomination form. More details on the call for nominations, including the number of vacant seats for each group, can be found [here](#). The nomination form is accessible [here](#).

Given the extraordinary circumstances that Auroville is going through, **it is important now more than ever to have solid members within our working groups**. Working groups must be able to represent the Residents' Assembly and work for its best interests. If you believe you have a set of skills that can be offered as a working group member, please come forward! If you know of anyone who would be suitable to serve in a working group, please get in touch with that person and ask them to consider joining.

Other Updates and Information

AVFO announces a new checklist to update the RoR

The AVFO [have announced](#) that there is a new [form](#) of nearly 50 fields that they are using to 'update the Register of Residents'. The form includes a set of open questions, as well as a checklist to which the only possible allowed answer is 'yes'

It has not been indicated so far whether the checklist is compulsory and what would happen if any Aurovilians refuse to sign it; nor has it been indicated whether actions deemed incompatible with this declaration would invite sanction, and if so, how.

Serendipity Guest House Update

As the living area and parking of Serendipity GH is located on the proposed Crown Road area, the stewards were informed on short notice that ATDC would come and remove these buildings on Thursday, 19th of May. The stewards moved all material from these spaces on Wednesday 18th, before the scheduled demolition. However, on the day itself nobody came.

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to provide compensation for the buildings to be demolished. They were told that since only ATDC members can make that decision, their request would be reported to the ATDC. One of the workers of ATDC said that they planned to start paving the road in 20 days time.

'Spirit of Auroville' Event at Matrimandir

Today, Sunday 22nd May at 5pm, there will be a meditation at the Lotus Fountain at the Matrimandir. To view the flyer, see [here](#).

Action needed

- **Nominate yourself or others for a Working Group:** The nomination phase for the Working Groups' Selection Process is officially open. You can nominate yourself or other community members [here](#). More info [here](#).
- **Show support for WCom members :** Working Committee members are on the front line, and need support. Please offer them a hug, a smile or a thank you whenever you see them. The same applies to Auroville Council and RAS members.
- **Call for financial support:** If you would like to donate towards legal and delegation fees please email evolvingalaxy@gmail.com. Unfortunately it is not possible for us to receive funds from outside of India.

Media & Other Links

- **Letter from Auroville International Board**

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Aurovilians' homes, to the Chairman of the Governing Board and the Secretary of the AVFO.

- **Media Release from Residents' Assembly members**

See [here](#) for the information being shared with the media by members of the Residents' Assembly regarding the current situation.

- **Press Release from AVFO**

The Office of the Auroville Foundation has released a '[press note on the current affairs in Auroville](#)'. In it they lay out their rationale and justifications for their recent actions.

- **Articles in the National Media**

The Hindu, 19 May 2022, "[Auroville residents gather to support Resident Assembly](#)"

The Hindu, 22 May 2022, "[Filing of police cases against 6 residents unfortunate: Auroville Working Committee](#)"

The Hindu, 22 May 2022, "[Accept National Green Tribunal verdict with grace, says Auroville Foundation ex-chairman](#)"

Comments from Aurovilians

- See [here](#) for an excellent clarifying post from Auronet on 'anti-national and anti-government activities' by Manas.
- Rod Hemsell has [written](#) a helpful overview of the recent events relating to the Working Committee.
- Also see here for a [Facebook post](#) by an AV child currently living in France.

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We are a group of Aurovilians who are actively involved in understanding the current crisis situation in Auroville in order to find a way forward together.

We stand for:

- Respecting our community processes for decision-making
- A collaborative approach in developing Auroville using integrated methods such as the Dreamweaving initiative
- Transparency and fairness in the organisation of Auroville
- Creating unity with our diverse voices

Please note that the website <https://standforaurovilleunity.com/> contains a great deal of information and a detailed timeline.

With regard to future actions, those who have particular skills such as writing, social media, film editing etc. are welcome to write to evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

Please also share your thoughts and suggestions by replying to this email.

We hope this has been helpful. Let's keep working to find a way to bring us closer together to the beautiful dream of human unity in Auroville. We can do it ... together.

For those who have had previous technical problems receiving the Bulletin, the list of all previous Bulletin issues is accessible here: <https://linktr.ee/evolvinggalaxy>

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