

# The Echoes of the Forest of Bastar: Why Hidma's Name Resounds Loudly at Delhi's India Gate Protest for Clean Air?

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Madvi Hidma, the central committee member of the CPI (Maoist) and the former commander of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army's Battalion 1, was killed in a fake encounter on 18th November 2025, after an informant ratted him out to the Indian state. Forget the niceties of the bourgeois law, which posits to uphold the right of all accused to a fair trial, what has grabbed the attention of all reactionary media is that students who had gathered to protest at Delhi's India Gate tourist site to demand for clean air on 23rd November 2025 also carried some posters with the face of Madvi Hidma. The image, a hand-drawn artwork of a man the state itself had no picture of until late last year, was defiantly raised with the thought-provoking slogan "From Birsa Munda to Madvi Hidma, the struggle for our forests and environment goes on."

The protest, held under the banner of Delhi Coordination Committee for Clean Air (a joint platform of student and labour organizations), comprised of more than 500 people at the same site on 9th November 2025. This was a joint-protest which raised the people's voice against the rising levels of Air Quality Index (AQI) in the city, making Delhi the most polluted capital in the world. Over the years, the various Delhi governments of different political parties have blamed the peasants of Punjab and Haryana who practice parali burning, an old technique to replenish the soil, for the noxious fumes people breathe in everyday in the city. The situation is such that studies find that life expectancy of those living in Delhi will be lower than those in other parts of the country, with some studies even finding evidence that children born in Delhi will grow up with poor brain development and limited cognitive functions.

However, these students showed a rare clarity on the subject matter and dispelled state-sponsored myths by challenging the real culprits: the foreign and big bourgeois industries as well as the large-scale construction work being carried out in the city constantly in the name of development. Their demands are therefore the resignation of the BJP's Chief Minister Rekha Gupta who has invested in meaningless measures to mitigate the effects of Delhi's poor air, the formation of people's committees comprised of migrant labourers, citizens of Delhi's urban slums and villages and civil society activists which will regulate the industrial development and planning in the city. They demanded the cessation of polluting industrial production in the city, with fair compensation being given to the workers who would lose their jobs in the process, along with demanding free bus services for commuters (largely workers, women and freelance professionals who commute by the city's buses). At the same time, a contingent among these students also repeatedly pointed out that these demands are only temporary solutions, with New Democratic revolution and the formation of Janathana Sarkars all over the country being the only way this ecological crisis can be dealt with. 17 students have been arrested by the Delhi Police, who blamed them for using pepper spray against the police officers (4-5 policemen have allegedly been taken to the hospital). Yet, the

discussion is around Madvi Hidma. Why do the people of this country keep finding common cause not with the Indian state, not with the reformatory petite bourgeois politics, but with those red fighters in Bastar? Those very red fighters who started their work on the Janathana Sarkars with the decisive declaration that their model, in contrast to the imperialist model of development of the Indian state, is that of the people.

While much shock is being displayed at students understanding the fact that Hidma's fight, the fight of the CPI (Maoist) is centred around the rallying call of jal-jangal-jameen-izzat-adhikar, it should be understandable to democratic-minded individuals that without the forests of Bastar, protected by the Adivasi peasants who have understood their relationship with nature for a long time, there is no clean air for anyone. Just as those who are protesting COP30 in Brazil, where the fascist Bolsonaro government ravaged the Amazon rainforest and the current Lula government is presently carrying out numerous bloody operations such as Operation Gordos against the organized peasants striving to protect their lands from latifundiums, anyone who is concerned about the environment in the world must be concerned about the killings of Maoists in India. It should be no surprise that days after the fake encounter against Hidma, an industrialist grabbed 127 acres of land in three villages of Abhujmaad forests (Dharma, Bel and Markapal) belonging to Adivasi peasants who had been originally forced out of their villages when the state's Salwa Judum campaign began. The facts are evident - every killing of a Maoist emboldens an imperialist, a landlord and a comprador bureaucratic capitalist to loot the people's resources with even more shamelessness and brutality.

Numerous forces are already murmuring "left adventurism" and "left sectarian demands" within their chambers. Is it left adventurism to condemn fake encounters? Since when is upholding imagery of a dead revolutionary a crime? And if it is, do these well-wishers of the "left" wish to abide by such laws? In a time when fascism is clamping down on the majority of the people of this country, is conceding ground- conceding democratic rights, the approach to be advocated by the architects of a never-happening revolution in India, led by these critics of "left adventurism"? Today, they have come for those student activists who say that each time they kill a Hidma, hundreds of new Hidmas will emerge from among our homes. Tomorrow, they will come for those who ceremoniously lay garlands around the neck of Charu Majumdar, thinking that their abandonment of his vision offers them any protection. The day after, they will come for those who bow their heads in front of Bhagat Singh. Without those who fight against this imperialist loot in Bastar, without these valorous student activists in Delhi, eventually, imperialism will swallow this entire planet whole. Socialism or barbarism, Rosa Luxembourg said. Each time organized political forces tell people to cower down in front of state repression, we move an inch away from socialism, towards barbarism. The CPI (Maoist), the PLGA and the Janathana Sarkars are the sole peaks of the Himalayas which hold back the cold winds of imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism from sweeping the people into the storm of reaction.

What will become of these 17 students under the custody of the fascist Delhi Police, one can already fathom. Some of them just held a press conference this month highlighting the brutal torture they were made to endure in July of this year when 9 people, including students and anti-displacement activists associated with the Forum Against Corporatization and Militarization (FACAM), were kept in illegal police custody where they were threatened to be raped by iron rods, taken for a staged encounter and even electrocuted. Yet, many students who endured all of this, are back again on the streets, once again raising the demands of the everyday citizen. These acts of rebellion, whether in Bastar or at the gates of power itself, may seem random and disconnected to the reactionary media but to all of democratically-minded individuals, they know that Hidma

lives in these 17, and in the countless others who knock at the doors of power again and again. Until the door shatters, under the force of the consciously alive. Let them come for us, with all that they have, for we recognize that this constant oppression keeps breeding resistance. And from this resistance, blooms the flower of revolution.