

LETTER

ABDUCTION AGAIN

PUDR expresses concern at the abduction of foreign nationals and government officials by the CPI (Maoist). However, a larger issue is raised by this act of abduction namely how even a wrong method can expose a legitimate concern of people desperately trying to get their just demands fulfilled by a government which has reneged on an agreement reached with the mediators last year, which saw the release of the district collector of Malkangiri. Then as now the question of rehabilitation of tribal peasantry displaced by water works in 1970s, or return of land to tribals dispossessed of their land, release of 600 plus activists of Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangathan (CMAS) fighting for the lands forcibly acquired from them among others has not been implemented.

The incarceration of the Maoists in jails for years on end by foisting multiple cases against each or their re-arrest no sooner as they have been given bail, has been the way rule of law has worked against them to imprison their ideas. The sheer fact of banning them denies them any opportunity to work any other way. Although abduction of civilians is prohibited by the Geneva Convention by belligerents, what has gone unnoticed is the abductions by the Indian agencies such as the 40 enforced disappearances from Jangalmahal in West Bengal. While one wrong does not justify another, the point is that policy of the Indian Government together with the state governments is meant to ride roughshod over every legitimate demand of the people even those they have officially committed through an agreement. Conceding any demand of the people runs counter to the government fighting a war of subjugation of its own people.

Rehabilitation of 12,000 persons displaced since 1970s or incarceration of 600 plus tribals in crowded jails for demanding restoration of their land ought to have been a matter of utmost concern.

PUDR urges the CPI(Maoist) to ensure the well-being of their captives. We appeal to the state government of Odisha to at least now fulfil their commitments, and also halt the joint forces operations to pave the way for a democratic solution. Also our appeal to the civil liberty groups, political parties as well as the media to focus on the legitimate demands in order to bring this incident to a mutually satisfactory closure.

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