

Statement by five former members of the Auroville International Advisory Council about the current situation in Auroville

18 May 2026

We, former members of the International Advisory Council (IAC) of the Auroville Foundation, wish to express our deep concern over the current situation in Auroville, which seems to be straying farther and farther away from the direction Mother gave in Auroville's Charter and in her numerous messages.

We are particularly concerned over the increasingly frequent use of verbal or physical violence in Auroville. The manner in which the management of Afsanah Guest House was forcibly taken over in October last year; in which the Youth Center was brutally dismantled on March 20, with unprovoked physical attacks on some of its inhabitants; in which the Auroville Council room, where residents had peacefully assembled for a meeting, was forcibly occupied on May 13, leading to altercations — among other incidents — seems to indicate that the use of violence is increasingly seen as an acceptable means to impose authority in Auroville. This cannot and should not be allowed to become the new norm, and we strongly condemn all violence in Auroville, whether in deeds or words.

Secondly, the Auroville community will remember that most members of the last IAC expressed (at least twice in writing, apart from oral representations during meetings with the last Governing Board) strong reservations about the manner in which land exchanges were arranged by the Auroville Foundation's administration. We find deeply concerning the recent series of land exchanges, again imposed on the community without consultation and, in particular, imposed on the residents who developed the lands and communities targeted for exchanges. Apart from resulting in considerable financial loss to the community, the exchanges continue to be opaque in nature and threaten Auroville's carefully nurtured environment – a vital foundation for Auroville's sustainability. We once again call for a halt to all land exchanges until a transparent procedure beneficial to all has been worked out.

Finally, we regret to note that there seems to be no improvement in the visa situation, with probably more than 30 Auroville residents being currently without a valid visa, as the Auroville Foundation's administration has kept in abeyance, often indefinitely, the standard recommendations for extension, though without assigning any reason for such delays. We are aware of several cases of residents being compelled to leave India or prevented from returning to India, leading to considerable unjustified hardship. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the issuance of such recommendations is tied to a perceived compliance by the residents, several

of whom have actually been told so. To use visas as a means of intimidation or to suppress legitimate dissent and enforce “alignment”, to use a word found in some recent communications from the Auroville Foundation’s administration, is, to our mind, reprehensible and diametrically opposed to Auroville’s ideals.

We must still hope that better sense will prevail and the Auroville Foundation’s administration, as well as the Ministry of Education, will agree that a supremely important project as Auroville, especially in the current global context, cannot possibly blossom with such methods and approaches. It is crucial that the rights and instruments of the Residents’ Assembly, one of Auroville Foundation’s three statutory bodies, should be respected, as enjoined by the Auroville Foundation Act and by the true spirit of collaboration and human unity without which Auroville will cease to exist.

Dena Merriam | Gabi Gilessen | Michel Danino | Julian Lines | Doudou Diène

Former members of the International Advisory Council of the Auroville Foundation