

## 'Green Hunt will result in genocide of Adivasis'

Gandhian **Himanshu Kumar** has been working among tribals in Bastar for more than 17 years. Though he has rehabilitated 30 villages devastated by the Chhattisgarh government's anti-Naxalite campaign [Salwa Judum](#), his ashram was demolished by the government in May this year. Kumar spoke to Jyoti Punwani:

### **How did you rehabilitate the villages?**

As a Gandhian, I could not just stand by and watch when Adivasis who had fled their village because of Salwa Judum, were beaten up for having returned to their village to depose before the NHRC. I decided to set up camp in that village. If the Salwa Judum forces came to burn it, they would have to burn me first. We persuaded the villagers to come back. They had lost everything seeds, cattle because whenever they tried to return, the Salwa Judum forces hounded them into camps and burnt their village. We arranged for everything, helped them plough their land. Slowly others began returning. Peace reigned in those villages till last month when Operation Green Hunt began.

The Supreme Court has directed the government to rehabilitate the tribals. If the government is not willing, let me do it. I can bring peace in a week. You withdraw your forces and provide the amenities that were stopped after Salwa Judum started: doctors, schools, aanganwadis.

### **Will the Maoists allow these to run?**

Medical officers tell me ruefully that it's the CRPF that beat up their doctors who go into the jungle to treat patients. They beat up teachers too. They are furious that these people can travel safely inside the jungle, while they get blown up. I pointed out that doctors and teachers don't go there with weapons like the CRPF does! Naxalites have said they will not interfere with my rehabilitation work because I have no political ambitions.

### **Is a dialogue possible?**

What stops the government from talking to the Adivasis? You are a democratically elected government, find out what your people want. As for the Maoists, how can the Centre tell them to stop violence without stopping it first? Every day, your forces demand liquor, chickens, women... they behead a child in front of his grandfather, rape Adivasi women at will... And when the Adivasi picks up a [lathi](#), they cry foul. Why are the forces there in Bastar? The Maoists weren't marching into Delhi. Nor did the Adivasis plead for protection from them. When the police, the administration, the judiciary has turned against the Adivasis, the Maoists have stood by them. The forces are there only to hunt the tribals from their land, so that the state can hand it over to corporates. The state has no desire for peace and is too arrogant to acknowledge its crimes. We have tried to file 1,000 FIRs against the police; not one has been registered.

Salwa Judum saw a 22-fold increase in Maoist numbers. Green Hunt will result in genocide of Adivasis. Those who survive will become Naxalites.

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