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Three Gorges Dam Campaign

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Anger at dam corruption growing by Jasper Becker
c **South China Morning Post** September 29/2000

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Beijing - Organised resistance among peasants protesting against corruption government officials charge the Three Gorges Dam resettlement project increasing residents have repeatedly clashed with police in recent months, peasant representatives say.

Their reports growing tension violence contradict official statements first stages scheme, which aims resettle between 1.5 million 1.9 million people 2009, proceeding smoothly.

Last week, 300 peasants Gaoyang township, in Yunyang, attacked officials charge county resettlement bureau, injuring least one. peasants accused officials embezzling funds set aside for their resettlement Tao Fu state farm, Hubei province. Their original homes

have already been pulled down and are homeless.

Three weeks ago about 1,000 peasants marched on government headquarters Kai county, Wanxian district, demanding meet government leaders. They hurled missiles injured some officials, including the deputy party chief, who h with brick, tried cut telephone wires. Officials summoned troops to quell violence.

"To defend themselves, peasants placed old and young front so troops could nothing," one source said.

Officials Kai county confirmed incident happened but denied telephone lines were cut that deputy party chief had been injured.

On February 22, more than 1,000 peasants staged a march Gaoyang township, where about 10,000 peasants are relocated. police stopped the marchers, who then staged 24-hour sit-in and demanded meeting with county leaders.

both cases, local officials refused negotiate with the peasants their representatives. many areas, peasants have selected their own unofficial representatives negotiate best compensation deals possible. Many families have contributed money to finance independent pressure groups.

During February protest, peasants demanded see official policy documents because believed they were being cheated local authorities, who they accuse pilfering resettlement funds set aside by Beijing.

Peasants have signed dozens petitions, often with their thumbprints, which have been delivered the State Council Three Gorges Corporation, asking higher authorities investigate corruption.

One petition signed last month peasants the counties Dazhou Xiaozhou, Wanzhou district, complained their representatives had been detained threatened local officials.

Another petition claimed peasant representative had been knifed local gangsters on orders a local official.

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