

BLACK FRIDAY

Back From Netai

[A six-member team from the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) visited Netai village of Lalgarh at 3.00 pm on 08th January, 2011 to investigate the incident of firing on unarmed villagers by the CPM-sponsored Harmad Bahini on 7th January (Friday) and released a report on January 12, 2011. Excerpts :]

VILLAGERS TOLD THE team that one month ago the camp of CPI(M) was formed at the house of the local CPI(M) leader, Rathin Dandapat. Abani Singh and Sovon Mondal, CPI(M) leaders of the same village, had told the villagers that the camp had been made to establish peace in the area. Gokul Maity of this village informed team-members that instead of establishing peace some trouble had been started at the village. Villagers were forced to cook and wash clothes for the camp-dwellers. About 20 to 25 armed persons were at the camp according to the villager Pradip Roy. One day they forced, at gun point, the villagers to participate in the rally of CPI(M). The non-armed villagers were compelled to guard the armed men of the camp.

Unwillingly they were obeying all orders from the camp. The agricultural work of the villagers was hampered for their service at the camp and also the dignity of the villagers was not protected by the members of the camp. Meanwhile the CRPF did not patrol the village a single day. The CRPF left the fate of the village in the hands of the Harmad camp. Other camps of Harmad bahini of CPI(M) are situated at Birkar, Belatikari and Sijua within 3 to 4 km from the camp of Netai. The villagers were always living under the fear of the Harmad Bahini. Finally, four days before the incident, the leaders of the camp announced mandate for arms training to the villagers of 18 to 35 years old. It was too much for the villagers. One day the villagers gathered to take arms training in the field. After that, on 6th January, the villagers unanimously decided that it was not possible to take arms training. On 7th January around 2 thousand villagers out of four thousand population, gathered before the camp at 8 AM. The villagers and the camp members held discussions at the Battala Chalk which is 20 to 25m away from the camp or the house of Rathin Dandapat. They told the leaders of the camp that villagers were not willing to take arms training. After discussion of 15 to 20 minutes the leaders said that they required the consent of the higher party committee in this matter. In the name of consent of higher committee they called the armed cadres from the other camp. After few minutes, from south of the village some armed men entered the village and firing started. Some of the villagers said that first firing started from the house-roof of Rathin Dandapat. There is another version that the armed men of the outside camp started the firing first.

Villagers gave the names of the armed persons who were engaged in the firing of 7th January at Netai. Such as Abani Singh, Sovon Mondal, Joydeep Giri, Asani Chalok, Tapan Dey, Phulora Mondal, Nabagopal Chai. They also said that the Harmads did not allow ambulance for injured persons.

The local police force was informed by the villagers at 8 pm before gathering in front of the camp. After firing Tanmoy Roy and Sibsankar Roy again informed the in-charge of Lalgarh Thana. After four hours CRPF entered the village. Then CRPF butted with their bayonets and terrorized the villagers. Salil Pal of Netai is still lying in the bed (Bed No. 32 of Surgical Ward) of Midnapur Sadar Hospital due to the injury by CRPF. Sandip Mondal was also injured by the CRPF. The Fact finding team made the observation that Lalgarh thana is situated at a distance of 2.5 to 3 km from the place of incident. The police force came to the

village after 6 hours of the incident. Harmad bahini fired at the villagers for a long time and the police did not take any initiative to resist the incident. The police gave enough time to the armed cadres of CPM to get away from the place of the incident. Police did not help the injured either. The villagers themselves hospitalized the injured persons. So it proved that the Harmad Bahini and police were jointly beside the incident of 7th January. The team now reached the conclusion that the firing of the 7th January (Friday) by Harmad Bahini of CPI(M) occurred with the alliance of police force and CRPF.

List of dead persons :

1. Phulmani Maity 2. Swaraswati Gharai 3. Samananda Gharai 4. Dheren Sen 5. Dhrubaprasad Ghoshwami 6. Arup Parta 7. Sourav Gharai.

Injured Persons who are still admitted in the hospital:

Gouri Das, Farmer, 65Yr. (Bullet injury at the right side of the chest) ii. Dilip Sen, Farmer, (bullet injury at left eye and right hand) iii. Arati Mondal, 52yrs, (bullet injury at belly) iv. Geeta Adak, (Bullet injury at belly) v. Saktipada Singh (Bullet injury at right side of the chest) vi. Tapas Mondal (Bullet injury at left leg) vii. Nayan Sen (bullet injury at left leg) viii. Avarani Mondal (bullet injury at shoulder) ix. Ganesh Adak (bullet injury at chest) x. Hansha Roy (Injured) xi. Taruni Ghata (Injured) xii. Naba Ghata (injured) xiii. Ashim Roy (injured) xiv. Lhakhon Sen, Madhu Jana, and Salil Pal (injured by CRPF) □□□