

Who is the state hunting?

Incidents of Massacre by Security Forces and Salwa Judum under Operation Green Hunt, in Bijapur and Dantewada districts of Chhattisgarh



Coordination of Democratic Rights Organisation (CDRO), September 2012

Contents

Preface	01
Killing of Adivasis in Bijapur District, 28th June 2012	03
Chintanlar Massacre, District Dantewada, 11th to 16th March 2011	09
Murders in Dantewada District, 17th Sept. & 1st Oct. 2009	13

Preface

This booklet brings together three fact-finding reports conducted by CDRO between October 2009 and July 2012 in the districts of Dantewada and Bijapur in Chhattisgarh. The first report, *Killing of Adivasis by CRPF in Bijapur District*, focuses on the massacre committed on June 28, 2012; *Chintalnar Massacre* exposes the brutal side of ‘area domination’; and *Murders by Security Forces* brings to light the horrendous mass murders that were committed on two days in 2009. Essentially, each report deals incidents of murder, loot, rape and torture committed by security forces and members of the infamous Salwa Judum. While all three reports have already been released to the press separately, the purpose of bringing them together between these covers, at this stage is to document the continuing story of the ‘war’ that the Indian state has declared on the people from 2009 onwards in the name of combating Maoism.

The government of India has never officially accepted that there is such a thing called ‘Operation Green Hunt’; or that it is fighting an internal ‘war’ in central India over the control of land and natural resources, as well as political control over a vast stretch of land populated by some of the poorest and the historically most deprived people in the country. However, more than 70 battalions of paramilitary forces and 10 COBRA commando battalions have already been deployed in Chhattisgarh alone. The army has a significant presence here and runs a huge jungle warfare school that is being continuously expanded. The air force has been roped in provide logistic, surveillance and technological assistance; and going by media reports there are serious suggestions to involve the air force in direct combat.

The prime minister of India has named ‘Left Wing Extremism’ as the country’s ‘greatest internal security threat’, and accordingly, the armed might of the state has been unleashed on not just the Maoists, but all suspected of supporting them or sympathizing with the cause. A key part of this military operation has been the induction (forced or otherwise) of a section of the local tribal youth in the auxiliary forces as Special Police Officers (SPOs) or as members of state (and corporate) sponsored vigilante gangs like Salwa Judum or Koya Commandos. This is meant to box in the Maoists through effective military and intelligence inputs provided by local youth, as well as by dividing the local population and making them fight each other. Financially, nine ‘Naxal *affected* states’ have been reimbursed from a central fund set aside for ‘security related matters’ and over the years, the government has only increased the amount available for such expenditures.

Nevertheless, the ground situation is such, that even the government is forced to admit that ‘left wing extremism’ is not just a ‘law and order’ issue, but has socio-political dimensions, rooted in social and economic deprivations. So, the Indian state claims that this ‘war’ on left wing extremism is being supplemented by another prong – ‘development’. The present Union Minister for Rural Development, Jairam Ramesh has asked for additional money for road building and connectivity in all the 60 districts identified as LWE affected. What remains hidden in this discourse is the fact that roads are as important for ‘development’ as for military movement and the corporate extraction of goods and resources. The government’s ‘development’ rhetoric becomes even more suspect in the context of several officially ‘Naxalite *affected*’ states lobbying hard to demand relaxation of the Forest Conservation Act (1980) as it imposes restrictions on the use of forest land for police or paramilitary purposes.

In November 2009, the then Home Minister, P Chidambaram stated that ‘in a period of two to

three years' the Naxalite challenge would be overcome. The 'war', however, refused to oblige Mr Chidambaram. In February 2011, he sombrely admitted that the security forces had not made major progress and the situation was fast becoming that of a 'stalemate'.

So, the state continues with its military agenda. Accordingly, in April 2012, the Home Secretary told a parliamentary committee that the security forces have been instructed to 'arrest and kill' as many extremists as possible. This booklet shows how, for the forces, this translates into a routine and blatant disregard for the laws of the land or even the norms of war laid down by the international community.

This is not to deny the fact that the Maoist movement is an armed one, with a military wing. Their guerrilla army, primarily drawn from the local adivasi population, engages the security forces in combat as part of their political struggle. But these facts can in no way legitimise the extra judicial killings of unarmed people, Maoists or suspected Maoists. It does not give the state the licence to illegally detain, torture and falsely implicate people by branding them as Maoists. Neither can it justify the attacks on villages by security forces - raiding, looting, burning houses and murdering the villagers - something that has become common in Chhattisgarh, as this booklet documents. It is also significant that while these atrocities by the state forces have been repeatedly exposed, the perpetrators have never been punished or even been tried in a court of law. The best the state could manage was to offer very feeble and insincere apologies after all its justifications and self-laudatory claims have fallen flat. It is as if the Indian Constitution or the Indian Penal Code remains suspended for the security forces operating in Chhattisgarh.

Indeed, the fact that the 'war' goes on, despite the vastly, immeasurably superior military might of the Indian state only points to the social and political aspects that lie at the conflict in Chhattisgarh. *Who is the State Hunting?* points towards the class nature of this war and shows how the security forces in Chhattisgarh are operating far beyond the boundaries of the law and how vast sums of public money is being spent to kill and harass some of the poorest, most deprived people in India.

KILLING OF ADIVASIS IN BIJAPUR DISTRICT, 28TH JUNE, 2012

An all-India fact-finding team of rights activists belonging to the Coordination of Democratic Rights Organisations (CDRO) visited the area in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh where 17 adivasis died as a result of firing by CRPF forces on the night of June 28, 2012. The team visited the villages of Sarkeguda, Kottaguda and Rajpenta and elicited information about the events. The following is a brief report of the team. A more detailed report will follow in due course. The team visited the villages of Sarkeguda, Kottaguda and Rajpenta on July 6 and 7 and elicited information about the events.

All three villages are small settlements located close to each other and in the jurisdiction of the Basaguda police station which is located about a Kilometer away. There is a CRPF camp at about three km from the three villages. While Sarkeguda with 25 households and Rajpenta (12 households) are in Korsagudem panchayat, Kottaguda with 30 households is in Cheepurupatti panchayat. Most residents of the three villages belong to the Dorla Koya tribe.

About 60 adivasis of these three villages assembled from around 8 pm on June 28 in an open area between Sarkeguda and Kottaguda. Such meetings where decisions have to be taken collectively are usually held during the night since adivasis are busy with work most of the day. As the sowing season was upcoming, the meeting was held to discuss several issues related to farming including fixing the date for the traditional seed sowing festival known as *bija pondum*- (this was to have taken place a few weeks earlier but was delayed because the pujari who conducts the ritual had died), distribution of land for tilling, lending help to those families who were without cattle, deciding the amount of rent for using the new tractor they had brought and how to raise fish. Arrears of Rs 10,000 due to the adivasis since two years for tendu leaf collection were paid only recently and they also wanted to discuss what use to put it to. It was a fairly cloudy night and visibility was poor. All those in the gathering were adivasi residents of the three villages and unarmed.

While the meeting was going on, a large contingent of CRPF personnel and CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action, a specialised anti-naxalite guerilla unit of the CRPF) commandos numbering well over a hundred, cordoned off the area. According to the villagers, at about 10 pm there was gunfire without any warning. The first burst was from towards the west and it hit three adivasis who died instantly. This was quickly followed by firing from three other directions. Terrified villagers began screaming and running. Most ran towards their respective villages. Some tried to hide in a hay-storing enclosure. Those who were fleeing for their lives were also fired upon. The firing continued for about 30 minutes after which, as if to survey the dead, the CRPF forces fired two flare guns that lit up the area. The forces stayed on in the area.

It was clear to the fact-finding team that a peaceful gathering of adivasis, none of whom carried any firearms, was surrounded by the CRPF and without any warning fired upon indiscriminately. As a result of this firing, 16 adivasis died — 15 that night and Irpa Suresh (15) in Bijapur hospital the next day. Six of the dead were minors, including a 12 year old girl Kaka Saraswati, daughter of K Rama. She was hit while fleeing towards her house in Kottaguda. Of the other five minors, two — Kaka Rahul (16) and Madkam Ramvilas (16) — were studying in class 10 at a school in Basaguda. Both stayed at a hostel in Basaguda and had come home during the summer vacations.

It was plain slaughter that night near Sarkeguda.

According to the villagers, those who did not die from the bullet wounds were killed by the police with axes they picked up from the village itself. Several eyewitnesses from outside the village, including mediapersons who saw the bodies before they were cremated, referred to some of them as having been brutalised with deep hacking cuts on the chests and foreheads.

The 17th victim of this senseless butchery was Irpa Ramesh, husband of I Lachmi and father of three children. After the firing began, he ran and made it to the safety of his house and stepped out

at dawn at about 5 am to survey the area. He was fired upon immediately and though he was hit, managed to get back inside his house. The CRPF men followed him in and clobbered him to death with a brick in front of his family members. According to Ramesh's father Irpa Raju, the CRPF men also stole Rs 5,000 from their house. The same night the police also stole Rs 30,000 from Irpa Narayana's house in Rajpenta as well as Rs 2,000 from the house of Madkam Nagesh.

Those killed are:

From Kottaguda:

1. Kaka Saraswati (12), daughter of K Rama
2. Kaka Sammayya (32), farmer, husband of K Nagi.
3. Kaka Rahul (16), student of Class 10 at Basaguda, son of K Narayana.
4. Madkam Ramvilas (16), student of Class 10 at Basaguda and classmate of Kaka Rahul, son of M Butchaiah.
5. Madkam Dileep (17), studied upto Class 8 at Pamed, assists his father M Muttaiah in farming.
6. Irpa Ramesh (30), farmer, husband of I Lachmi, father of three children.
7. Irpa Dinesh (25), farmer, husband of I Janaki, father of four children, is younger brother of Irpa Ramesh.
8. Madkam Nagesh (35), farmer, also a professional dholak player who performed during festivals, husband of M Sammi, father of two children. His wife is pregnant with their third child.
9. Madkam Suresh (30), farmer, husband of M Sammi and father of two children, is younger brother of Madkam Nagesh.
10. Irpa Narayana (45), farmer, husband of I Narsi, father of four children.

From Rajpenta:

11. Irpa Dharmayya (40), farmer, husband of I Bheeme, father of five children.
12. Irpa Suresh (15), studied upto class 5, son of I Chandrayya. Died at Bijapur hospital on June 29.

From Sarkeguda:

13. Sarke Ramanna (25), farmer, husband of S Somulu, father of three children.
14. Apka Meetu (16), son of A Sukhram, helps his father in farming.
15. Korsu Bichem (22), son of K Gutta, worked earlier for a borewell firm at Hyderabad, came home a month ago to help his family in farming.
16. Kunjam Malla (25), farmer, son of K Lakmadu.
17. Madvi Aithu (40), farmer, husband of M Kamli and father of four children.

Six adivasis were injured in the firing. Four of them, Kaka Ramesh (11) and Kaka Parvathi (10), Irpa Chinnakka (40) and Abka Chotu (16) were admitted to hospitals in Bijapur and Jagdalpur and have since returned home after treatment. Madkam Somayya (30) and Kaka Senti (19) were taken to a hospital in Raipur and are still undergoing treatment but are out of danger.



Injured Kaka Ramesh and Kaka Parvathi

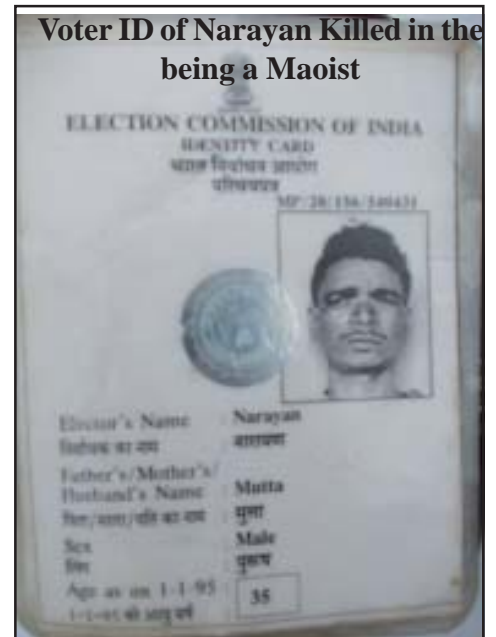
Among the injured Kaka Ramesh (13) and his younger sister Kaka Parvathi (11) escaped narrowly. After the firing began, they ran in the direction of their house in Kottaguda and sustained bullet injuries on their left arms. Irpa Munna (26) and Sarka Pullaiah (20) who were also injured were not taken to the hospital by the CRPF. They are being treated with traditional medicine by their fellow adivasis in Sarkeguda and Kottaguda respectively. A few cattle also died in the firing.

The CRPF men camped in the ground that night and took away 15 of the dead to Basaguda the same night and Irpa Ramesh in the morning. Apart from the injured, they also took along with them about 25 villagers who were let off in the evening. The adivasis went to Basaguda the same day and demanded that the bodies be handed over. The police did so towards evening and the villagers performed their funeral the next day. While some were cremated others were buried. The body of Irpa Dinesh was not returned to the village since, according to the police, he was a Maoist. His body was buried near the police station at Basaguda.

Flouting standard norms, the CRPF men not only carried away the bodies but also scooped away the bloodstained ground beneath the bodies. The Bijapur superintendent of police has gone on record saying that “proper post mortem was conducted by a team of doctors at the Basaguda thana and a report is being prepared”. A post mortem has to be conducted at a hospital properly equipped for the routine and not a police thana. Significantly, the villagers are unanimous that no post mortem was carried out, a fact corroborated by several reporters who saw none of the tell-tale marks that show on the body after a post mortem procedure.

The fact-finding team was also told by the villagers that on the morning of the 29th, CRPF men dragged two women to the fields nearby and tore their clothes. Three other women were also abused, beaten up and threatened with rape.

While these are the plain facts, the police establishment — from the Bijapur SP to high-ranking officials in the CRPF establishment — have sought to portray this carnage on adivasi civilians as one of a prolonged exchange of fire with dreaded Maoists resulting in the deaths. Injuries sustained by



Irpa Munna's Wife, Irpa Laxmi with thier kid

six CRPF and CoBRA commandoes was repeatedly pointed out. These lies were duly parroted by the political class headed by Union Home Minister P Chidambaram. Broadly, the initial assertion was that an “Operation Silger” was planned several weeks ago and three teams of the CRPF and CoBRA personnel had planned to converge in an area where they had “intelligence inputs” of a big Maoist gathering. Even before the CRPF men could reach there, they came upon a congregation at Sarkeguda and before they could verify matters, they were fired upon because of which the CRPF men resorted to firing in “self defence” resulting in the death of many Maoists. According to IG (Operations), CRPF Pankaj Kumar Singh “a full-fledged Maoist training camp was being run there and the arrangements were such that if attacked they could wrap up everything and leave in 10 minutes. We have recovered IED’s, lot of literature, polythene tents, solar cells and muzzle loading guns.”

This is brazen falsehood to explain away a horrible crime. The plea of self-defence is a favourite invocation by the police and paramilitary forces to explain away extra-judicial killings. The fact-finding team is of the firm opinion that there was no exchange of fire and the firing was completely one-sided, emanating only from the side of the special forces. It was unannounced and unprovoked.

The injuries to six CRPF and CoBRA personnel on that night was repeatedly cited by CRPF officers to buttress their argument of an exchange of fire. The fact-finding team noticed dozens of bullet marks on trees around the area where the adivasis had assembled as well as bullet marks on some houses indicating that the adivasi gathering was fired upon from all directions. It is entirely plausible that the six personnel sustained the injuries because of the firing by their colleagues from the other sides. The villagers themselves are of the firm opinion that the six CRPF and CoBRA men were caught in their own crossfire. All adivasi residents that the fact-finding team spoke to stated emphatically that there were no Maoists present in their gathering and all of those attending the meeting that night were unarmed.

Following reports in the national media that there were a number of civilians, including minors, who were killed, the official version was toned down but the basic argument of armed Maoist presence at the meeting and a bonafide encounter continues to be insisted upon. The CRPF now says that seven of the deceased — Madkam Suresh, Madkam Nagesh, Madvi Ayatu, Kaka Sammayya, Korsa Bijje, Madkam Dilip and Irpa Narayana are Maoists and that there are various cases of violence of a serious nature lodged against them in various police stations across Chhattisgarhstate. In a macabre take on the death of adivasi civilians, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister S Raman Singh said that the Maoists had used the adivasis as human shields and therefore were responsible for the death of civilians!

The more intelligent among the security establishment have now launched a discourse about “unfortunate collateral damage” and how that may be minimized in such engagements in future. Pertinently, there was no way that the CRPF and CoBRA men could have made out the presence of armed people in the gathering on a cloudy night and from the distance they were located at — about 100 metres away. They surrounded the gathering and began firing with murderous abandon. Even if the claim of the CRPF that they were fired upon and were only retaliating is true, there is absolutely no justification whatsoever in unleashing gunfire on a village gathering.

Over many years, terrible violence has visited the area. In particular after a combination of the police and criminal Salwa Judum vigilante gangs were let loose on the adivasis in south Bastar since 2005. In a six-month long reign of terror, residents of all three villages have faced attacks by Salwa Judum gangs, had their houses looted and burnt as a consequence of which they migrated, many of them to Khammam district in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. Two adivasis, Madkam Billa and a minor Korse Bheema of Sarkeguda were also killed by the police at the time. In fact, the adivasis had returned about three years ago and were in the process of rebuilding their lives when the June 28 massacre happened.

In many villages of Korseguda and Cheepurupatti panchayats, instances of police harassment abound. While in the earlier phase of State brutality on adivasis, the common word one heard was that the “judum have done this”, now people say “the forces are causing a lot of problem” alluding to the CRPF and other paramilitary and special police that have been pumped into the area in large numbers over the past two years. The forces, they say, come and position themselves near the villages in the night and fire in the air. “They do this to see if any one comes out and runs so as to kill them.” People of Korseguda, Cheepurupatti and other nearby panchayats go to Basaguda to purchase supplies and also sell some of their produce. “But only the women go since the men will invariably be taken in by the police at Basaguda, questioned, abused, beaten and sometimes detained for weeks on end. The men started staying away after some of them were booked in false cases.”

As the fact-finding team was approaching the three villages, we saw several groups of heavily armed CRPF men in the forest. They viewed us suspiciously but did not intervene in any manner. They were present when the team was on its way back several hours later. Their presence, after having been responsible for the blood-shed a week ago, works against normal and fearless functioning of life in the area. Referring to the announcement by the Chhattisgarh government of a judicial enquiry by a sitting High Court judge into the incident, the adivasis said it would only have any meaning if the enquiry was held in the village itself.

Amidst this inhumanity, there was in evidence a heartening defiance among the adivasis. Unlike during the horrendous mayhem of the early salwa judum, the adivasis are not considering leaving their villages anymore. Instead, there is a strong sense of the injustice done to them and an urge for redressal. The fact-finding team was witness to relief sent by the government being rejected outright. The SDM of Bhoopalapatnam RA Kuruvanshi had arrived in several vehicles with supplies of rice, dal, clothes and some utensils. Angry villagers virtually shouted him and other officials out of Kotteguda. “You kill our children and now you want to help?” “We are Maoists, are we not? Have you come here to give Maoists these supplies?”

The fact-finding team is of the opinion that the mowing down of 17 adivasis on June 28 is a fall-out of the current counter-insurgency strategy of the government in its fight against the Maoists. In Chattisgarh, time and again this has meant that adivasis perceived of being the support base of the Maoists are being deliberately targeted and subjected to terrible violence. This is an unacceptable violation of the right to life and liberty. Functionaries of the Central and State governments keep stating from time to time that Maoism is not merely a law and order problem but as one having strong socio-economic roots. However, in practice Maoism



Father of around 12 years old, Kaka Saraswati, killed by CRPF

is being treated as nothing but an outbreak of mere criminality and deployment of killer security forces is seen as the only solution. This policy of brutal suppression must end. It is not our case that the police must turn a blind eye to violence by the Maoists. The police must carry out the task of prevention and investigation of crime and they must do so fully respecting people's rights and must function strictly within the ambit of the law. The government should implement a policy which seriously addresses issues of social and economic deprivation. It must stop treating the law of the land and the Constitution with contempt. Governments must adopt a political approach to the Maoists in place of the policy of violent suppression that has been the State's principal response all these many years.

Demands:

1. All CRPF and CoBRA personnel who participated in the operation near Sarkeguda village on the night June 28 must be must be charged under Section 302 of IPC relating to murder and other relevant provisions of the penal code as well as under the SC, ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and prosecuted.
2. All CRPF and CoBRA personnel who participated in the operation near Sarkeguda village on the night June 28 must be must be charged for sexually molesting women and looting and destroying of property. The above must be prosecuted under relevant sections of the IPC.
3. The Central and State governments must stop the ongoing policy of trying to brutally suppress the Maoists and must address that movement politically.
4. Governments must respect the Fifth Schedule mandate in letter and spirit and the adivasis' right to land, forest and other natural resources in their region. Protective legislation for the adivasis must be sincerely implemented.

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CHINTALNAR MASSACRE, DISTRICT DANTEWADA , 11th TO 16th MARCH 2011

A 13 member fact finding team of Coordination of Democratic Rights Organisations visited the Chintalnar Area of Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh to probe into the incidents of atrocities perpetrated by the Salwa Judum and the state forces on the adivasis living in this area between 11th and 16th of March 2011.

The incidents was propagated by the police as 'encounter' between the CRPF and Maoists in which, according to the police, 36 Maoists were killed. Also 3 SPOs were killed and 9 others were injured. The police had celebrated this incident in the media to prove their dominance over the Maoists in this region. Media persons and fact finding teams were restricted from going inside on the pretext that it is 'war zone' and the so-called war between the state and the Maoists are still going on, hence it is risky for any outsider to go inside. Most recently, the state home minister, Nankiran Kumar gave a written statement in the assembly stating that the Maoists had led the attack on villagers and burnt and looted homes in a bid to divert attention of the police who were in the area for 'area domination exercises'.

Against this backdrop of serious crimes committed by the security forces and salwa judum and the cover up by the police and politicians, a fact finding team comprising various civil and democratic rights activists and other individuals, went inside this area on the 26th and 27th of March 2011 and visited Morupally, Timmapuram and Tadmetyla villages. As members of the team, we spoke extensively to the villagers and the victims of the incident. We were shocked to find that once again, the police version propagated by the state is completely hoax and far from reality.

What exactly happened?

Morupally village

According to the residents, on the morning of 11 March 2011, a huge contingent of 300 paramilitary and Salwa Judum forces attacked Morupally Village in the Chintalnar area after they got a prior information that a big meeting of adivasis will be held there. While people started running towards the forest for cover, the Judum forces, dressed in military fatigues, entered the village and started attacking the elderly and women.



Woman raped by Salwa Judum (Koya commandos)



80 years old Madivi Bheema beaten by Salwa Judum

1. **Death:** Madvi Sula, an elderly villager was picking tamarind from the tree when the Judum forces accosted him, accused him of being a Maoist informer and shot him dead in front of his wife and hanged from a tree.
2. **Rape:** Mangi Ganga was raped after her valuables and other belongings were looted from her house. Emula Modey, a 35 year old woman, was raped after she was threatened for not disclosing the location of the Andhra Maoist Dalam. The Judum members also took away 10,000 rupees from her.
3. **Assault and Arrest:** Madivi Bheem, an 80 year old woman, was brutally assaulted. Her belongings were also looted. While leaving the village, Judum members picked up Madvi Joga, his daughter, Likke and his son Madvi Bheema and took them to Chintalnal PS. There, Likke was separated from her brother and father, stripped and kept the whole night. The following morning when she was handed over to her father, her clothes were not returned.
4. **Burning of homes:** 33 houses were burnt, looted and destroyed.
5. **Identification of Accused:** Villagers identified 9 members/leaders of Salwa Judum. They are: Madakam Bheema, alias Ramesh from Junaguda; Telam Anda from Lakapole; Vanjam Deva from Cherpan; Dasaru from Vilampalli; Ramulal from Bodikel; Maara from Morupally; Keche Nanda from Korapad; Kartam Dula, alias Surya (Judum leader) from Misman; Payake, woman Judum member from Timmapuram.

Timmapuram Village

Encounter between Salwa Judum and Maoist forces: Two days later, on 13th March, the forces advanced towards Timmapuram after ravaging Morapally village.

On the way, the next day Maoists came and tried to stop them. In the armed clash, that lasted for two hours, one villager Bhima alias Sudarshan was killed while two other got injured. 3 SPOs were killed while 9 others got injuries, of which one died later.

Killing of Bursey Bhima and burning of homes: The CRPF and Salwa Judum SPOs were forced to retreat after the prolonged encounter. They came to Timmapuram village and took shelter there. They made bunkers inside the village to quell probable Maoist attack. Before leaving the village they set fire on 55 houses. Bursey Bhima was picked up by these forces from Pulampad village on their way to Timmapuram. After setting the villages on fire, they hacked Bursey Bhima to death with an axe. This is probably due to the fact that Bhima was an eye-witness of their entire carnage.

Identification of Accused: People of Timmapuram have identified several Salwa Judum members who led this carnage. They saw, Mantam Bhima alias Ramesh (from Jannaguda Village), Telem



Houses Burnt in Timmapuram Village



Villagers living in fear and without Shelter

Anda (of Lekapor), Wanjan Peva (of Charpan), Dasaru (from Villampally), Mara (of Monipally), Ramlal (of Bodikal), Keche Nanda (of Korapad), Kartam Dula alias Surya (of Misman), an SPO and one woman SPO Payake from Timmapuram itself.

Tadmetla Village

From Timmapuram on their way back, the forces entered Tadmetla village and it became their next target. In Tadmetla, they burnt a total of 207 houses. These houses were simply gutted to ashes. They raped Marvi Jogi and beat her till she lost consciousness. When she came back to senses, she found her cash and jewellery worth Rs. 12,000 missing. Around 20-25 other people in Tadmetla were beaten up including children as young as 12 years old. Marvi Anda and Marvi Ayita of this village were picked up by police and are still missing. They have not been produced even in police station.

We spoke to the affected villagers like the rape victim from Tarmetla village Marvi Joga. No case has still been registered against anyone and not even a medical test has been done. Two people from



A rape victim of the Village and burnt houses

Tarmetla Muchaki Anda and Muchaki Ayita have gone missing and villagers claimed they have been taken by the forces but are yet to be produced.

This one-sided ruthless attack by the state forces and Salwa Judum on innocent unarmed adivasis were propagated in the media by the police as 'ongoing encounter with the Maoists'. The rampage of the salwa judum and state forces continued for almost five days. Two people were murdered cruelly, while 3 women were raped. Almost three hundred homes were set on fire and completely gutted down. They looted everything the adivasi people had including domestic animals like goats, cows, chicken and pigs along with their money, jewelleryes and other belongings. More than fifty people have been grievously injured that includes children as young as 12 years old and women. This clearly shows that the Salwa Judum is active and functioning like always. The state's branding of them as 'Koya Commandos' is bogus. Despite the Supreme Court directive to disband Salwa Judum it is fully functional and actively promoted and sponsored by the state.

These rampages were done with full consent and active support of the state. In the middle of these unilateral atrocities, the state air-dropped rations and other food supply to the forces while taking away the dead and the injured. On 24th March, the SDM had visited these villages with some relief material. But even after he directly spoke to the villagers and saw the evidences of the atrocities, no case has been registered against anybody. Even now instead of taking action against the perpetrators of these atrocities, the state is still stopping civil rights activists and individuals to visit the area.

People in Morupally and Timmapuram are living in utter dire condition. People in these two villages have received no relief from the state. They said that they have got some interim relief from the Maoists. Many of them are staying under trees. After the fact finding team left, one local newspaper reported of six starvation deaths in Morupally village which needs to be confirmed. We have been inside these areas for two days, only to see that there was no 'encounter' with the Maoists as claimed by the police, which is nothing but a myth propagated by the state to justify these atrocities.

The attack by the state forces and the Salwa Judum was heinous and the attack on the innocent adivasis has been done persistently by the state and its mercenaries in the name of 'Operation Green Hunt'. These villages were particularly targeted as they have done alternative development works like digging ponds, distributing lands among the landless, making irrigation facilities which the state has failed to provide in all these decades. As we saw these areas are still the most underdeveloped regions of the country and all that the state has done is to violate the rights of autonomy of the adivasis, denied them of their basic means of livelihood and life and now they are perpetrating such monstrous atrocities by Salwa Judum and paramilitary forces.

We condemn these outrageous acts of state violence and demand:

- Registering the cases of rape, murder, atrocities and kidnap against the CRPF and Salwa Judum
- Exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of the crime.
- Immediate providing of medical facilities to the injured and medical tests of the rape victims
- Compensation of the people according to their specific losses
- Allowing more civil rights organisation and media persons to go inside the area.
- As per direction of the Supreme Court the salwa judum must be disbanded immediately and functioning of the Salwa Judum in the name of 'Koya Commandos' must be stopped.
- Operation Green Hunt must be stopped immediately

Members of the fact finding team:

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Burnt Houses

MURDERS IN DANTEWADA DISTRICT, 17TH SEPTEMBER AND 1ST OCTOBER 2009

The government claims that Operation Greenhunt is a necessary measure to bring 'civilian administration to 2.5 million people' in areas which the Maoists control. The Home Ministry has admitted that it will take at least 18 months to show the results. Begun in September 2009, Operation Greenhunt has been accompanied with a huge publicity campaign against the Maoists and news ranging from beheading of a police officer to the most recent 'train jacking'. What have been suppressed in this vehement campaign are violent actions carried out by the security forces in the name of 'flushing out Maoists'. For instance, no substantive information has been given in the media regarding the Gachanpalli killings of 17th September 2009 and 1st October killings at Gompad and Chintagufa villages in Chhattisgarh by security forces. Nor have any reports appeared regarding detentions and arrests of several young men on 1st October. Information regarding looting, burning and torture which accompanied these operations have remained unknown. Also, that people have fled their villages and are living in make shift sheds in the forest, has gone unnoticed. The fact that on both these days, security forces (Cobra, local police and SPOs and Salwa Judum leaders such as Boddu Raja) went on a rampage—stabbing and killing people, looting, burning houses and forcibly picking up young men—is the other side of Operation Greenhunt which has been carefully kept away from public scrutiny.

In order to ascertain these facts, a 15 member fact-finding team visited Dantewada area between 10th and 12th October 2009. The team comprised members from PUCL (Chhattisgarh), PUDR (Delhi) Vanvasi Chetna Ashram (Dantewada), Human Rights Law Network (Chhattisgarh), ActionAid (Orissa), Manna Adhikar (Malkangiri) and Zilla Adivasi Ekta Sangh (Malkangiri). The team was initially denied permission and was repeatedly questioned and interrogated at Dornapal and Errabore police camps on the way. The team stayed at Nendra village and met witnesses and victims from several villages and gathered testimonies from them. Subsequently, the team spoke to District Collector and Superintendent of Police, Dantewada. Given below are some of the observations made by the team.

17th September 2009: 7 villagers brutally killed by security forces

Village Gachanpalli

1. Murders: In the early hours of 17th September, 6 villagers were murdered by security forces in this village. Dudhi Muye (70 yrs) who could hardly walk was murdered after her breasts were cut off. Family members who had fled the scene on seeing the security forces, found her lying dead in a pool of blood. Similarly, Kawasi Ganga (70 yrs) who could barely see was stabbed and murdered in his bed. He too was found by his family members who had fled from the house and had taken shelter in the forest. Madvi Deva (25 yrs) was tied to a tree and shot at three times and then beheaded. His grandfather who was accompanying him back to the village was a witness to this. The family hasn't found his body. Three other villagers, Madvi Joga (60 yrs), Madvi Hadma (35 yrs) and Madkam Sulla were stabbed and murdered. The last two were killed in front of one witness, the wife of Madkam Sulla. Madvi Joga was killed after being stripped naked while ploughing his little plot of land. All the houses were ransacked, broken and burnt down. Family members are either living in sheds in the forests or have taken shelter with relatives. Many others have also taken similar shelter as their houses were burnt down by the security forces.

The case of Madvi Deva: This young man was a resident of Singanpalli village and had gone out in the morning of 17th for some family work. When he did not return his family searched for him. Two days later, a Patel from another village informed the family that he had been shot and killed by the security forces and his body was buried in the compound of Chintagufa PS. The Patel was asked to supervise the burial in the PS.

2. Torture: The villagers claimed that Muchaki Deva (60 yrs) of Onderpara was grazing cattle on

the morning of 17th September. He was caught, beaten and dragged into the village by security forces. He was hung on a branch of a tree and brutally tortured. As a result, the upper part of his body is severely injured and he has developed maggots in his wounds. He was gravely ill and although he has no access to medical aid he has been taken to Bhadrachalam by members of the fact-finding team.

Tied and paraded: 6 villagers, including 3 women were tied and paraded through Gachanpalli and other villages where the security forces went. Fortunately, they escaped as timely rains made it possible for them to flee.

3. Forced displacement and terror: families of those who were murdered by security forces and those whose houses have been burnt down vengefully, have fled the village and are living in make shift sheds in the forest. The condition of the others is no better as the entire village has been terrorized by security forces.

1st October 2009: 10 villagers brutally killed by security forces

Village Gompad

1. **Gompad 'encounter'**: SP Dantewada described the operations in Gompad village on 1st October as an 'encounter'. An encounter with a difference: while 9 villagers were killed by security forces in the village and their bodies were left there, no casualties were inflicted on security forces. This too the SP confirmed. 4 members of one family, Madvi Bajar, his wife, Madvi Subbi, their married daughter, Kartam Kanni and their young daughter, Madvi Mutti were stabbed and killed inside house. So too were two other villagers from Bhandarpadar, Muchaki Handa and Madkam Deva, who were staying the night over at Madvi Bajar's house on their way home from Andhra Pradesh where they had been working. Another couple, Soyam Subba and Soyam Jogi were stabbed and killed inside their house. Yet another villager, Madvi Enka was stabbed inside the house and then dragged all over the village. Before leaving the village, the security forces shot him and left his body. All 9 deaths, like the ones on 17th September, were preceded by stabbing and the bodies were left in the village. When the team asked the SP about recovery of bodies from the encounter site, the SP stated that Naxalites had 'taken them away'.

More killings: In Chintagufa, a 45yr old man, Tomra Mutta was stabbed and shot inside his house. On seeing the sudden arrival of the security forces, Tomra Mutta ran to protect his family. He was shot in the process. The team confirmed 10 murders that had taken place that day but there is apprehension that the total number of killings may be much higher as many villages could not be contacted or accessed. The SP confirmed that two sets of raid parties set off that day comprising of Cobras and local police. Hence, the details with the team do not give the entire and exact picture of how many villages were attacked and targeted.

2. **Torture:** Travails of a 2yr old: Madvi Bajar's grandson was not spared. He is all of two and yet the security forces beat him, cut four of his fingers, broke his teeth and cut off part of his tongue. He has been taken to Bhadrachalam by members of the fact-finding team.

Witnesses reported several instances of harassment at the hands of the security forces. In Gompad, one villager was caught and interrogated and then shot at in his leg. He managed to run away but still has the bullet injury and has had no medical treatment. In Chintagufa, security forces tied another man and made him walk to Injaram PS. They severely beat him and also attacked him on his toe with a knife. He was finally let off in the evening. In Gompad, one young mother was shot at under her knee by security forces inside her house. Her four children fell on her



and she was thus, saved. Without any medical treatment for over two weeks, she was first brought to Dantewada, and now to Delhi where she has been operated upon and is undergoing treatment.

3. Arrests: 8 arrested and 2 missing: Ten young men between 18-32 years were beaten and picked up by security forces from Mukudtong and Jinitong villages on 1st October. Eight have been shown as arrested in a case that was registered on 3/10 at Konta PS under various sections of IPC, Arms Act and Explosives Act. They are currently lodged in Dantewada jail. However, two still remain missing. Female relatives who went in search of those missing at the Konta PS were harassed, made to affix their thumb impression on blank documents and driven away. When they returned two days later, they were abused, told not to return and informed that the men had been taken to an unknown place.

4. Looting and Burning of property and houses: As many as 9 instances of looting and burning by security forces were reported to the team. Unlike the 17th September killings which were followed by arson and burning of the houses of those murdered, security forces on 1st October looted homes. They took away paddy, pulses, brass pots and poultry from many homes. Money, ranging from 300/- to 10,000/- was stolen from these houses. Destruction of property, particularly burning down of houses was carried out in as many as seven instances.

5. Presence of SPOs and Salwa Judum leader with security forces: Residents of Mukudtong village confirmed that the 'raid' party was accompanied by known Salwa Judum leader, Boddu Raja of Injaram camp and they recognised SPOs Pande Soma of Phandeguda village and Ganga of Asarguda village. Residents of Gompad village were able to recognize SPO Madvi Buchcha who belongs to their own village.

6. Forced displacement and terror: Several families are living in makeshift sheds in the forest area as their houses have been burnt down. Those who are unable to run and flee are living in terror in the villages and residents and relatives have helped them to repair their houses and have given them other support.

Conclusion:

While the team could only meet residents of some of the villages, there is apprehension that a much larger number of people were killed on both days in other villages. The same is true for instances of torture, loot and detentions. The clamp down on information makes it impossible to know what exactly is happening in distant and far flung villages. However, what is clear is that the operations conducted by security forces have compelled villagers to leave their villages, flee into the forests and/or take shelter with relatives in other villages.

The condition of those who are residing in their villages is precarious and vulnerable. Given that the government has not complied with the Supreme Court order on rehabilitation of displaced families (families which were displaced in the earlier phase of Salwa Judum violence), the new and current phase of violence by security forces has added to the crisis in these remote and inaccessible villages. Instead of rehabilitating people, the government, in the name of combating Maoism, is bent upon unleashing its lethal paramilitary forces and evicting people from their villages. It is imperative to immediately end to this policy of eviction and terror and enable people to settle in their villages.

Unanswered Questions:

1. If each of the deceased were 'maoists', then why did the security forces leave the bodies in the villages? What was the point of the brutality that preceded killing?
2. Equally, if those injured were also Maoists, then why didn't the police arrest them? Why were they not given medical aid?
3. Why was an old man tortured brutally in hot oil? Why was a two year old subjected to such torture?

4. Why were houses looted and burnt?
5. Why is justice denied in these cases? Why haven't the families of the deceased, those injured and tortured and those whose houses were looted given compensation?

Demands:

1. That the government must accept responsibility for murders committed on 17th September and 1st October by security forces and file FIRs against those responsible. Further, the government must acknowledge all instances of torture, illegal detention and destruction of property. FIRs must be lodged in each case and compensation given in each instance.
 2. That an impartial inquiry (comprising civil society representatives and representatives of organizations working in the area) be conducted into the incidents of murder and acts of arson, loot and torture on 17th September and 1st October by security forces. The focus should be to bring out the truth behind these killings and also investigate the extent of the operations carried out on both days.
 3. That the government must immediately take steps and show its conviction in the Supreme Court order on rehabilitation of villages and implement it immediately. The above described incidents of 17th September and 1st October have created fear and panic and compelled villagers to flee. Unless the government implements the SC order, villagers will not be able to live in their villages.
 4. That along with the implementation of the above mentioned order, there be an immediate end to cordon and search operation carried out by security forces in these areas. Lack of rehabilitation coupled with an ever increasing size of the paramilitary forces in such backward areas with low population density raises fears of repeated incidents, such as the ones described above.
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Constituent Organizations of CDRO

Association for Democratic Rights (AFDR, Punjab),
Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC),
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Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR, West Bengal),
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Published by: Coordination of Democratic Rights Organisations (CDRO)
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