

4 April 2025

APPEAL FOR CEASEFIRE AND DIALOGUE

We, the undersigned organisations and individuals, welcome the CPI (Maoist) offer of peace talks and the Government of Chhattisgarh's response keeping the door for talks open. However, the government needs to demonstrate its intent by stopping the war on the ground immediately. We further call upon both parties to keep the best interests of the Adivasis and other villagers in mind, and to engage in peace talks keeping in mind the constitutional, democratic and human rights of citizens within the broader framework of the Constitution of India.

The Adivasi dominated districts of Bastar division in Chhattisgarh, West Singhbhum in Jharkhand and Gadchiroli in Maharashtra are currently at the epicenter of this conflict and the lives and well-being of the residents must be given first priority in any talks.

We appeal to both sides to accept and announce a ceasefire to stop the use of violence in any form with immediate effect. There should be no more hostilities from either side whether in the form of operations, extra-judicial killings and encounters, IED blasts and killing of civilians or any sort of violence.

The Government, which has been constituted under the Constitution of India, is obligated to be the first to observe, respect and function based on constitutional principles and values. In the spirit of the Constitutional vision and ethos, a major responsibility vests with the Government not to view the situation as though it is a 'war' with an external adversary but as an internal conflict involving our own citizens which requires to be brought to an amicable settlement at the earliest. Crucial to this process is for the Government to demonstrate its magnanimity of spirit and commitment to constitutional values by taking the lead to call for peace talks with the Maoists without imposing prior conditions.

It is now exactly 20 years since the state sponsored and now banned Salwa Judum began in Bastar causing enormous misery in terms of people killed, villages burnt, rapes, starvation, mass displacement and other forms of violence. Since then, the villagers of Bastar have known little peace. They barely returned to their villages when they were faced with Operation Green Hunt and successive operations. Since 2024, under the name of Operation Kagaar, over 400 people have been killed (287 in 2024, 113 in 2025).ⁱ While the exact numbers of civilians killed is unknown, given that several of those claimed as Maoists have been identified by villagers as civilians, it is evident that civilians are being disproportionately affectedⁱⁱ. An Article 14 estimate between 2018 and 2022 counts more civilians (335) killed than security personnel (168) and Maoists (327).ⁱⁱⁱ 2024 saw several incidents of children being killed. SATP gives the breakup for 2025 at 15 civilians, 14 security forces and 150 Maoists.^{iv} The forces have got Rs. 8.24 crore as rewards for these killings.^v

According to an official estimate, 16,733 people have been arrested in the last 25 years, and 10,884 surrendered.^{vi} The government claims that Maoists will be finished by March 2026, and there are only 400 armed cadre left now.^{vii} The bulk of the weaponry recovered (a mere 263 weapons) is country-made pistols, crude 12 bore guns or muzzle loaders.^{viii} The number of 'severely affected' districts has come down to six. Under these circumstances, the Maoists are hardly such a security threat as to warrant the kind of offensive that we are seeing in terms of militarization.

Instead of observing the directions of the Supreme Court to disband SPOs and stop engaging surrendered/arrested Maoists in any form in counter-insurgency operations, the Government has expanded the use of District Reserve Guards and Bastar fighters consisting of ex-Salwa Judum recruits. They are the ones most responsible for human rights abuses, and their own human rights are abused in the process. Hardly any civilians have been compensated for their losses since Salwa Judum, and no prosecutions have taken place despite Supreme Court directions.

More than 160 security camps have come up across Bastar.^{ix} Most of these are on the common lands and in some cases private lands of villagers, and are causing severe distress to the Adivasi inhabitants.^x There is approximately one security personnel per 9 civilians.^{xi} The pace of schools, health services, public transport and other welfare schemes has not kept pace with that of roadbuilding. Instead, the government has signed a number of MOUs with mining companies, which villagers fear will lead to widespread displacement and environmental degradation. Their constitutional struggles against mining and other forms of displacement have been suppressed, both in the normal course and under the excuse of fighting Maoism.

Villagers who have been peacefully protesting at various sites asking for their constitutional right to be consulted under PESA and other provisions have suffered severe repression – their protest sites have been demolished and villagers beaten. Mortar shells and bombs have been used indiscriminately causing panic among villagers who are no longer able to live normal lives. The Moolvasi Bachao Manch has been banned and its young leaders have been arrested, on serious charges like UAPA. The official justification is merely that they protested against security camps and extra-judicial killings, even though the Constitution guarantees the right to assembly and protest. The government has closed off any room for peaceful dialogue.

The Maoists should cease hostilities against state forces and the use of IEDs which endanger ordinary villagers, including children, and cattle. They should put an end to the ‘death sentences’ handed out in *jan adalats*.

In the conditions of armed struggle and state repression the real issues that concern the people are relegated to the background- such as food security, land and forest rights, education, health and cultural rights besides their multi-faceted exploitation. Any mining that comes up on their lands requires their consent. All these issues need to be immediately addressed, which is only possible under conditions of peace and justice.

We welcome all initiatives towards peace. As concerned individuals from various parts of the country, we once again demand peace talks within the ambit of the Indian Constitution.

We propose some simple yet urgent demands for which the government must initiate the process:

1. The government should stop the offensive in Adivasi areas, in order to facilitate a ceasefire
2. The CPI (Maoist) should cease all hostilities against the state forces to facilitate a ceasefire
3. Dialogue must begin between Government and CPI (Maoist).
4. Free access to the affected areas should be provided to the independent civil organizations and media
5. People’s livelihood needs and constitutional rights must be addressed urgently.
6. The state should immediately release Adivasis and other activists jailed for asserting their democratic rights and disagreeing with state policies inimical to

Adivasis so that they can participate in the talks and remain equal stakeholders in this dialogue. (For example the activists of Moolvasi Bacahao manch)

We firmly believe that peace talks and a ceasefire are only the first step towards the restoration of democratic rights in Bastar. They should be followed by a sustained process towards permanent demilitarization of the area (including dismantling of all security camps), release of all concerned prisoners, reparation for all human rights violations, implementation of protective laws such as PESA and FRA, a moratorium on new mines, respect for the right to protest, and other conditions of free and democratic life.

We appeal to all democratic and political forces, including political parties to support this process and make the state deliver its constitutional obligations.

Organisations

1. All India Feminist Alliance (ALIFA) (Sagari, Nikita, Deepthi, Varsha, Priyanka, Pranjali)
2. All India Inquilabi Youth and Students Alliance (ALIYSA) (Rahee, Heman, Raju, Shubham, Ritika, Laasya, Karthik)
3. All India Krantikari Kisan Sabha (A.I.K.K.S) (Sankar Inquilab, State Secretary Odisha)
4. All India Lawyers Association for Justice (Clifton D' Rozario and Maitreyi Krishnan)
5. Association for Protection of Civil Rights (Nadeem Khan)
6. Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (Ranjit Sur)
7. Bhagat Singh Chhatra Ekta Manch (Gurkirat)
8. Campaign Against Fabricated Cases (CAFC), Odisha (Narendra Mohanty)
9. Campaign for Peace and Justice in Chhattisgarh (CPJC) (Isha Khandelwal, Sharanya Nayak, Nandini Sundar)
10. Coordination of Democratic Rights organisations) (CDRO)
11. Civil Liberties Committee, Andhra Pradesh (V.Chitti Babu, Ch.Chandra Shekhar)
12. Civil Liberties Committee, Telangana (Prof. Laxman Gaddam, N.Narayana Rao)
13. Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP) (Ravi Balla)
14. Coordination Committee of Working Women, Rajasthan
15. Democratic Front against Operation Green Hunt, Punjab (Parminder Singh, A. K. Maleri, Buta Singh Mehmoodpur and Yash Pal)
16. Dr. Richhariya Foundation (Karthik)
17. Ek Potlee Ret Ki (Kaani Nilam) (Radhika Ganesh)
18. FAOW (Mukta Srivastava)
19. Fatima Shaikh Study Circle (Osama)
20. Forum Against Oppression of Women (Sandhya Gokhale)
21. Forum Against Repression, Telangana (Prof.G. Haragopal, K.Ravi Chander)
22. Ganatantrik Adhikar Surakhya Sangathan, (GASS), Odisha (Deba Ranjan and Dr. Golak Bihari Nath)
23. Hasrat-e-Zindagi Mamuli (Chayanika Shah)
24. Human Rights Forum (S Jeevan Kumar, VS Krishna)
25. Indian Nationalists Movement
26. INSAF (Vidya Dinker)
27. Insani Biradari (Aadiyog, Imran Ahmad)
28. Jaldhara Abhiyan (Upendra Shankar)
29. Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha (B B Choudhary, Elina Horo, Siraj Dutta, Tom Kavla)

30. Justice News (Arun Khote)
31. MAKAAAM
32. Manomitram (Renny Antony)
33. Nagrik Adhikar Samiti, Jharkhand (Ashok Verma)
34. Narmada Bachao Andolan (Medha Patkar, Kamla Yadav, Mahendra)
35. National Alliance for Justice, Accountability and Rights (NAJAR) (Sr. Adv Gayatri Singh, Adv Indira Unninar, Adv Purbayan, Adv Deeptangshu Car, Katyayani Chandola, Carina)
36. National Alliance of People's Movement (Arundhati Dhuru, Ashish Ranjan, Meera Sanghamitra)
37. National Federation of Indian Women NFIW
38. New Trade Union Initiative (Milind Ranade, Gautam Mody, Manas Das)
39. Odisha Manarega Shramik Union (P Parvati)
40. Pahal Sansthan
41. People's Watch (Henri Tiphagne)
42. People's Union for Civil Liberties (Kavita Srivastava, V Suresh)
43. People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) (Harish Dhawan and Paramjeet Singh)
44. Queer Collective India (Priyank Sukanand)
45. Queer Poets Collective (Rumi Harish, Dadapeer Jyman, Sunil Mohan)
46. Rajsamand Mahila Manch (Lalita Sharma)
47. Revolutionary Youth Association (RYA) (Niraj Kumar)
48. Saajhi Duniya (Roop Rekha Verma)
49. Sajha Kadam (Praveer Peter)
50. Samta
51. Save Dwarka Forest People's Movement (Tannuja Chauhan)
52. Telangana Democratic Forum
53. Trade Union Center of India (TUC) (Bichitra Patra)
54. Young People For Politics (Nivedita Ravi)

Concerned citizens

1. A. Banerjee
2. A.Suneetha
3. Aakar Patel
4. Addanki Veeranjanyulu
5. Adv. Bhoomika Pandhare
6. Ajay T G
7. Akhileshwari Ramagoud, Hyderabad
8. Alok Agnihotri Advocate
9. Anand malviya
10. Anju K Disability Activist
11. Ankita Aggarwal
12. Anto Joseph
13. Anupriya S
14. Anuradha Banerji, Activist-Researcher.
15. Anuradha Talwar
16. Apurba Roy
17. Aratrika
18. Arindam Roy
19. Arun Vyas
20. Aruna Nellutla

21. Arvind Narrain
22. Ashalatha
23. Ashima Roy Chowdhury
24. Avani Chokshi
25. B Muralidhar
26. Balreddy jitta
27. Bappaditya Sarkar
28. Barnali Mukherjee
29. Beena Choksi
30. Bela Bhatia
31. Bhanumathi Kalluri
32. Bharat Majhi
33. Biraj Mehta
34. Biswapriya Kanungo, Advocate, Bhubaneswar
35. Bittu Kondaiah
36. C B choudhary
37. C Mitra
38. Carol Geeta
39. Cedric Prakash
40. Chanda Asani
41. Chandu
42. Chitra Joshi
43. Deepa
44. Dinesh Yadav
45. Diviya
46. Dr. Rosemary Dzuwichu
47. Dr. Sudhir Vombatkere
48. Dr. Walter Fernandes
49. Dr. Sebastian Joseph Professor
50. Fawaz Shaheen
51. Frazer Mascarenhs
52. George Monipalli
53. Goutam Kumar Bose, Jharkhand Agitatore and Trade Union Activist.
54. Gova Rathod
55. Gurbir Singh
56. Harsh Mander
57. Hem Mishra
58. Himanshu Kumar
59. Isha Khandelwal
60. Jean Drèze
61. Joseph Xavier, Madurai
62. Judah
63. Judah Sharon
64. K Sukumaran Advocate Gudalur The Nilgiris
65. K. Manoharan, Writer & Human Rights activist, Tamil Nadu
66. K. Praveen kumar
67. K.Sajaya, Independent Journalist and Social Activist
68. Kailash Mina

69. Kamal Gopinath, President, PUCL Mysore
70. Kamini Tankha
71. Kanduri praveen Kumar
72. Kavva Laxma Reddy
73. Khalil ur Rehaman
74. Krishnakant Chauhan
75. Lalita Ramdas
76. Latha K Biddappa
77. Madhubanti
78. Madhumitha Shankar
79. Madhuri
80. Manav Sivaram
81. Manisha Banerjee
82. Millind Champanekar
83. Mohamed Miandad
84. MV Ramana
85. N Venugopal, Journalist
86. Nancy Gaikwad
87. Narla Ravi
88. Natarajan D V
89. Navsharan Singh
90. Neetisha Khalkho
91. Nikita Jain
92. Nikita Naidu
93. Nisha Biswas
94. P M Tony
95. P. Rohini Rajasekaran
96. P.vishnuvardhanarao
97. Padmini Baruah
98. Paran Amitava
99. Paromita Dutta
100. Ponnala vijayanandareddy
101. Prakash Louis
102. Prakriti
103. Pranjali Tripathi
104. Prashant Rahi
105. Prof Latha K Biddappa
106. Prqgnya Joshi
107. Radha Kumar
108. Radhika, Assistant Professor (Law)
109. Raghavender Reddy
110. Rajani Rao Bangalore
111. Rajaraman
112. Rajesh Ramakrishnan
113. Ramneek Singh, Playwright
114. Ranjana Padhi
115. Rati Rao E.
116. Ravi Joshi

117. Renny Antony (Kerala)
118. Rohit Prajapati, Environment Activist
119. Roohdar X
120. Rukmini Rao
121. Rupa Pannalal
122. Salam Rajesh, Imphal, Manipur.
123. Salim Saboowala
124. Sanober Keshwar
125. Sarfaraz
126. Satyanarayana.s
127. Shalini Gera
128. Shalu Nigam
129. Shreya Subramanian
130. Shridevi PN
131. Shubham Kothari
132. Shubham Waydande
133. Shujayathulla
134. Solomon
135. Srimant Mohanty, Odisha
136. Sudhir kumar
137. Sukanya Kanarally
138. Syed Akmal Razvi
139. T Nishaant
140. Tariq Durrani
141. Ulka Mahajan
142. Ushasi Roy
143. Vaishnavi
144. Vani Subramanian
145. Varsha
146. Vijaya Vanamala
147. Wandana Sonalkar
148. Y Rajashekhar
149. Y.J. Rajendra

ⁱ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/in-80-days-113-maoists-killed-by-forces-in-chhattisgarh/articleshow/119277633.cms>

ⁱⁱ https://pucl.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Pidiya-and-Bodga_final-eng.docx.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.article-14.com/post/in-bastar-war-lines-between-civilians-maoists-blur-as-amit-shah-sets-march-2026-deadline-to-end-insurgency-67abb2b8cf943>

^{iv} <https://www.satp.org/datasheet-terrorist-attack/fatalities/india-maoistinsurgency>

^v <https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/ground-zero-bastar-the-fight-to-finish-off-maoists-2648870-2024-12-12>

^{vi} <https://indianexpress.com/article/long-reads/maoists-arrest-chhattisgarh-naxal-cpim-9837130/>

^{vii} <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/raipur/only-400-armed-cadres-left-in-bastar-clock-ticks-on-maoist-elimination-police/articleshow/118658159.cms>

^{viii} <https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/ground-zero-bastar-the-fight-to-finish-off-maoists-2648870-2024-12-12>

^{ix} <https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/ground-zero-bastar-the-fight-to-finish-off-maoists-2648870-2024-12-12>

^x <https://aippnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Citizens-report-on-security-and-insecurity-bastar-chhattisgarh.pdf>

^{xi} Ibid.