

STOP SALWA JUDUM!!

STOP VIOLENCE IN DANTEWADA!!

Since June 2005, the Government of Chhattisgarh, with the support of the Home Ministry has been waging a counter-insurgency operation against the Naxalites in the guise of a 'spontaneous', 'self-initiated', 'peaceful', 'people's movement' named the Salwa Judum in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh. The district administration claims that upset with the Maoist strike call on collecting *tendu* leaves and opposition to development works like road construction and grain levies, people in some 200 villages began mobilizing against the Maoists, going on processions and holding meetings.

However the fact is that the Salwa Judum is being actively supported by the Chhattisgarh Government. Far from being a peaceful campaign, Salwa Judum 'activists' are armed with guns, *lathis*, axes, bows and arrows. Up to January 2007, 4048 "Special Police Officers" (SPOs) had been appointed by the Government under the Chhattisgarh Police Regulations. They actively participate in the Salwa Judum and are given military and weapons training by the security forces as part of an official plan to create a civil vigilante structure parallel to that of the Naxalites.

Though exact figures are not known, over the last two years, atleast 1, 00,000 people have been displaced and the lives atleast 3, 00,000 people from the 644 "liberated villages" has been completely disrupted, because of Salwa Judum. People are forcibly picked up from their villages and are confined into 'relief camps', where they face acute shortage of food, water and other basic amenities. The condition of several thousands who have been forced to migrate to neighbouring states and districts is even worse. All those villages which have not come into camps are deemed "Maoists" villages and denied all health, education and other facilities, including access to markets. A large number of people have thus been denied their fundamental rights

There has been a complete breakdown of civil administration and the rule of law in Dantewada district and Salwa Judum 'activists' have become vigilantes who assert the right to control, intimidate and punish anyone they consider to be a suspected Naxalite. Cases of murder, loot, arson, rape and other violence and atrocities by Salwa Judum go unreported. The Government does not accept responsibility for the actions of the Salwa Judum 'activists', it sponsors, encourages, promotes and assures them full state protection and grants them impunity to operate as an extra-legal authority within the district. The Maoists also retaliate with attacks on camps, SPOs and police. According to State government's own figures, Salwa Judum has only intensified the violence from both sides.

The Government's only response to Maoist insurgency has been to militarise; step up police operations and to pit civilians, in the name of Salwa Judum, against Maoists and against each other. By resorting to such measures, the government has seriously challenged the efficacy of democratic and constitutional means of finding solutions to people's problems. It has completely failed to address the root of the discontent, the deprivation and alienation of Adivasis, which form basis of the Maoist foothold in Dantewara.

WE DEMAND:

We demand that the Chhattisgarh Government:

- ⇒ Disband and disarm Salwa Judum immediately
- ⇒ Stop appointing Special Police Officers
- ⇒ Stop recruiting children and adolescents below 18 years of age
- ⇒ Allow Adivasis to return home to their villages; wherever houses and property has been destroyed or damaged, government should re-build them.
- ⇒ Stop harassment and allow free access to journalists, civil society organisations, and medical and education workers to Dantewada.
- ⇒ Repeal the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act 2005
- ⇒ Create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue to find political resolution to political issues
- ⇒ Stop arrests, detention and false implication of Human rights activists, social workers etc and release all such persons.

We demand that the Government of India:

- ⇒ Stop aiding and abetting Salwa Judum in the name of promoting “local resistance groups”.
- ⇒ Institute a high level independent enquiry into all acts of violence-rape, arson, loot, murder and disappearances by Salwa Judum and paramilitary forces and initiate criminal proceedings.
- ⇒ Recognise the right to life and dignity of internally displaced people living outside Chhattisgarh and ensure their safety
- ⇒ Create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue to find political resolution to political issues

We demand that the CPI (Maoist):

- ⇒ Stop all forms of violence
- ⇒ Create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue to find political resolution to political issues
- ⇒ Stop recruiting children and adolescents below 18 years of age
- ⇒ Allow safe return of villagers to their home including Salwa Judum supporters.

Appeal to Members of Parliament

Raise this issue in the Parliament and demand a Parliamentary debate on Ministry of Home Affairs policy of promoting “local resistance groups” in general and Salwa Judum in particular. Institute Joint Parliamentary Committee to investigate the role played by the state police, political parties and Ministry of Home Affairs in creating the civil war situation

Appeal to all concerned citizens

Please visit Dantewara and assess the situation yourself.

Raise your voice against Salwa Judum and the flagrant human rights violation in Chhattisgarh wherever you are.

About CPJC:

The Campaign for Peace and Justice in Chhattisgarh is a campaign group formed by individuals and organisations who are deeply concerned about the gross violation of human rights going on in Chhattisgarh in the name of fighting ‘internal terrorism’. We are extremely concerned by the violence unleashed by the state backed Salwa Judum which has pushed Chhattisgarh into a civil war situation and the repressive Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005 which is being used to crush all voices of dissent in the state.

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