

Support the Heroic Struggle of Adivasis in Lalgarh, India

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By ILPS General Secretariat

Over the past week, thousands of Indian police and paramilitary forces have descended on Lalgarh, West Bengal to crush the just struggle of the adivasis (tribal people). Progressive people around the world must raise our voices to help break the reign of military terror that has been unleashed upon the people.

In November 2008, the adivasis of Lalgarh rose up against decades of abuse by the police and the "new landlords," the local kingpins of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), commonly known as "CPM." This is the same "communist" party that tried to take away peasants' land in Nandigram and Singur, only to be beaten back and exposed by determined struggle.

In recent years, hundreds of adivasis in the Lalgarh area have been imprisoned on false charges of having ties with the Maoist insurgency. They formed the People's Committee against Police Atrocities (PCPA), which has extended its influence to hundreds of villages in the Lalgarh area. In recent months, Maoist activists who have been working in the area for years initiated development projects for drinking water, irrigation, roads and health centers that have involved over 200,000 people.

After CPM cadre fired on a demonstration led by the PCPA in early June, thousands of adivasis burned down CPM offices and police camps, symbols of unbridled power and oppression. As the movement spread to new areas, the West Bengal Left Front government, led by the CPM, asked the central government to send in its armed forces to "retake" the area. As several thousand West Bengal police and central paramilitaries moved towards Lalgarh, they were met with dug up roads, felled trees and massed demonstrations of adivasis trying to obstruct their progress. They also were dogged by landmines and a series of ambushes by the Maoist forces. It took them 2 1/2 days to reach the Lalgarh police station.

When the police and paramilitaries reached Lalgarh, they moved to teach the adivasis a lesson. CPM cadre dressed in police uniforms pointed out homes of PCPA members. Police broke into their houses and dragged villagers outside to be beaten. Children were not spared; they broke the leg of a seven year old boy. Hundreds of women were stripped naked and humiliated: a woman was raped with a rifle butt by a policeman. The paramilitaries forced local youths to act as "human shields," searching for hidden mines and explosives. Faced with this brutality, tens of thousands of adivasis were forced to flee their villages. Hundreds of houses have been burnt down and several thousand families were herded out of their villages. More than 20,000 people are placed now in make-shift camps looked after by the

opposition parties.

Even during this military operation, the Maoists operating in the area held mass meetings of villagers only a few kilometers from the state forces. According to the Bengali daily Sanbad Pratidin of June 27, the U.S. and Israel have provided technical assistance that has allowed a recently launched Indian satellite to locate Maoist guerilla units in the dense forests. The West Bengal government also clamped down on outside observers. A team of intellectuals from Kolkata, included the film maker Aparna Sen, that visited Lalgarh and called for a cease fire was arrested and charged with subversion. A week later, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was banned throughout India, and Gour Chakravarthy, the open spokesperson of the CPI (Maoist) in West Bengal, was arrested in Kolkata while giving an interview inside a TV channel studio in Kolkata.

The adivasis of Lalgarh need the support of progressive and freedom-loving people around the world. The brutality of the West Bengal state and the Indian government must be brought into the light of day.

The International League of People's Struggle (ILPS), (a worldwide alliance of democratic, anti-imperialist mass organizations) supports the heroic and just struggle of the people of Jangal Mahal - Lalgarh and condemns the reactionary and anti-people ruling classes in India that hand in glove with the imperialist powers are hell bent on using brute force to crush the peoples resistance.

We urge all ILPS members, and other progressive, democratic and anti-imperialist people everywhere, to urgently build support for the struggling people of Lalgarh. Statements of support, public meetings, and demonstrations at Indian embassies and consulates around the world can put pressure on the state to withdraw its occupying forces, and can let the struggling people of Lalgarh know that they have friends far beyond West Bengal.

***Down with the fascist aggression of the CPM, the WB state and Central Indian state against people of India!
Down with the imperialism, Zionism and all other reaction!
Support the Heroic Struggle of Adivasis in Lalgarh, India!***

**General Secretariat
International League of Peoples' Struggle**

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