

Judicial Probe Into Kishenji's Death

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ONCE AGAIN, THE RIGHTS body activists of Bengal unanimously and unequivocally demanded judicial enquiry into Kishenji's death on Friday, 23rd December at a Convention at Bharat Sabha Hall, Kolkata, organised by Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR). The central theme of the convention was "A Republic cannot kill its own Children" as famously observed by the Supreme Court recently.

The demand gained further momentum when representatives of the Left Front partner Forward Bloc as well as former Trinamul MLA Dipak Ghosh joined IFTU, Bandi Mukti Committee, Matangini Mahila Samity and other organisations in expressing their wholehearted support to the resolution placed by the organisers. Renowned intellectuals like Tarun Sanyal, labour leader Prafulla Chakraborty, scientist Meher Engineer, singer Bipul Chakraborty also supported the demand for judicial probe into all such killings.

"This convention holds that if the state government does not order any Judicial probe over Kishenji's death, the people of this country will believe that the state government really has something to hide which means Kishenji has been killed in a fake encounter, not in a real encounter," the resolution said.

Earlier, Deboprasad Roy Chowdhury and Dhiraj Sengupta of APDR informed that the term 'encounter death' had been introduced in the country during the Naxalite movement of 1970's. During March 1971 to October 1971, not less than 202 political workers were killed in the name of encounter with security forces under the Congress regime. None of the killers was brought to book or tried by the successive LF governments.

Instead, the extra-judicial killings of political activists continued during the LF regime. The leaders of People's Committee Against Police Atrocities as well as Maoist leaders including Lalmohan Tudu, Sidhu Soren, Asim Das (Kanchan), Umakanta Mahato and Sashadhar Mahato were killed in so-called "police encounters". At least 25 members of Kamtapur Liberation Organisation were killed in the similar fashion. The LF governments did not pay heed to the demands of judicial probe into these killings.

The same legacy is continuing under the present Trinamul Congress-led regime also. Not only Kishenji, at least two other Maoist workers were already killed in so-called encounters. Speakers after speakers in the convention demanded a halt to this illegal and dirty practice by the Indian State and its regional stakeholders.

Tarun Sanyal believed that Kishenji was coming for peace talk with the Government. He said, none of the villagers heard any police announcement over loudspeakers asking the

Maoist leader and his associates to surrender, as chief minister Mamata Banerjee claimed later. If villagers did not divulge Kishenji's location despite combing operation by the security forces for three days, then all of the villagers around were Maoists, Sanyal felt. "And then I must say, Kishenji is not dead, he is alive amongst his dear village folks", he added.

He said every citizen of India should keep Kishenji's photograph in their drawing room because he was the man who had fought to protect land, water and forests of the country from the foreign mercenaries.

Dipankar Chakraborty, Amitdyuti Kumar, Choton Das and all other speakers endorsed the CDRO fact-finding team's observations that had picked enough holes in the government/police version which legitimised the demand for judicial probe further. They said that the inconsistencies in police story made it clear that Kishenji was captured, brutally tortured and killed in cold blood.

Dilip Chakraborty of IFTU condemned the interlocutors in the failed peace process and termed them as 'betrayers of Rights movement' for accepting government terms and conditions over joint Forces and others.

The house accepted the amendment suggested by Sujato Bhadra that the Chief Minister should be condemned for virtually asking state CID to follow her line over the statutory investigation into Kishenji's death since she had aired her views on the circumstances of his end even before the government's sleuths wrapped up their probe.

The convention finally resolved: "This convention demands that the death of Kotesher Rao (Kishenji) should be probed with a sitting High Court or Supreme Court judge. At the same time the convention also demanded probes into the 'encounter killings' during the LF regimes". □□□