

Hunting Adivasis In Mineral Corridor

By Gladson Dungdung

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“Naxalites are our stray brothers and sisters therefore we will address the issues of Naxalism through dialogues”. These are the holy words of Jharkhand Chief Minister Sibhu Soren, who repeatedly told us even after swearing in as the guard of the state for 3rd time. However, the unbearable pressure from the central government and the corporate houses made him completely helpless. Consequently, he took U-turn and attended a special meeting with our ‘Corporate Home Minister’ P. Chidambaram in Delhi on January 27th on the issue of so-called ‘Operation Green Hunt’. After his return from Delhi, he started dancing in different tune, saying, operation green hunt will be started if the Maoists do not abjure violence.

Soon after he showed the green signal to the security forces for operation green hunt, the police and security forces started rehearsal in different parts of the state. The first brutal rehearsal was done in Garhwa. The CRPF brutally assaulted to the primitive tribes (the Indian state is proud of being able to keep some indigenous people in the primitive stage) who were protesting in front of the collector’s office in Garhwa. Their only crime was they demanded for 200 days employment in MGNREGA, direct appointment in the government jobs and implementation of the forest rights Act 2006 (which prime objective is to right the historic wrong that’s what our government told us).

The brutality began when the Adivasis entered into the collector’s office premises on February 2; the CRPF closed the gate and beat them up mercilessly for 20 minutes. Consequently, 50 Adivasis including women were severely injured and admitted to the hospital. As usual, the Chief Minister Sibhu Soren ordered for an inquiry to bury the public anger. Ironically, the police filed a case against 13 Adivasi sufferers alleging them for attacking to the security forces (who were with the guns) and no case was registered against those security forces for beating to the Adivasis mercilessly. However, there is a public outrage on the issue therefore a small gun man might be punished for the inhuman acts of the security forces, and the officers will enjoy impunity as they have been doing for years in our democratic country. Indeed, it was just an indication of the coming ‘operation green hunt’, where dogs, cats, snakes and scorpions are ready to kill the Adivasis in the forests.

Perhaps, the state has seized the democratic rights of the citizens on the one hand and it did not let the security forces to remain as the human beings on the other. Our democratic government(s) repeatedly tells us that the security forces have been made killer animals like Greyhounds, hunter cats like Jaguar, dangerous snakes like cobras, poisonous creature like scorpions and list goes on. These Greyhounds, Jaguars,

Cobras, Scorpions and other forces are left to roam freely in the forests with the license to kill the Adivasis, who have been living in the forests for the years before the existence of the Indian state. These dogs, cats, snakes, scorpions and other forces will attack, bite, sting, tear down and kill whoever they find in the forests. Of course, the most sufferers would be the Adivasis. The only census 2011 will tell us about its impact as decline of the Adivasis population.

An eastern Indian state Chhatisgarh is a living example of how the state has been carrying out a hunting of the Adivasis in the name of cleansing the Maoists, where 3 lakh Adivasis of 644 villages deserted their homes to escape from the police atrocity. 50,000 of them are living in the relief camps, 50,000 fled to Andhra Pradesh and thousands of them migrated to the neighbouring states. 5000 Adivasis women were raped, hundreds of Adivasis were killed in fake encounters and hundreds of them were thrown behind the bars alleging them as Maoist supporters. Ironically, when a SPO (Special Police Officer of Salwa Judum) catches, attacks or kills an Adivasi, he becomes a hero for the state but when the same person rapes an Adivasi woman he does not remain as the SPO and the blame goes to an Adivasi raping his own woman (with the clear intention for shielding the inhuman acts of the police forces backed by the state).

The operation green hunt is going on in the state of Chhatisgarh and the Adivasis are being hunted everyday but our democratic government does not inform its own people about it, where the right to information is a constitutional right of the citizens. Interestingly, P. Chidambaram is not only a 'Corporate Home Minister', who bagged money from 'Enron Corporation' and 'Vedanta' but now he is also a person who believes in misguiding to the people of the land. When the operation green hunt was launched, he coined it as a media's creation. "Show me one government official saying this and I will take action" these were his threatening words. Ironically, on December 4, 2009, Dantewada-based DIG anti-Naxal operations SRP Killuri unmasked Chidambaram by telling to the media, "As of today, Operation Green Hunt is underway in districts like Bijapur and Dantewada." Unfortunately, Chidambaram did not take any action against his officer. Similarly, after attending Chidambaram's meeting, Siby Soren and Naveen Patnaik are tirelessly speaking for the operation green hunt but Chidambaram does not ask them to stop their holy talks on OGH.

Unfortunately, the centre and state governments do not even bother to obey the order of the supreme court, which states to re-establish those 3 lakh Adivasis in their (644) villages as they were in the previous days. Of course, these democratic governments are more interested in establishing the corporate houses in these villages rather than protecting the villagers. Now the Tata, Bhushan steel, Jindal and many others corporate sharks are roaming in these villages with the full security provided by the state. A million dollar question is how the corporate houses are peacefully running their plants in those so-called red corridors where the government's claim of not being able to carry out any development activities?

The fact of the matter is the villages in Chhatisgarh were vacated for the corporate houses in the name of cleansing the Maoists and the operation green hunt will be extended to those states soon, where there are high chances of exploiting the natural resources in the name of development. Since, there have been series of protests against displacement in the mineral corridor therefore the governments are attempting to get land clear for the corporate houses through the 'legislations', 'manipulations' and the 'legal guns'. The state is hunting the Adivasis in the name of hunting the Maoists. The question is does state have right to kill its own people?

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