

Wrongly arrested for being Maoist?

Jaideep Deogharia, TNN, 9 February 2010, 10:56pm IST

RANCHI: The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), which investigated into the allegations of arrested Maoist Jeetan Marandi's wife that her husband was innocent, has found that the arrest could be a case of mistaken identity.

Marandi was arrested in Karando village of Peertanr block of Giridih on April 5, 2008, for being a notorious member of the banned CPI(Maoists). Marandi has been in Giridih Jail since then.

In December last year, his wife Aparna Hansda, had appealed before the state committee of the Jharkhand unit of PUCL urging it to take up the matter.

Primary reports released by PUCL, after a team led by Father Stains Swami investigated into the matter earlier this week, reveal that the case could be that of mistaken identity and conspiracy. At a Press conference here on Monday, vice president, PUCL, Trideev Ghosh, who was a part of the team, said Shyamlal Kisku, alias Jeetan of Nimiyaghat police station in Giridih, is a squad member of the CPI(Maoist) whereas Jeetan Marandi of Peertanr was a full time cultural artiste who performed street shows and produced audio cassettes based on songs composed on contemporary issues.

The incident reminds one of Rajendra Yadav of Telari village in Chhatarpur block of Palamau who was arrested by the police in December last year, allegedly mistaking him for another Rajendra Yadav of Arar village, under the same police station. Yadav, after being arrested, died in police custody, reportedly because of physical torture. Yadav of Arrar village is known to be a member of the armed squad of CPI(Maoists).

Ghosh said Marandi was held for seven cases, out of which six are in Giridih and one in Ranchi. "In as many as three cases, there is an element of doubt as far as the role of the police is concerned," he said. According to PUCL, Marandi was in Beur Jail during the period when case no 44/2003 of Tisri police station was instituted. Similarly, he was lodged in Giridih jail after being arrested on April 5, 2008 in case number 696/2007 of Kotwali police station Ranchi when he was made accused in case number 42/2008 of Peertanr police station, Giridih.

Ghosh added that the matter in which Jeetan is close to being sentenced is the Chilkhari case in which a local daily wrongly published his photograph. "Jeetan raised an objection and a corrigendum was published the next day but still the police arrested him," he said.