

Rise!

Resist!

Liberate!

REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT (RDF)

Contact: revolutionarydemocracy@gmail.com

Press Release

2 June 2012

**Condemn the massacre of 20 adivasi villagers and their children in Dandakaranya
by the mercenary forces of the fascist Indian state!**

**Expose the white lies of the killer gang of Chidambaram-Raman Singh portraying
the massacred adivasis and their children as leaders and cadres of the CPI (Maoist)!**

**Rise up to oppose the genocide of adivasis under Operation Green Hunt
by the Indian state and its War on People!**

When the adivasi peasants of Sirkegudem, Kothagudem and Rajupenta – adjacent villages separated by not more than a kilometre in the Bijapur district of south Chhattisgarh – gathered in hundreds on the night of 28 June 2012 to plan the performance of the traditional festival *Beej Pandum* (seed festival), they least expected to be surrounded by six hundred armed forces personnel of the Indian state. At least 18 adivasis lost their lives in the cold-blooded massacre that followed. Two other villagers were likewise killed near Jagargunda village of Sukma district the same night, and predictably, were shown as casualties of an ‘encounter’ between the Maoists and the armed forces. As the testimonies of the eyewitnesses coming through the media, activists as well as the statements of the CPI (Maoist) now confirm, the killing of the adivasis was a heinous massacre committed by the Cobra battalion of the CRPF and the Chhattisgarh police under the command of top police officials including CRPF Director General Vijay Kumar and Chhattisgarh Inspector General of Police T G Longkumar. It is also clear that this massacre is a part of Indian state’s extermination campaign against the Maoist revolutionary movement and the adivasis of central and eastern India under the rubric of Operation Green Hunt that was launched with a media blitzkrieg in September 2009.

To cover up this massacre of genocidal proportions and to defend this indefensible act, the puppets of the ruling classes, be it the chief architect of Operation Green Hunt, central Home Minister Chidambaram or Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh, have tried in vain to colour it as a ‘major military victory’ against the Maoists! Chidambaram even went to the extent of propagating the lie that three important Maoist leaders were killed in this ‘encounter’. The top-brass of the CRPF and police too are shouting from rooftops about gunning down ‘armed Naxalite leaders and cadres’. They are patting themselves on their backs for carrying out a ‘daring night attack’! They have claimed that 6 men belonging to the armed forces have sustained ‘injuries’ during the so-called ‘firing in self-defense’. The cock-and-bull story of terming this gathering as a big ‘Maoist meeting’ attended by ‘senior Maoist cadres’ has also been floated. A section of the corporate media has shamelessly echoed the sadistic celebration of this bloodbath by the ruling classes and their mercenary armies.

However, such theatrics and white lies have utterly failed to hide the truth behind the Sirkegudem massacre. The fact that hundreds of heavily armed ‘security’ personnel commanded by top CRPF and police officials encircled and indiscriminately fired upon a village assembly with an intent to kill as many of them as possible, and that the trail of this

massacre was continued till the next day leaving a total of at least 20 defenseless adivasi villagers dead – including five children – has been laid bare. At least four instances of sexual assault on adivasi women, a number of serious injuries and the reign of white terror through arrests and brutalities against the villagers during this ‘daring operation’ have also come to light, exposing the fascist fangs of the Indian state and its loyal armed forces.

The seed festival is an important event in the agrarian cycle of the adivasi peasants of Bastar, observed during the onset of Monsoon. The rituals connected to this festival are believed to be necessary for enhancing the productivity of the seeds and for ensuring a good harvest of crops. This festival, apart from marking the commencement of the agricultural season, is also crucial for making collective decisions regarding the utilisation and distribution of agricultural land and means of production. Given the import of such meetings ahead of the seed festival, it is hardly surprising that several hundred villagers from the three villages were present in the meeting called for planning the upcoming festival. The meeting included the old and the young, men and women. Like many of the meetings, ceremonies and festivals of the Bastar adivasis, the meeting at Sirkegudem village on 28 June too went on till the small hours of the night. The same night, three teams consisting of two hundred CRPF Cobra commandos and police personnel each, commanded by a CRPF DIG, set out for Sirkegudem from Jagargunda, Chintalnar and Basaguda CRPF camps (the first two are located in Sukma district while the last is in Bijapur). By 1 o’clock in the night the gathering at Sirkegudem was surrounded by the government forces and was fired upon indiscriminately. As per the testimonies of some eyewitnesses published in newspapers, the villagers shouted at the armed personnel to half fire but the firing was not stopped, and the bloodbath continued for several minutes. Later some of the dead bodies were loaded in a tractor by the armed forces and taken away from the killing fields.

The old trick deployed by the government armed forces of killing adivasi villagers and branding them as ‘Maoist/Naxalites’ can no longer fool the people. The dead have once again exposed the lies of the Indian state. A 9 year old girl and an 11 year old boy are among the dead, while three more children of 12 to 15 years of age have been also killed by the CRPF in the massacre. Kaka Saraswati, 12 years of age, was one of the children killed. Vijju, an adivasi woman of around 65 years, lost two of her sons in the massacre. She told reporters, “My sons were not Naxals”. Sabka Mitu, 17, died of a wound caused to his throat by a sharp object. Irpa Chottu, a 14 year old adivasi boy of Sirkegudem told that he was caught by the armed forces, interrogated and subsequently shot in his leg. The next morning the forces shot dead Ramesh, an adivasi youth, in front of his father Irpa Raju while trying to go out of his house. These mercenary gangs subsequently broke open Raju’s house and looted Rs.5000. These are only a few instances of the atrocities which have come to light so far.

Villagers who survived the massacre have testified that no Maoist was present in the gathering and the government’s armed forces did not even care to check the purpose of the meeting before opening indiscriminate gunfire, presuming that it was a Maoist meeting. In two separate statements, Vijay Madkam, Secretary of the South Bastar Committee, CPI(Maoist) and Jagan, Spokesperson of North Telangana SZC clarified on 30th June that all the people killed in the massacre perpetrated by the Central and Chhattisgarh state police on 28 June were adivasi villagers and that no leaders or cadres of the Maoist party were killed. They also said that there was no firing from the side of Maoists as they were not present at the site of the massacre. Gudsa Usendi, the Spokesperson of Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of CPI (Maoist) in a telephonic interview to ABN-Andhra Jyothi has condemned the statement made by Central Home Ministry that top Maoist leaders Somulu, Nagesh and Mahesh were among the killed. He also clarified that Irpa Suresh, claimed by the

government to be the commander of Bijapur and Dantewada PLGA, was also not among the killed. The Irpa Suresh who was killed was in reality a tribal peasant visiting his relatives in the village.

Rather than being brought to book for executing this heinous crime, the armed forces and their commanders are being hailed as heroes by the political crooks running the country – whether it is Chidambaram, Raman Singh or Nankiram Kanwar. These criminals in uniform enjoy so much of protection and patronage from the state and the ruling classes for faithfully carrying out their anti-people agenda that a soldier who took part in the massacre boasted by declaring that “We did not use any area weapons such as grenades or rocket launchers. If we really wanted to, we could have razed the entire village”. As if more was left to be done even after carrying out this macabre execution and brutality!

Indeed, razing of villages after villages, killing civilians suspecting them to be Naxalites, fake ‘encounters’, custodial murders, rape, torture and arrests have become the ‘Standard Operating Procedure’ of the mercenary forces operating under the direction of Chidambaram fascist gang running the country today. If more than 650 villages of Dandakaranya were burnt down – many of them repeatedly – by the Salwa Judum during 2004-2008, the latest phase of Indian state’s war on people under Operation Green Hunt has resulted in hundreds of cold-blooded murders and brutalities perpetrated against revolutionaries, political activists and adivasi villagers in Chhattisgarh alone. The Indian state has used unrestrained coercive powers – often legalised through draconian laws such as AFSPA, UAPA, NSA, CPSA, etc. – apart from deploying its military might against the people of the country who have chosen to resist the unbridled exploitation by the ruling classes.

This is why the struggling people led by the Maoist revolutionaries have become the ‘biggest internal security threat’ to the feudal and comprador ruling classes of India. To crush this movement and to prevent the people from seizing political power, these rulers have unleashed a brutal war under the direct command of the imperialist powers against the growing revolutionary movement in central and eastern India. The Sirkegudem massacre is the latest episode in this all-out class struggle. With the Indian Army lurking in the outskirts of Maad in North Bastar with the fig-leaf of ‘training’, such brutal massacres and genocide of adivasis in the hands of the government’s forces threaten to become much more frequent in the coming days, unless we rise up and collectively resist this fascist onslaught. RDF appeals to all the democratic and pro-people organisations and individuals as well as the people at large to demand punishment of the police personnel, police officers and their political masters who are directly responsible for perpetrating the Sirkegudem massacre, including the CEO of Operation Green Hunt, P. Chidambaram and his aide Raman Singh.

President
Varavara Rao
09676541715

General Secretary
Rajkishore
09717583539