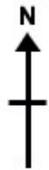


# Where The State Makes War On Its Own People

A report on violation of people's rights during the Salwa Judum campaign  
in Dantewada, Chattisgarh. April 2006.



# DISTRICT MAP OF CHHATTISGARH



Map not to Scale

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| ⊙ | State Capital  |
| — | State Boundary |

## Preface

Since June 2005, Dantewada District (formerly part of Bastar district), Chhattisgarh, has been in the news for an alleged uprising of adivasis against the Communist Party of India (Maoist). Most media and official reports described this movement, known as Salwa Judum, as a spontaneous and self-initiated reaction to 'Maoist oppression', and hailed it as a turning point in the fight against Naxalism. At the same time, a few reports indicated that people had been displaced in large numbers and were living in miserable conditions in camps. While this was officially attributed to Maoist threats and retaliation against those joining the Salwa Judum, stray news also came in about the forcible emptying out of villages as part of the government's anti-Maoist policy, and of excesses committed by members of the Salwa Judum and security forces.

A fourteen-member team from five organizations conducted an investigation between 28 November and 1 December 2005 in Bijapur and Bhairamgarh blocks of Dantewada district, focusing specifically on the violation of human rights and the impact on people's everyday lives. The organisations are: People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) Chhattisgarh, People's Union For Civil Liberties (PUCL) Jharkhand, People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) Delhi, Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) West Bengal, and Indian Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL).

The information in this report is based on: a) Discussions with government officials and paramilitary forces; b) interviews with people in Bhairamgarh, Matwada, Meertur and Gangaloor camps; c) discussions with people we met in villages that we visited, d) interviews with leaders and members of the Salwa Judum; and e) discussions with fact-finding members of a CPI team. We have also relied on the CPI's Open Letter to the Prime Minister dated 16 November 2005, detailing their findings, two CPI (Maoist) press releases dated 10 October 2005 and 20 November 2005, and their Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee newsletter, *Prabhat*, dated July-December 2005, as well as press clippings from June 2005 till the present.

On the basis of the fact-finding, three facts stood out strongly, all of which ran counter to the government's assertions: First, it is clear that the Salwa Judum is not a spontaneous people's movement, but a state-organized anti-insurgency campaign. Second, it is misleading to describe the situation as simply one where ordinary villagers are caught between the Maoists and the military. The Maoists have widespread support and as long as people continued to live in the villages, it was difficult for the government to isolate the Maoists. Rather than questioning its own non-performance on basic development, the government has resorted to clearing villages on a large scale. Tens of thousands of people are now refugees in temporary roadside camps or living with relatives with complete disruption of their daily lives. Prospects for their return are currently dim. Third, the entire operation, instead of being a 'peace mission' as it is claimed, has escalated violence on all sides. However, only the murders by Maoists are recognized, and the Salwa Judum and paramilitary operate with complete impunity. The rule of law has completely broken down.

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**1. Dantewada: Region and Its People**

Dantewada district, situated at the southern tip of Chhattisgarh, has borders with Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, and was part of Bastar kingdom till 1947. After independence, it was merged with Kanker kingdom to form Bastar, the largest district (39,114 sq km) in the state of Madhya Pradesh. In 1998, Bastar was divided into three districts, Kanker, Bastar and Dantewada, and in 2001 all three districts became part of the newly formed state of Chhattisgarh. Recently, Bijapur has been carved out as a new police district in Dantewada.

With a population of 7.91 lakh, Dantewada district has the lowest population density in the state at 40.8 persons per square kilometre (2001 census). Topographically, the region is composed of an undulating plateau, with hill ranges cut by a number of rivulets that flow into the Indravati river. These riverbeds provide the space for most rural settlements. Godavari and Mahanadi are two major rivers that arise from the Bastar uplands.

The district is divided into four tehsils: Bhopalpatnam, Bijapur, Dantewada and Konta. The Salwa Judum and police operations originated in Bijapur tehsil, but have now spread to Konta. The people inhabiting the district are predominantly tribal – mostly Maria Gonds and Dorla – accounting for 82% of the rural population. Scheduled Castes account for about 3% of the population and the rest are OBC communities like the Sundis, Kallars etc. A number of immigrants, mostly traders, but also lower level officials, school teachers, health workers etc., have settled in the small market towns like Bijapur, Sukma, Konta and Dantewada. The Bailadilla mines hardly employed any local adivasis, with the result that the mining town of Kirandul is a non-tribal enclave, with little connection to the surrounding countryside.

This picture of a large number of fairly small tribal villages, and a few large villages, with non-tribal households is supported by the cen-

sus data. Of the 1220 villages in the district, 455 are wholly tribal and another 458 are more than 90 per cent tribal, i.e. 75 per cent of the district's villages are almost completely tribal. Only 76 villages, or approximately 6 per cent of the total, have less than 50% tribal population. The larger villages serve as local markets and it is these that tend to have greater non-tribal populations.

About 38 per cent of the rural area in the district is outside the village and part of 'forest' land. The 2001 Census states these forests have 202 villages, of which about 90 are inhabited. What is pertinent is that these villages have no land rights and are at the mercy of the forest department. [Dantewada has one National Park (Indravati) and two wildlife sanctuaries (Bhairamgarh and Pamed)]. Other than these, the rest of the villages occupy 62% of the district, but again 46% of this is also designated as 'forest'. Hence in total, about two-thirds of the district belongs to the Forest Department, at least on paper. Some of these forest areas may have been village lands earlier. For instance, in the areas under the Bhopalpatnam and Kutru zamindaris, feudal oppression during colonial times forced residents to flee their villages. After 1947 and the abolition of Zamindari, these residents came back to find their lands notified as forests.

The villagers are heavily dependent on both agriculture and forests. Of the total village land, barely 29% land is cultivated, and as said earlier, nearly half is designated as forest and the rest is either uncultivable or is culturable waste. The average landholding per household (2001 Census) works out to 1.01 hectare, i.e., 2.5 acres. Irrigation being by and large absent (barely 2% have some sort of irrigation), only a single crop is possible. The shifting of villages due to economic reasons is therefore common. In the 2001 Census, there are 30 such villages that have become uninhabited (this is in addition to 112 uninhabited forest villages). Some of these villages continue to practice shifting cultivation in forest areas, a practice that has been banned by

the government, except in the Abujhmarh areas to the north of the Indravati.

The land actually under cultivation may be significantly more than these figures suggest. Villagers have cleared significant areas designated as forest land within the village for cultivation. Most of the people own land, thus 84% of the main workers in rural Dantewada and 55% of the marginal workers are cultivators. Yet, the paucity of land, and the low yields forces 6% of the main workers and 39% of the marginal workers to work as agricultural labour (in all, around 14% of the total working population). Such employment is provided on the lands of those who own larger and/or more fertile plots. They work either as *naukar*, i.e. free labour obtaining a seasonal wage, or as *kabadi*, i.e. attached labour with a larger landowner, getting food in lieu of wages. Such sale and purchase of labour is concentrated in some villages while being wholly absent in most others. Of the district's 1,220 villages, nearly 400 have no agricultural labourers and in all nearly 800 villages have less than 10%, while 96 villages have more than 50% agricultural labour. Labourers also migrate to neighbouring areas in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra for work.

Given the rain-fed agriculture, the collection and sale of non-timber forest produce at weekly *haats* (markets) or to agents is an important source of local income, a fact that underlines the people's dependence on the forest, and their forced interaction with Forest Department officials and traders.

At the village level, authority and respect is commanded by the *patel/pedda/mukhia* (headman) and the priest. In some cases, the same person performed both functions. The next rung in the structure is the *pargan manjhi*, the head of a cluster of villages, a person of considerable clout. The headmen, in many instances, belong to households that are the oldest residents of the village, or those who initially set up the village. The process of the shifting of populations led to later settlements within existing revenue villages, with the newer settlers obtaining lower amounts of land and less productive lands in

comparison to the earlier settlers. Thus, while cultural practices ensure that economic differences are not visible in dress and size of dwelling, the older practice of collective labour has now become a means of garnering the labour of the less well-off by those better-off.

Literacy levels are low in rural areas at 29% for men and 14% for women, with an overall rural literacy rate of 21%. Yet this presents a partial picture. In Bijapur tehsil for instance, there are only 52 villages in which more than 25% of the population is literate, and 35 villages have no literates at all. This is related to the availability and the quality of schools in the district: out of the 1220 villages, 214 do not have even a primary school and, of these, for 107 villages the school is more than 5 kilometres away. The presence of a school building in the village, moreover, does not ensure that teachers are available. In some cases, teachers use the excuse of the presence of Maoist organisations in the village to remain absent. In any case, with the ongoing Salwa Judum, schools have come under attack. Security forces have been using school buildings as temporary camps and Maoists have been blasting these buildings to prevent security forces from finding pucca shelters in the villages.

The situation is distinctly worse regarding health facilities. Out of the 1220 villages, there is no medical facility in 1161 villages. A primary health centre exists only in 26 villages; a private registered medical practitioner in 17 villages, a government subsidised one in 12 and a community health worker in 122 villages. A telling comment on the inadequacy of the health infrastructure and the health and well being of the people is provided through the studies conducted by Chhattisgarh PUCL in earlier years. As early as 1987, an investigation into repeated reports of blood dysentery in Bastar that claimed many lives each year revealed that people had very limited access to potable water. A more recent study during 2004 revealed that things had not really improved very much in the last 18 years (See Box 1: *Deaths due to Hunger and Malnutrition*).

### **Box 1 Deaths Due to Hunger and Malnutrition**

A team from PUCL Chhattisgarh visited villages Burgum in Kuakopnda block and Hirpal in Geedam block of Dantewada district following newspaper reports of hunger deaths in south Bastar during March 2004. The following deaths due to hunger and malnutrition were documented.

| <b>Village Burgum</b><br><b>Block Kuakonda</b><br><b>Dist. Dantewada</b> | <b>Village Hirpal</b><br><b>Block Geedam</b><br><b>Dist. Dantewada</b> | <b>Village Burgum</b><br><b>Block Bastanar</b><br><b>Dist. Bastar</b> | <b>Village Mutanpal</b><br><b>Block Bastanar</b><br><b>Dist. Bastar</b> |
|--|--|---|---|
| Bhima (7 years)  |  |   |   |
| Bidde (1.5 years)  | Sukki (60 years)   | Pintu (2 years)   | Sappe (50 years)  |
| Podiya (35 years)  | Pidde Bai (20 years)   | Mangay (40 years)   | Jagri (45 years)  |
| Sunil  | Sunita (9 months)  | Raju (40 years)   | Laxmi (60 years)  |
| Vinay Kumar  | Bachchi (12 days)  | Machi (2 years)   | Payke (70 years)  |
| Devmati  | Mangli (60 years)  | Gonchand (1 year)   |   |
| Lassi  |  | Dhaniram (7 years)  |   |
| Dewa   |  | Dole (60 years)   |   |
| Kosa   |  | Ayati (35 years)  |   |
| Esamti   |  | Diwar (2 years)   |   |
| Buddhu   |  |   |   |
| Anda (55 years)  |  |   |   |

The main findings of the team were:

- i) In the villages visited there is no effective system of food security. There is no effective infrastructure for agricultural production, and neither is there any other source of employment. So people lack the means to obtain the minimum food levels necessary for basic health. Consequently, a large proportion of the population is a victim of severe malnutrition.
- ii) There is no access to safe and potable drinking water. Even the water from hand-pumps is contaminated, and foul. Village people are forced to obtain water from small holes dug in riverbeds. Much illness is due to lack of access to safe water.
- iii) Doctor and paramedical workers are deployed in the villages only on paper. They do not go to the people. Their behavior is very unsympathetic, and often insulting. Their only concern is with their salaries. Some sources suggested that health personnel in the areas under Naxalite influence are reluctant to go to villages because if they are residents of these areas, they are suspected by the police of having sympathies for the Naxalites and consequently harassed.

## **2. Natural Resources and the Rhetoric of Development**

While the people of Dantewada are extremely poor, their land is extremely rich, both in terms of minerals and forests. When the government talks of 'development', it appears to have in mind the development of these resources for private profit as against the development of its people. When organisations and movements have pointed out that the two are not

synonymous, and that the way mining and other industrial activity has been practiced in the past has resulted in the displacement and consequent pauperisation of tribals in this region, they are called 'anti-development'.

The earliest commercial mining was for iron ore deposits, which are among the best quality in the world. Some of this iron ore is currently mined at the Bailadilla mines at Kirandul/Bacheli, wholly for export, located in the centre of

Dantewada district. The only rail line in this region is from the port of Vishakapatnam to Kirandul. The mines have provided no employment locally, what they have given the region is pollution of the rivers Sankini and Dankini. A considerable amount of iron ore from Bachelu is also illegally sold on the black market. In the 1970s, the widespread practice of non-tribal men working in the mines keeping adivasi women and then abandoning them was highlighted. Not much has changed since then. There are also substantial deposits of tin, corundum, granite, lapidolite (lithium ore), marble and silliminite. Tin is illegally mined and smelted, consuming vast amounts of timber for charcoal in the process. The business is run by the immigrant settlers who pay bribes to the police in order to conduct their trade.

These efforts at exploiting natural resources have gained momentum since the formation of the state of Chhattisgarh in 2001. The new state government has entered into agreements with several industrial houses such as the Tatas and Essar to set up steel plants on land leased from the state. Plans are afoot for intensified mining with the Essar group setting up a pipeline to transport 8 million tonnes of iron ore slurry per annum to the Vishakhapatnam port. A National Mining Development Corporation (NMDC) steel plant has already been initiated at Nagarnar village in Bastar, despite local protests.

Under the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act 1996 (PESA), it is necessary to consult the Gram Sabha before acquiring land in Fifth Schedule areas. To the contrary, in Nagarnar, the government used violence against protestors, and resolutions that were unfavourable to the government were simply replaced by pro-plant resolutions in the books. A sponge iron plant has already come up nearby in Raikot, emitting thick black fumes into the air. Complaints by the panchayat about the pollution have been ignored. In 1992, when the Bharat Jan Andolan protested against a proposed steel plant at Maolibahat village, its leader and former Collector of Bastar, Dr. B.D. Sharma was

paraded through Jagdalpur with a garland of shoes by BJP activists.

The government is also proposing to revive the Bodhghat Hydroelectric project, which had years ago been stopped by the Indira Gandhi government following pressure from a local conservation group, BASCON. The Ministry of Environment and Forests approved the diversion of 5,734 hectares of forestland for this in February 2004 on the grounds that compensatory afforestation had already been carried out. The Polavaram dam in Andhra Pradesh will also submerge some 2,335 families in Konda district. Other major changes planned for the Bastar-Dantewada region include the Dalli-Rajhara-Raoghat- Jagdalpur railway line. The Mardum Defence Base and a Jungle Warfare Training College near Kanker have entrenched a military presence in the region. The latter has reportedly cut down a large number of trees in the reserve forest.

But nearly six decades of official boast of 'development' has little to show for it. In fact, while literacy and health indicators are miserable, the one indicator that is thriving is the ratio of police stations to population. A cursory look at the infrastructure for development shows that while Dantewada boasts of 37 police stations across the district for its 374 panchayats (with 33 new police stations to come up), there are only 26 primary health centers (PHCs), 26 Higher Secondary Schools, and four degree colleges in the district.

More money is being allocated for security and anti-Naxal operations than for development. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs' *Annual Report 2004-05*, Rs 150 crore will be reimbursed to the nine naxal-affected states, Rs 296 crore was released during 2003-04 for the modernisation of police forces in naxal-affected districts, Rs 475 crore has been set aside for raising 19 Indian Reserve Battalions (IRBs) (the cost of raising one IRB is Rs 25 crore), (see *Box 2: Indian Reserve Battalions*), Rs 825 crore has been allocated for 55 severely naxal-affected districts under the Planning Commission's Backward Districts Initiative for filling in "crit-

## **Box 2**

### **India Reserve Battalions**

The Government of India raises one or more India Reserve Battalions [IRBs] in each state. The concept of IRBs was mooted by the Ministry of Home Affairs “in the background of increasing problems of law and order and emerging internal security scenario in the country, which put considerable pressure on the Central Police Forces”. As of 2004-05, there were 85 IRBs in the country, each having 1,007 personnel. These battalions are trained by the CRPF and the BSF in fighting with modern weaponry. The responsibility for recruiting and maintaining these battalions rests with the state governments, but the central government bears the expenses towards raising and training its personnel. However, the central government has the power to deploy the IRBs anywhere on payment to the concerned state.

*Source: Ministry of Home Affairs 2004-05.*

ical gaps in physical and social infrastructure” for a period of just one year. For the construction of rural roads, the Ministry of Rural Development is to provide Rs 37.5 crore per annum for naxal-affected areas under the Prime Minister’s Grameen Swarojgar Yojana (PMGSY).

Indeed, what passes for development in official parlance has a security imprint. The physical infrastructure to be built includes - other than police stations - roads, bridges, etc. While roads, bridges and electrification will no doubt benefit ordinary people, it is evident that their needs are hardly what is behind the bringing in of the Border Roads Organisation for building roads in the region. An official Work Proposal from the Collector’s office states that the real rationale of road building and widening is to flush the Maoists out from the jungles and make troop movement in the area easier (*Collector’s Work Proposal*). The BRO road from Jagdalpur to Dantewada, for instance, is not

being built through the panchayats, and thus does not even provide local employment.

To summarise, the adivasis and other local inhabitants of the region have little possibility of actual development and are acutely aware of their marginal and exploited status. For the overwhelming majority in the villages, agriculture is unviable since plots are small and there is no investment in irrigation, there are severe restrictions on the use of forests partly due to the creation of wildlife reserves, the prices of forest produce are deliberately kept low by traders and the government, and the government machinery treats them with apathy and contempt. On the other hand, there is a small minority – mostly trading families, shopkeepers, members of the bureaucracy, lawyers and others living in the small towns, and some rich tribal leaders who have gained through politics or corruption involving illicit felling of trees (see *Box 3: Malik Makbuja Scam*) who want large development projects.

In a situation where the state claims rights to the land and the people who live on that land are treated as peripheral to the national economy, a mass base of the Maoists challenging this status quo forms a threat to the state’s plans for heavy industry and profits in this region.

### **3. Political Movements**

The first political mobilisation in the former Bastar district under the aegis of a political party took place in the mid-1970s, by the Communist Party of India (CPI). It created its organisation in the Bailadilla mines, around issues of control over mineral resources and work opportunities for locals. The struggle in the mines was brutally suppressed through state repression, including police firing on protesting workers during 1976-77 that resulted in the death of several workers and members of their families. The movement begun by the CPI spread through large areas of Bastar and brought the party electoral success in two of the three legislative assembly seats. The other issues taken up by them centred around the lack of amenities and access to forests. The CPI had for long demanded an

**Box 3****Malik Makbuja Scam**

The *malik makbuja* right refers to the right of peasants to cut trees on their own land. A widespread scam in the 1990s led to the large scale illegal felling of trees in Bastar. It's a classic instance of how forest and timber resources in the region have been cornered by non-*adivasi* and *adivasi* elites.

Ostensibly created to safeguard the interests of *adivasis*, the MP Protection of Scheduled Tribes (Interest in Trees) Act 1956-57 requires the supervision of the sale of felled trees by the Collector, with the sale money being deposited in a joint account. However, agents soon took over the process by offering to help *adivasis* with the complex paperwork involved, only to cheat them. Timber merchants bought land in order to fell the trees on it. Since land alienation laws restrict the purchase of tribal land by non-tribals, timber merchants usually targeted the lands of poor non-tribals. However, rich tribal politicians such as Mahendra Karma were able to buy land from other tribals as well. Both revenue and forest staff facilitated this.

Despite questions raised in the assembly by CPI MLA Manish Kunjam and others, and complaints of the Collector against his own superior for collusion in the *malik makbuja* scam, the MP government did nothing. Ekta Parishad and Samaj Parivartana Samudaya, two local organisations, took the matter to the Supreme Court (WP (Civil) No. 202 of 1995). In 1997, the Court banned all felling in the then Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh. The Lokayukt held an independent enquiry and the matter was handed over to the CBI. A CBI FIR dated 8.12.1998 states:

"The facts contained in the writ petition, reports of Lok Ayukta and its connected papers, prima facie show that the above-named officials of Govt. of Madhya Pradesh and land owners namely Mahendra Karma, Rajaram Todem, Suresh Chand Surana, Srinivasan Awasthi, Brij Mohan Gupta and others were party of criminal conspiracy during 1992-96 to cause wrongful gain to the land owners in the matter of felling trees. It is alleged that the accused public servants bestowed undue favours to the said land owners and others and illegally accorded permission to fell a large number of valuable timber trees on the basis of forged and fabricated documents and in utter disregard of the provisions of the MP Protection of Aboriginal Tribes (Interest in Trees) Rule 1957 and Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code 1959."

According to a CBI letter dated 14.10.1999, FIRs had been filed against ten people for offences between 1992 and 1996 in 56 villages. However, no further action has been taken against Mahendra Karma or any of the other accused.

autonomous council for the Bastar area to ensure a degree of independence in the formulation and implementation of development policy.

Movements against the dominant development paradigm and rampant corruption in the administration continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Many of these were local in character. These included the movement against pine forestation to feed the Ballarshah Paper Industries, the movement of the women of Asna near Jagdalpur against forest enclosure and monoculture forestry, and the resistance of the tribals of Mawlibhata to a proposed steel plant on their

land. In recent times, the most serious challenge to the dominant model of development has come from the CPI (Maoist) formations.

**A. THE MAOIST MOVEMENT**

The Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh, bordering Dantewada to the South, has a long history of peasant struggles dating back to the 1940s. By the 1970s, the struggles of the peasantry were led by a number of Marxist-Leninist parties, including CPI (ML) People's War (PWG), a precursor to the CPI (Maoist). Around 1980, PWG started an organization in the area of present-day Dantewada district, called the Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor San-

gathan (DAKMS). The earliest issues taken up by these organisations revolved around oppression and exploitation by 'outsiders', primarily the forest and revenue departments, the police, and moneylenders. They mobilized against the practice of forest officials levying fines and demanding illegal payments in money and in kind for collection of minor forest produce by locals, for use of village forest areas for cultivation, or felling of trees for house-building. Revenue officials also demanded similar payments for extending cultivation. Crimes listed under the Forest Act 1980 provided police officials as well the opportunity to extort poultry, meat, liquor and money. The sum total of the payments as well as the recurrent need of food loans and seed loans led people to moneylenders. Another issue was the people's lack of a *patta* (ownership papers) on the forest lands brought under cultivation, and on all cultivated land in forest villages. Mass organisations such as the Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan (AKMS) deployed methods of chasing away forest and revenue officials from villages and attacking forest posts. Many forest check-posts were abandoned.

The organisations spread quickly and covered large parts of Konta, Bhopalpatnam and Bijapur tehsils in less than a decade. By the late 1980s, internal contradictions in adivasi society started being addressed. One of these was the inequality in land ownership. This inequality was more marked in parts of Konta tehsil in the Godavari river valley. Distribution of a part of larger holdings controlled by a few families in the village (often including those of the headman and sarpanch) to those without land, and redistribution of the more fertile lands was carried out in some areas. Redistribution of grain was carried out in a similar manner.

A second initiative was the creation of *sanghams* in villages. These were intended to gradually replace the traditional structures of authority at the village level, articulate issues of the village and settle disputes. *Sanghams* exist in many villages of Dantewada today. These *sanghams* are currently one of the major targets of the Salwa Judum as they challenge the tradi-

tional structures of local authority, and are identified with the Maoists. Even the District Collector states that the "real strength [of Maoists] lies in sangam membership who are from among the villagers" and comprise none other than the "illiterate common man who like others takes care of his family through earning daily wages" (*District Collector's Workplan*).

There were also initiatives at fixing prices of forest produce collected and sold to traders. The most celebrated among these was the raising of prices in *tendu patta* (beedi leaf) collection. Struggles by peasant organizations managed to raise the rates from barely Rs 2 for 100 bundles (of 100 leaves each) in the early 1980s to Rs 35 in 1989, to Rs 80 by the mid-1990s (see *Box 5: Ban on Sale of Tendu Patta*).

The period from the second half of the 1990s onwards was marked by other initiatives: prevention of the appropriation and misuse of government funds by Sarpanches/headmen, mobilisation of labour for the creation of irrigation facilities, creation of seed banks to tide over the lack of access to seeds at harvest time, maintenance of land records for all cultivated lands to counter governmental refusal to do so, efforts at rejuvenation of forests, etc. The same period saw the creation of similar organisations in neighbouring areas in the north: Abhujmarh and other areas in Bastar district and parts of Kanker district. By 2000, when the state of Chhattisgarh was created, the CPI-ML (PW) had created substantial bases in the forest areas of Bastar, Kanker, and Dantewada.

Two decades later, the People's War declared the entire tribal forest region that includes Bastar and extends into Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh as a guerrilla zone, i.e. a region where the Peoples War would attempt to prevent the state officials and forces from maintaining their rule and create alternative institutions of what it termed 'people's rule'.

#### B. JAN JAGRAN ABHIYAN

The region has a history of political opposition to the Maoists from the dominant sections of society (both tribal and non-tribal) in the form

**Box 4****Mahendra Karma's Colourful Career**

Mahendra Karma of the Congress (I) is one of the major tribal leaders of the Salwa Judum. He is a known figure in the region, politically and otherwise. Originally from Pharsepal village, he belongs to the Kashyap clan. Pharsepal and its surrounding villages are known to have several landed households (their wealth measured by the fact that they sell 3-4 truckloads of rice), many of which are related to Karma. His father, Boodha Majhi, was a clan mukhia who also used to collect taxes for the raja.

Karma first began his political work with the All India Students Federation while he was in the Law College at Jagdalpur. His active political career began around 1975. He went on to become a CPI MLA in 1978, but was denied a CPI ticket in 1981 on the grounds of his poor performance. He joined the Congress upon this, of which his brother was already a member. In the 1981 elections, which he contested as a Congress candidate, he lost the Dantewada seat to the CPI. Following turmoil in the Congress party, he joined the new party floated by Madhavrao Scindia, and was one of the two Members of Parliament elected on this ticket. In the eighties, he is seen to have established close relations with business interests in Dantewada and emerged as an opponent of the CPI-led Swayatta Andolan. Following the formation of Chhattisgarh state, Karma became a minister in Ajit Jogi's cabinet. Karma is now the official 'tribal leader' of the Congress (I) in the state.

of the Jan Jagran Abhiyans. The acquiring of lands from large holdings and their redistribution to landless households by peasant organizations led to the creation of a section unhappy with the Maoists. Additionally, the downsizing of the role of the headman and the priest due to the creation of sanghams also contributed to the backlash. Traders and contractors in trading towns and tehsil headquarters such as Bijapur and Bhairamgarh - who were mostly non-tribals - added to this constituency against the Maoists.

In July-August 1990, the residents of Bedre village near Kutru killed their headman. Large contingents of police forces were stationed in the area. The headman's brother, along with police forces, started organizing retaliatory attacks against Maoist sympathizers. Within no time some political leaders, notable among them the present MLA Mahendra Karma (see *Box 4: Mahendra Karma's Colourful Career*) took over the leadership of this operation which was called Jan Jagran Abhiyan. The method of the Abhiyan was to threaten a village to hand over those most active with the organisation, or else face an attack. Such attacks involved looting and

sometimes the consumption of grain, poultry and animals, burning of houses and household goods, beating and rapes. Those associating actively with the sanghams (village organisations) were arrested. In case of a surrender, before or after the attack, the surrendered were made part of the Jan Jagran Abhiyan and were required to participate in attacks on other villages. This process lasted for over three months, starting from close to the Bhopalpatnam-Bijapur road in the west and extending towards Konta in the south of the district. The BJP government in Madhya Pradesh at that time extended full support to the Abhiyan and an-all party committee was formed in its support, which included the Congress, BJP and the CPI. (The CPI has since held it to be a mistake on their part to have supported the Abhiyan.) The Abhiyan was successful in its objective to the extent that a small cluster of villages in Konta was all that was left of the tribal-peasant organisation.

The erstwhile People's War then launched a counter-offensive targeting state forces, whom they felt were the mainstay of the Abhiyan. The retaliation by the Maoists followed the same strategy as the attacks by the Abhiyan: surren-

der or suffer attack. However, only those headmen and others who had closely associated with the Abhiyan suffered attacks on their property. Within a short while the Abhiyan ended and Maoist organisations were re-established. Many headmen who ran away from their villages to escape Maoist retaliation were provided space for a hut by the government, behind the Bijapur police station.

During the 1990s, one significant new issue around which people were mobilized was of land ownership. This was more contentious in cases where the villages were more economically differentiated. In 1998, villages around Pharasapal, Mahendra Karma's native village, saw the birth of another Jan Jagran Abhiyan. These were villages where some households produced substantial surpluses of grain for the market. Mahendra Karma led this Abhiyan from its inception. The pattern of mobilizing for and against the Abhiyan were similar to that in 1991. This second Abhiyan, of 1998 was however localized and short-lived.

Since 2000, an increasing number of police and paramilitary forces have been deployed in Dantewada. The first battalion of the CRPF permanently stationed in 2001 was joined by two

more battalions. An India Reserve Battalion (IRB) from Nagaland was also stationed here.

Around May-June 2005, another mobilization against Maoist organisations using local elites, both adivasi and non-adivasi, and the state forces began. Mahendra Karma, the Congress MLA, was again at its forefront very soon. This time round it was named Salwa Judum. Salwa is the Gondi word for the water that is sprinkled on a patient to drive an illness out, while Judum is the word for collective hunts. Salwa Judum thus means the purification hunt, seemingly meant to cure tribal society of the Maoist 'illness'. In official circles, this campaign is also referred to as Jan Jagran Abhiyan as well as Salwa Judum, probably indicating both the continuities as well as differences from the Jan Jagran Abhiyans of the past.

The differences are crucial: For one, the Salwa Judum is over a wider area, involves much more intensive use of state power and is centrally part of the central and state governments' anti-Naxal policy. Two, the attacks and killings are more frequent and far more brutal, and its impact on the daily life of the local people far more devastating.

The picture conveyed by the administration and dutifully picked up by the local media is that the Salwa Judum is a 'spontaneous' and self-initiated movement of local tribals, having its immediate trigger in some of the Maoists' recent policies such as the ban on collecting *tendu* leaves and on participating in state elections. However, none of the earlier reports treat the matter with the seriousness it deserves and some are even frivolous in nature. According to one report, "From a handful in number to thousands. This is how the anti-Naxal movement is gaining ground in the main heartland of Naxalites in Bastar...After keeping their mouths shut for decades, the tribal people are getting united to battle against the People's War." (Manjusainath, *Hindu*, 2005).

However, the picture these accounts provide of the Salwa Judum is far from accurate. The fact is that the Salwa Judum is being led by sections of local elites, contractors and traders, that it is officially part of anti-naxal initiatives, and that it is being actively supported by state agencies to an unprecedented degree. It's far from being a "spontaneous" response to Maoist 'tyranny' by the local populace at large, as the government is making it out to be.

A lesser known truth is that, as a consequence of the Salwa Judum, the lives of thousands of people in the region are being torn apart in the course of what the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Dantewada, himself described as "*aghoshit yudh*", an "undeclared war". In just the last few months, about 30,000 people have been displaced from their homes. Approximately 15,000 people from 420 villages are living in temporary camps as refugees, as per official estimates. Perhaps an equal number are living with relatives in other villages or in rented accommodation. Some reports suggest that 96 people from about 34 villages have been killed till November 2005.

The experiences of the fact-finding team in Dantewada district itself conveys the sense in

which an undeclared war is gaining frightening proportions. The following quote is from our notes:

"In Dantewada district it is a common sight to see locals moving around with traditional weaponry such as bows and arrows. But to our team's surprise and concern, we found the sight of heavily armed local surveillance parties of not only security personnel, but also local people on their bicycles, in groups of five (and often more), carrying three assault rifles, one 2 inch mortar launcher and a sten-gun, to be just as common.

"Check points on the highway (NH 16) that runs across the northern part of Dantewada district were often manned by armed locals who demanded that they check our vehicles in case we were harbouring arms or food for the Maoists, more popularly known in this area as '*dada log*'. These armed, non-military locals were members of what has come to be known as the Salwa Judum.

"A part of the team, on their way to Ganalloor via Bijapur, were not allowed by a Salwa Judum mob to proceed any further than Bijapur. This incident occurred in the presence of local government representatives and security forces, who made no move to intervene. The team also witnessed a part of a village clearing operation conducted by the Naga Indian Reserve Battalion forces on 30 November, where, among other instances of looting by the forces, some soldiers chopped off the head of a cow – one among the herds of cattle that they claimed they were rescuing from the Maoists – in full view of the villagers and of the vehicles that were stranded on the road. There was also an ambulance from Geedum Hospital assisting in the operation."

### 1. The Emergence of the Salwa Judum

There is an ambiguity about the Salwa Judum's origins. There are two somewhat conflicting explanations. The Salwa Judum is understood to have started either entirely as an anti-

Maoist civilian initiative arising out of local social contradictions or alternatively, as an operation organized right from its inception as part of the administration's long-term counterinsurgency plans. Actually, the question about its origins is secondary. What's more important is one, the social basis of the Salwa Judum; two, the extent of state patronage it is currently getting as part of the Indian state's anti-Naxal agenda; and three, the brutality people are facing as a consequence. In fact, the Salwa Judum could not have reached its present dimensions without the extent of state support it is getting.

According to the Collector of Dantewada district, K.R. Pisda, the Salwa Judum, like the earlier Abhijans, also started near Kutru. In May 2005, he heard that in interior villages falling under Kutru tehsil mobilising was taking place against the Maoists. The people there were apparently upset with the Maoists' ban on collecting *tendu* leaves (see Box 5: *Ban on Sale of Tendu Patta*) and on laying roads in the area. Following this, the administration got letters from Bedre (where the first Jan Jagran Abhiyan had begun in 1990) and some other villages asking for police protection against the Maoists. The Collector said he first encountered the Salwa Judum on 19 June 2005, when he saw a crowd of 5-6,000 people in Matwada village, on their way to Kotarapal village, a Maoist stronghold. In a Salwa Judum meeting in Tadmendri village around the same time, local *sangham* members were told to stop associating with the Maoists. There was a stampede at this meeting, and some 80-90 people had not returned home by evening. Fearing that Maoists were burning houses, crowds of people took to the road. Some 15,000 people, he claimed, gathered in different places and the administration opened camps wherever there were police stations – Matwada, Naimed, Bhairamgarh, Kutru, etc. Soon after, a meeting was held every alternate day in villages that were known to be pro-Naxalite.

All the leaders of the Salwa Judum whom we met also referred to having organised locally. According to Lakshman Kashyap, a local leader of the Salwa Judum and a relative of

Mahendra Karma, meetings were fixed through notes passed between villages. Kashyap recalled that the first such note he received was from a teacher, Deva Sodhi of Pharsegarh, inviting people to a meeting in Matwada.

A Maoist document (*Prabhat*, newsletter of the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of CPI [Maoists]; July-December 2005) also points to some local mobilisation against them by village headmen. The first action by Salwa Judum, according to them, occurred after some land redistribution was conducted in about 25 villages between Kutru and the Indravati river. People from these villages who had so far not been part of the Dandakaranya Area Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan (DAKMS) had now expressed a wish to join. On 5 June, mukhiyas from Aveli village, Gannu Patel and Masa Gaital of Bandeparra reportedly invited local leaders of the DAKMS to Usikapatnam village to discuss problems faced by the local people. However, when the DAKMS members visited Usikapatnam, they were detained, beaten up and handed over to Kutru police station.

These accounts from the three different sources suggest that the Salwa Judum began at the local level over a variety of issues including opposition to the *sanghams*, and redistribution of village land. The Salwa Judum leadership represents those who consider themselves victims of Maoist violence. These include those sections of tribal and non-tribal society who have been adversely effected by the Maoists' policies eg those in traditional positions of authority within the village, those whose lands have been redistributed, those traders whose profits have been hit by the struggles over *tendu patta* and forest produce etc. Lakshman Kashyap, a local Salwa Judum leader told us that the Salwa Judum leadership primarily consists of (a) some headmen, sarpanches, and panches along with their clans people, and (b) non tribal immigrants-both of whom (were) mobilized against the Maoists. Even official accounts do not deny this composition of the leadership of the Salwa Judum (*Collector's Work Proposal*). At the grass roots level it is also apparent that contractors, trans-

**Box 5****The Ban on Sale of Tendu Patta**

Among the various explanations being provided today by the administration and sections of the media for the rise of the Salwa Judum, the ban on the sale of beedi leaf (tendu patta) by Maoists is often mentioned. The year 2005 witnessed a strike call by the peasant organisation DAKMS that led to a boycott of tendu patta collection, an important source of income for tribal households. In the Dantewada region, 2005 was also a year of drought. Some discontentment over the boycott and the resultant loss in income among the adivasis is inevitable, but to say that it led to the Salwa Judum is absurd. Such theories negate the wider context for the ban, particularly of the long struggles fought by the adivasis and the Maoists to improve the rates of tendu patta, and the dubious role played by the state.

For the large majority of Bastar's people, as also in the neighbouring tribal region of Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and Malkangiri in Orissa, incomes in cash result entirely from the sale of minor forest produce. Tendu patta, in particular, has a short season yet provides this income in the lean summer months and virtually every family engages in tendu patta collection. Tendu patta and bamboo also differ from other minor forest produce in that their collection and purchase is better organised, whether directly by the state or through contractors.

Till the early 1980s, the tendu patta trade was wholly controlled by private contractors, and collection rates were extremely low, barely a couple of rupees for 100 bundles each of 100 leaves (i.e. for 10,000 leaves). By 1984, struggles taken up by adivasis and peasant organisations managed to raise the piece rates to Rs 17 per 100 bundles of 70 leaves each, i.e. Rs. 24 for every 10,000 leaves.

At varying times, state governments tried to abolish and replace private contractors. However these attempts failed as the governments prescribed rates much lower than those paid by contractors. In Maharashtra, the state government issued such an order in 1985, but was forced to withdraw it in 1989, following a boycott of tendu patta collection in the next three years. For Bastar, such a perverse order came in 1989; rates that had reached Rs 35 per 10,000 leaves were reduced by the government to a paltry Rs 25. 'Cooperative societies' were formed to oversee its collection and purchase. This governmental policy resulted in a strike and led to a boycott of tendu patta collection for the next five years.

From 1995, people in Bastar again resumed collection. They presented certain basic demands to the state government: a collection rate of Rs 100, establishment of a collection centre in each village, prompt payments, and the employment of local people as munshi and watcher. These demands were rejected. It led to varied protests ranging from mass petitions by villagers at forest range offices, to road blockades and destruction of forest produce depots. Protests persisted, forcing the MP government in 1999 to set up a committee to examine the fall in tendu patta collection. This committee recommended the re-introduction of the contractor system.

During this decade from 1989 to 1999, the MP government had raised rates from Rs 25 to Rs 40 per 100 bundles. The reintroduction of the contractor system in Bastar witnessed a rise in rates from Rs 40 to Rs 80. Over the same period, rates by private contractors in Maharashtra had been hiked from Rs 60 to Rs 136. This was achieved through villagers' tendu patta struggle committees negotiating with contractors. Police attempted to prevent negotiations and villagers were detained at many places. Contractors too were pressurized by the government not to agree

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with the demands. Despite this, rates in Maharashtra presently are Rs 180 but in neighbouring Bastar, the demand for a rate of Rs 100 has not been met, leading to a boycott of tendu patta collection.

The above description makes it clear that the various state governments have played a most dubious role. They have viewed these struggles as increasing Maoists' popularity and have tried to sabotage struggles. Despite this, increases in collection rates have occurred solely due to pressure from peasant organisations, which have used boycott calls as a form of struggle in bargaining with contractors and pressurizing the government.

Hence, notwithstanding some discontent to which it may have given rise, to say that the current ban led to mass support for the Salwa Judum is far from the truth. A more likely explanation of the relation between the boycott and the Salwa Judum is that the boycott *further* fostered the discontent of tendu patta traders and contractors, who had a grouse against the Maoists and who therefore readily made common cause with the government in the shape of the Salwa Judum.

porters and traders from small towns of Dantewada district, who have much to gain from industrialization in the region, also play a prominent role in the Salwa Judum.

However, what's important is that the state promptly exploited the situation. It's crucial never to forget that the Salwa Judum could not become what it has without the extent of state support it is getting. For instance, the district collector told us that of the 150-200 Salwa Judum meetings that had been held till December 2005, he himself had attended 75 per cent. Other sources also make it evident that the state has played an active role in channelising and propagating the anti-Maoist opposition among sec-

tions of the population, thus fuelling the Salwa Judum as part of its all India anti-Naxal policy.

According to a video (apparently made at a media training organisation, Jan Darshan, at the government's request) the Salwa Judum started on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 in Kutru, where people were upset with the Maoist's ban on collecting tendu leaves, the frequent closure of *haats* due to their bandh calls, and the alleged siphoning of development funds from the area. However, it also revealingly states that 'Operation Salwa Judum' was preceded by months of 'overt and covert operations' by the police (from January 2005 onwards) in which the police tried in a "subtle manner" to convince people of the ills of Maoism. The video shots of Salwa Judum meetings clearly show the Chief Minister, the Collector and politicians like Mahendra Karma addressing these, and security personnel accompanying Salwa Judum processions. The video mentions the government concept of 'carpet security', by which military camps are stationed across the district, village defence *samitis* (organizations) created, and roadside settlements set up for those who can't return to their villages, for fear of Maoist attacks. Our fact-finding found that the 'carpet security' plan was well in place.

Also pointing to the administration's close and prompt links with the Salwa Judum is an audio CD released by the Maoists to the Chhattisgarh press in August 2005, in which the Superintendent of Police, Bijapur district, is heard stating that Rs 2 lakhs would be given to every village that joins the Salwa Judum. He is also heard announcing rewards for killing Maoists, and incentives for people with knowledge of weapons and land mines.

It is instructive to learn that fostering local resistance is part of the government's all-India policy to fight the Maoists. Annual reports of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for 2003-04 and 2004-05 refer specifically to the "creation" (pp 6), "raising" (pp 46), encouraging, promoting, etc., of "local resistance groups" and the need to harness the "anti-naxal feeling among a section of the villagers" to "counter atrocities committed by naxalite outfits". This supports

our view that the Salwa Judum has become part of conscious state policy. Without the state functionaries' presence at meetings conducted by the Judum, and the state's role in conducting training for local Special Police Officers (SPOs) from among members of the Salwa Judum, fortifying police stations, building roads, maintaining camps, posting the Naga IRB in this region, etc., the Salwa Judum would not have become as powerful as it has. To understand the Salwa Judum, it is essential to look at the administration's financial and other kinds of support for it and the government's long-term anti-Naxal plans (See Chapter 3: "Undeclared War").

## 2. Mode of Operation of the Salwa Judum

*"This is what happened in Bangapal, sir. On 3<sup>rd</sup> August we held a meeting in Munder village. Villagers from Munder ran away to the hills. The Naga Battalion went to the hills, caught them and brought them back, and made them join the Salwa Judum. Those who were unwilling to join were arrested. I don't know everything – I don't know how many people have been made to join and how many arrested."*

– Lakshman Kashyap

Local leader of Salwa Judum, in an interview

No clearer account of what happens during a Salwa Judum operation is available. Those who don't join the Salwa Judum are forcibly brought in by the Salwa Judum members, the police and the Naga IRB. Both our fact-finding and an earlier fact-finding report (November 2005) by the Communist Party of India (CPI), point to a consistent pattern. First, Salwa Judum meetings are organized in villages that are known to support the Maoists. The audience for these meetings are transported by buses hired or procured by the administration. Money for this comes from the central government. Often, various politicians address these meetings. Processions, called '*padyatras*', go from the larger villages where camps are located and are accompanied by the security forces and sometimes, by the Collector or the SP. In the course of these meetings, the houses of *sangham* members or ordinary villag-

ers are burnt and their cattle, pigs, poultry and other household goods looted. Since the houses in these villages are scattered, villagers are often unable to collectively resist these attacks. However, some villages do resist attacks, aided by their own *sangham* members and other Maoists. Sometimes people are killed, but no FIR is ever registered for those killed by the security forces. Maoist killings are however, recorded and the family compensated in many cases (See Appendix II: *Killings by Maoists*). People from defeated villages are then forced to come and live in the camps, of which the administration itself claims to have set up seventeen. They are unable to continue with their agricultural activities and their normal existence, and are expected to go on Salwa Judum processions and meetings in other villages and be part of other attacking parties. Additionally, they are expected to keep an eye on people known to be associated with the Maoists.

The daily lives of thousands of ordinary people in this area have been affected and their livelihoods hit by the Salwa Judum. In some places, such as Mankeli, in order to force the people to join, the Salwa Judum activists have prevented villagers from visiting weekly *haats* to purchase edible oil and salt.

Individual families are sometimes split between the Salwa Judum and those who wish to remain in their villages or align with the Maoists. For instance, one of the men arrested from village Satwas, Barsu Sudru, has a younger brother who is with the Salwa Judum. The *perma* (priest) of Markapal is still in the village – the team was not able to visit the village –, but his wife has come to live in the Bhairamgarh camp. We came across instances (e.g., in Mankeli village) where the Salwa Judum took away young people from their village and their families were unaware of their whereabouts. Since people who live in camps are forced to work as informers against members of their own and neighbouring villages, and participate in attacks against them, villages are becoming increasingly divided. Such divisions are of no small sig-

nificance as either side is continuously engaged in violent attacks and killings.

Sangham members who are arrested are kept in camps next to police stations or chowkis. According to the Collector, there are 1,500 surrendered sangham members in the camps. In February 2006, Mahendra Karma claimed that more than 3,000 sangham members had surrendered (The Hindu; February 6, 2006). The government has announced that it will give rehabilitation grants to these surrendered Maoists. The men whom we met in camps openly stated that those who surrendered or were living in the camps had to keep informing the administration about the activities of the Maoists.

Those who are reluctant to surrender remain in custody. Sukhmati of Taaki Lode village, north of the Indravati river was staying in Bhairamgarh camp because her husband had been locked up in the Bhairamgarh police station, located just behind the camp. This was when other men who lived in the camp were undergoing SPO training. The SHO of the Bhairamgarh police station, however, denied that there were any people locked up in the police station.

### 3. Attacks by Salwa Judum

Unlike the Jan Jagrans of 1990 and 1998, when some mukhijas were mobilised against the Maoists, now the attacks by the Salwa Judum on villages are being carried out with the assistance of the CRPF and the Naga IRB, accompanied by a small contingent of civilians. The Naga IRB, feared by the locals, are in fact known to prefer to conduct their raids by themselves.

While we do not have any independent confirmation of this, there are serious allegations of rapes by security forces and Salwa Judum activists. Maoists have listed 31 cases of rape, of whom six women were also murdered since the Salwa Judum began in June 2005 (*Prabhat*, July-December 2005).

There also are reports that children and old people are being beaten. Villages are forcibly cleared of people and their cattle. In most villages that had been attacked, we found that en-

tire villages were completely empty, except for the occasional old person and women in some cases. We also chanced upon villages where people had finally decided to 'surrender' following repeated attacks by the Salwa Judum and the security forces.

The following are accounts of some attacks on villages by the Salwa Judum.

#### KOTARAPAL VILLAGE

Kotarapal is a large village divided into Joono Kotarapal and Navin Kotarapal, which was a stronghold of the Maoists. Kotarapal was attacked four times by the Salwa Judum. The first was on 18 June 2005, following a Salwa Judum meeting at Matwada (a large village where the weekly market is held) in which about 3,000 people participated. The meeting was addressed, among others, by Mahendra Karma Majhi, mukhiya Korsu Sukulu and Lekam Jilaram. People from villages close to the Indravati such as Sattuva, Bail and Dharma also participated. From the meeting, about a thousand people marched to Kotarapal village, a few kilometers away. Forewarned villagers had already sent the aged and the children out of the village; young men and women stayed back. When the Salwa Judum procession neared the village, it was attacked by the villagers and sangham members. In the melee that ensued, 2 people (Micha Dashru of Bandeparre and Mohan Singh of Naimed) died. Sangham members detained 12 people, of whom 11 were later released. Bhuvneshwar Thakur of Jangla remained in their custody and he was killed on 26 June.

Following the 18 June incident, a Salwa Judum meeting took place in Bijapur, called by Mahendra Karma, *Prabhari mantri* (Minister in-charge of Dantewada district) Kedar Kashyap and Rajendra Pambhoi, MLA. It was here that the Jan Jagran Abhiyan became 'Salwa Judum'. On 1 July, Kotarapal was attacked, for the second time, by a combined force of the District Armed Force and the CRPF, which was led by the Inspector-General, Bastar region, the S.P. Bijapur, as well as Mahendra Karma. Since most of the villagers and sangham members had escaped to the jungle, the attackers looted and

burnt their houses and killed their cattle and livestock. Two elderly peasants, Uikay Sannu and Vanjam Mangu, were killed and an old woman was fatally injured.

The third attack took place on 11 August, in which Lekam Budhram (35) and Aatam Bodhi (30), both sangham members, were killed by Naga IRB soldiers. It appears that in this attack, as well as a fourth attack that followed on 12 September, Naga IRB soldiers took a large number of people to Matwada camp. According to the CPI fact-finding report, 48 youths who were allegedly sangham members were picked up from Kotarapal and made to surrender before Mahendra Karma on 13 October. Since then they have been detained in Bhairamgarh police station. According to some people from the village, whose families had refused to live in the camps, their mukhiya had been pressurizing them to leave the village. Many people had already run away into the forests. The last two families from this village were attacked by the Naga IRB and the men taken away to nearby Jangla and tortured. The village now lies completely empty.

#### MUNDER VILLAGE

Munder village, another known Maoist stronghold, was almost entirely empty when we reached there. Road construction activity, which was on in full swing stopped about half a kilometre before Munder. In the village, we met one very old man who told us that everyone was out working on their fields. We found, strangely, that field after field was being harvested only by women. One woman told us that all men of working age from the village had been taken away by the Salwa Judum to Bangapal, which has a large SPO training camp, and had not returned home.

Munder is eight kilometers from Pharasapal, Mahendra Karma's village. Munder village had been attacked five times. Munder was first looted on 22 July. Pigs, goats and chicken were slaughtered and made a feast of and ten houses were burnt. There were no casualties because the villagers, many of whom are sangham members, were expecting an attack and had escaped to the nearby forest. Three days later, the vil-

lage was again attacked. Three more attacks took place. In the first of these, on 28 August, Boggam Sannu (18 years) was killed. Then a meeting was called on 3 September in Munder by the Salwa Judum. Once again the villagers escaped to the forest. According to Lakshman Kashyap, who was the local organizer of this attack, 10 girls and 11 boys escaped to the forest. This time, the Naga soldiers entered the forest, killed Kadli Kummal (a DAKMS member) and captured the rest, who were asked to join the Salwa Judum. Twelve people who refused were detained without being charged. On 10 September, in yet another attack, Kadli Kamlu (DAKMS member) was killed by Naga soldiers while they were on a patrol in the now-deserted village.

#### MANKELI VILLAGE

Mankeli is a large forest village, with several smaller hamlets off the road between Bijapur and Gangaloor. This village too has been repeatedly attacked. Out of approximately 112 houses in six hamlets, about 60 houses have been burnt by the Salwa Judum and several have been looted.

The Murias of this village originally came from the Pinkonda area. Of all these households, only about 25 households had pattas given by the forest department. The rest cultivated encroached land. The Maoists redistributed land within the village for instance, 5 acres of one man's holding of 25 acres was taken for collective cultivation. The seeds from this farm were given to those who didn't have any seeds for cultivation the following year. The Forest Department officials have not visited this area for two years. People here, like in many other places, complained about the ban on tendu leaves. In fact they said they were warned that their hands would be cut off if they sold tendu leaves, but all in all, they came across as being neither with the Maoists, nor with the Salwa Judum.

The first time the Salwa Judum came, on 15 September, the CRPF set fire to people's homes, including their pigsties. The Salwa Judum took away people's goats, pigs, poultry, and the mahua, tora and grain they had stored. They set

fire to the anganwadi building after looting the mahua, imli and other things that had been stored in it. They also killed 20-year old Modiyam Bhadru (DAKMS member). The villagers buried his body and after this incident, no one wanted to join the Salwa Judum. Expectedly, the village was attacked again. This time, on 25 September, the Naga IRB soldiers came on their own and killed Korsu Suklu and Punem Kanda, both sangham members. The Naga forces also took away some 5-6 boys and one girl, who were forced to work as informers. The village headman was also taken away. The third time, on 3rd October, the Naga soldiers came with two of the boys they had taken away earlier, who identified two sangham members Kosa Aitu and Emla Kova. They were killed while working in their fields.

The villagers were also told by the Salwa Judum, in turn, that since they gave shelter to the Maoists, they would not be allowed to purchase anything from the *haats* (markets). As a result, they could no longer buy even basic necessities like salt from Bijapur. Villagers also said that all the sangham members from Naya *para* (hamlet) had been captured while those in other *paras* of the village were in hiding. In Tong *para*, everyone, not just sangham members had fled. The Maoists broke down a school in this village in which Naga soldiers had spent a night. The villagers said that the Maoists had warned the sangham members that if they joined the Salwa Judum, they would be killed.

The villagers had been sent a letter to join the Salwa Judum in September, and had already displayed some readiness to join the Salwa Judum by attending Salwa Judum meetings at Dhanar (1 October) and Korrepal village (4 October). These two villages had been spared because they had indicated a readiness to join in. When we met the villagers, three attacks by the Salwa Judum on the village had already taken place. They were extremely tense and were deliberating on whether and how to surrender to the police in Bijapur. Three *paras*/ hamlets had resolved to do this and thought that the others would join them. They were hoping that once

they had officially surrendered they would be allowed to live normally. Even as we were in Mankeli, we heard gunshots, whose source we had no way of confirming. In front of us, three terrified men ran for their lives.

What's happened in Mankeli illustrates the manner in which villages with a Maoist mass base are, through coercive means, being annexed to the Salwa Judum campaign. A news report quotes a Dantewada DSP as saying, "Rebels have been fast losing base in their stronghold in Dantewada district. Around 35 senior sangham members surrendered at a function in Mankeli village, 412 km south from state capital. Over 5,000 local people attended the function from 22 villages" (IANS, 28 December 2005), completely hiding the brutal process by which this has been achieved.

Several such accounts such as Mankeli or Munder could be given, but we were unable to visit many villages because of the difficulty we faced in travelling freely in this region. Much of the information we have may be incomplete, simply because the administration keeps no account of the people killed or displaced by the security forces and the Salwa Judum. Nevertheless, we met people from different villages in camps who spoke about their displacement. For instance, in Bhairamgarh camp, we were told by the people of Halur village that they had been brought there by the Naga soldiers. Maoist documents claim that many attacks of the Salwa Judum and the security forces have gone unrecorded. For instance, village Ariyal, a forest village which is a Maoist stronghold, where tensions had been brewing for long, was attacked on 2 September. The mukhiya of Ariyal, Dorru Mangu, who had joined the Salwa Judum led the attack in which ten sangham members, including a 12-year old *bal* sangham member were detained, made to stand in a row and shot dead. Amongst those who were killed, were relatives of the mukhiya himself (*Prabhat*, July-December 2005).

A CPI fact-finding team had visited several villages, where they were told of the Salwa Judum's looting, burning and killing. In village

Mundbedi, the CRPF had come accompanied by 50 Salwa Judum members. They took 40 kg rice from the house of Nandu, along with chickens, pigs, goat and whatever they could lay their hands on. The Salwa Judum burnt four of Kavvad village's 36 houses, and cooked within the village some of the things they looted 20 kg of rice, 20 chickens and one pig. The villagers hid in the forests. While leaving, the Salwa Judum burnt 2 quintals of *kosra* and 40 kg of rice. After emerging from Kavvad village, the Salwa Judum attacked villages Pidiya and Andri. Thirty houses were burnt in village Pidiya, and Santu, son of Aitu, was shot dead by the CRPF. In village Burji, the Salwa Judum forces came on 30 September and killed and ate 6 pigs and 6 chickens. They also took away 10 goats, 30 vessels, mahua, and grain. Lemon and sulphur trees were cut and one cycle was broken. People from 60-70 houses ran away and the Salwa Judum looted Rs 10,000 from their houses. In village Mallur, a thousand-strong Salwa Judum procession came in October along with the CRPF. They beat up 17 youths badly and took them away, forcing them to join the Salwa Judum. Mallur, Palnar and Tamodi villages also suffered burning and looting. In Palnar, 30 people were forcibly taken away, of whom Sukhram, son of Godi, was killed. In the first week of August, in Manjhimindari village, a combined force of Salwa Judum and the police burnt all the houses as well as pigsties and chicken coops. All the pigs, goats and chickens were killed and eaten. The village was empty because when the attack began, the villagers ran away to the forests to escape the attack but didn't have time to take all their belongings. Our team also met some villagers from these villages such as Burji, Pusnar, Palnar and Mallur in Gangaloor camp. Half the villages had come to live in camps while the other half was hiding in the jungles. Once in the camp, they are unable to do other work or return to cultivate their fields. They were also expected to turn up for Salwa Judum processions whenever they were called in other words, they were captive.

#### 4. CPI (Maoist)'s Violence

The Salwa Judum has led to an increasing spiral of violence, in which both sides are now fighting an almost full-fledged war. This is in contrast to two people who are listed as killed in 2004, according to official documents.

During our fact-finding, we heard that in some cases, the Maoists had killed people simply for attending Salwa Judum meetings. One man from Palnar told us at Gangaloor camp that after a Salwa Judum meeting on 24 August in Gangaloor, the Maoists called a meeting in Palnar the next day and told people not to join the Salwa Judum, and noted the names of ten people, including him, who were taking others to join the Salwa Judum. He explained to the Maoists that he had taken people to avoid having the village burnt down. He was however threatened by people present from Saonar village for joining the Salwa Judum and as a result, had left the village out of fear. On 4 September, some Maoists came to Palnar and told people they had to leave their houses and camp in the hills to escape attacks by the Salwa Judum. (Sure enough, some days later on 21 September the Salwa Judum and forces went to attack Palnar and found the whole village empty.) At 8 pm that night of 4 September, the sarpanch, the village patel and 7 SC boys were asked about their relationship with the Gangaloor Majhi and told that if they joined the Salwa Judum, they would not be allowed to come back and live in the village. The sarpanch, patel and two others were killed, while the remaining SC boys escaped to Gangaloor.

Later, some of the people from Palnar who had camped in the hills came to Gangaloor. Of the 350 households in Palnar, about 50 went to Gangaloor (250 households here, according to the man from Palnar we spoke to, are with the Maoists). They had left the Maoist camp on the pretext that they wanted to come back to the village to restock grain. Following this, their houses were raided and the school and hospital in Palnar destroyed by the Maoists.

In Gongla, the 70-year old former sarpanch Gaita Budu took people from the village to a

Salwa Judum meeting in Gangaloor on 21 September. The following night, Maoists came to his house and killed him. After this incident, the whole village (110 households, 600 people) went to Gangaloor. In Kotarapal village on 18 June, Bhuvneshwar Thakur of Jangla was first detained for being a Salwa Judum organiser and then killed by sangham members while he was already in their custody (See Kotarapal account, earlier).

We talked to people in Bhairamgarh camp, where there were about 2,000 people from around 25 villages. Some ordinary people who attended Salwa Judum meetings from curiosity or a desire to avoid having their villages attacked by Salwa Judum have also come into camps either out of fear of Maoists or specifically after being threatened by them. Individual families and villages are sometimes split between those joining the Salwa Judum and those who wish to remain in their villages or align with the Maoists. For instance, while half the residents of Markapal village chose to stay on in the village, the other half had fled to the camp after sangham members threatened the men for attending a Salwa Judum meeting in Bhairamgarh. Those who had come to the camp had sold their mahua and left with whatever they had.

Several people in Bhairamgarh camp and elsewhere told us of instances of threats and beatings when people chose not to ally with the Maoists. Pramod Kumar and Lakmibai from Maramatta village told us that the Maoists took away 30 quintals of their last crop along with Rs 15,000. He also said that his entire village was threatened. Those who did not become sangham members or those who were sympathetic to the government's policies were driven away. Villagers from Dharma village said they had heard that the Maoists would beat those who had come to camps, and were therefore scared of returning. The Maoists have since put out notices asking people in the camps to come back to their villages, assuring them that they will not be harmed

Besides fear of Maoist violence, some issues of coercion came up during our interviews.

Some people from Gongla village complained that they were forced to give contributions to the Maoists in the form of one day's tendu leaf collection and one day's pruning wages, as well as rice contributions. Phulmati, whom we met in Jagdalpur Hospital (see Phulmati's account below in the section Non-registration of FIRs) told us that she was forcibly taken away by Maoists to harvest grain elsewhere and her aged father who protested was beaten.

People from Gongla said that no panchayat work was allowed in their area. The educated youth are unhappy with the Maoist opposition to government programmes. They want government programmes to be implemented as these are a source of employment. Not being able to participate in elections is also an issue for some people.

There has been an intensification of the conflict – by both sides – in recent weeks. CPI (Maoist) squads have begun attacking and killing security forces stationed in Dantewada and elements that they perceive are in alliance with these forces. On 28 February, at least 26 persons were killed when Maoists used a landmine to blow up a truck near Konta, which was carrying people returning from a Salwa Judum meeting. In yet another landmine blast, 14 people were killed in Kanker district on 24 March 2006 when Maoists attacked a jeep in which a group of tribals and local tradesmen were returning home from the local market. The Maoists targeted the private vehicle, mistaking it to be a police jeep. In the second incident the Maoists have apologized for the landmine blasts.

The actual scale of Maoist violence tends to be exaggerated by the administration, helped by an ideologically bent and largely pliant media, to suggest the illegitimacy of the movement. A point repeated to us by everyone, including many Salwa Judum activists, was that the Maoist movement had a mass base among the poor for whom some very real victories have been won, especially against a corrupt officialdom. It is however a fact that the escalation in violence has had certain unfortunate fall outs. In an area where medical and health facilities are already

lacking, schools and hospitals are either rendered dysfunctional by their use as bases by the security forces, or are consequently destroyed by the Maoists. In the prevailing warlike situation the Maoists have used coercion and fear for purposes of intimidation, and shown a general intolerance of dissent. More disturbingly, the escalation in violence has resulted in a number of killings by the Maoists when the victims were in their custody and hence isolated and unarmed. The maintenance of democratic practices by people's movements are particularly important in furthering a progressively democratic society.

## 5. Displacement and Life in Camps

The government has set up several camps in Dantewada for all those villagers who have had to vacate their homes, as a consequence of the Salwa Judum campaign. We found that these camps house five groups of people: those sarpanches, their families and allies who have a stake in working with the administration and who had decided to live in the camps because of Maoist threats; ordinary villagers who have been forced by the Salwa Judum to leave their villages and live in the camps; those who had fled their homes because of real incidents of or rumours about Maoist retaliatory violence; the SPOs and in some cases, their families; and lastly, surrendered sangham members and their families.

All these camps have been set up near police stations. According to the Collector, Dantewada, there are 17 such camps, with approximately 15,000 people living in them in Bhairamgarh and Bijapur tehsils alone. In one camp in Bhairamgarh alone that we visited, there were 2,000 people from around 25 villages in the camp. Some of these consisted of entire villages such as Belnar, Bangoli, Sattuwa, while in other cases a few families from a village had come in.

It is difficult to overstate the extent to which the daily lives of thousands of people have been turned upside down and their livelihoods destroyed due to the ongoing evacuation of vil-

lages. In many cases people were made to leave their villages soon after sowing and crops now lie rotting and uncut in the fields. People living in camps that were relatively close to their villages trekked all the way everyday to work on their fields.

Those who are under SPO training, however, spend their days being trained in the camp. They had been promised a monthly allowance of Rs 1,500. When people already are at the margins of poverty and then have their livelihoods hit, this becomes a despicable way the government is inducing people to take up arms in its offensive against the Maoists. However, recent reports indicate payments to SPO's have not been regular leading to some dissatisfaction.

Many others have started working on earthworks under the Food for Work programme of the central government. According to women from Markapal village we spoke to, the men got Rs 50 for doing coolie work; other reports suggest that people are getting Rs 55–60 a day for Block level or PWD work and Rs 60 for forest work. The roads that locals are working on lead to police stations off the highway. Locals are not employed in the construction of the national highway NH 16, as the work was given to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), which prefers to bring in workers from outside.

Most people the team met said that they were surviving on whatever they brought with them initially or on meagre government rations. At Meertur, one of the largest camps, we were told by the Meertur mukhiya that food for the camp's population was provided for free by the government. People living in other camps told us that the government had provided free rations only up to August or September. By the time we visited these camps, only old people still got some rice a month, dal, potatoes and onions free.

Living conditions in the camps are abysmal. We saw blanket distribution ceremonies in Ganggaloor and Meertur camps, but little else to suggest that the government was interested in the welfare of the people staying in them. There is no proper shelter. People live in tents erected

by the administration, or in little shacks made of plastic sheets and sticks that they have put up themselves. The tents were bare as people have few or no possessions. Sanitation and health conditions in the camps are very poor. Though we did see two health workers in Bhairamgarh camp, reports of Medicin Sans Frontiers suggest that health conditions in the camps are at crises levels.

Some of the details of the Bhairamgarh camp highlighted by the CPI's open letter to the Prime Minister underline this situation: The camp is located close to the police station and the Bhairamgarh block headquarters. As many as 107 people from Sattuva village had been staying in a 5x16 metre space (less than 900 sq. feet) for three months. The administration gave no help in setting up the tents and people had to get sticks from the forest to build their tents. All the relief work was being done under the supervision of the administration and not through the local panchayat. People from camps were every now and then forced by the police to attend Salwa Judum rallies.

One thing that bound people across camps was their anxiety as to whether they would ever be able to return home. Many people in camps would alternate between fear of Salwa Judum attacks and fear of Maoists while telling us about their reasons for being there. Many are there because of Salwa Judum attacks. There also prevails, among others, a vague fear of Maoist retaliation against those who join the Salwa Judum, willingly or under pressure, and then return to their villages. This fear is fuelled by the administration and Salwa Judum members, thus maintaining the pressure on people to keep living in camps, so much so that all outsiders not in uniform, like the fact-finding team, are viewed with suspicion.

This is not all. The administration plans to make some of these camps permanent. (When we posed this question to the home secretary of Chhattisgarh he felt that while some may be able to return to their villages many may not be able to until such time as Maoists are not wiped out from the area.) About 200 people have been al-

lotted land for houses along the highway in Kutru. This is part of the government's plan to create roadside villages, attached to police stations. While some of these villages may house people unable to return to their homes because of fear of Maoist retaliation the plan seems to be much wider in scope. Clearly, the government's agenda seems to be to empty out the villages, attack the Maoist mass base, and deny Maoists the food, shelter and other material support that enables the movement to function and grow. Salwa Judum leader Lakshman Kashyap admitted to having no idea about how people in these roadside villages would survive.

## **6. Non-registration of FIRs and Atrocities by the Security Forces**

Combing operations and attacks on villages by the Naga IRB, CRPF and the Salwa Judum leave many people dead and injured ( see *Appendix I: People Killed in Attacks by Salwa Judum/ Security Forces*). Almost all these killings are unrecorded. Apart from killings, the administration is arresting a number of people suspected of being Maoists or Maoist sympathisers. Most of these detentions are completely illegal and unrecorded. This is not to mention the ill treatment meted out to locals by the security forces stationed there. Whether it was a Naga soldier we spoke to or a CRPF officer, the sense of their superiority over the people they were meant to protect was overwhelming and shameful. The people at the end of such treatment are those with absolutely no access to, and perhaps no knowledge of, legal aid.

In a Jagdalpur hospital, we met two young girls - referred to as 'Naxalites' by the nurses - recovering from serious bullet injuries. One of them, Sambatti from Wanger village, refused to speak to us as she was either too scared or in too much pain to speak. The other, Phulmati, a resident of Belnar village, told us she had not been in touch with her family since she was arrested. She said she had been forcibly taken by some Maoists to harvest abandoned fields in Karkawada, near Nelasnar on the main highway just before Bhairamgarh. There were twenty of

them - including some members of a Maoist squad - working on the fields when police found them and opened fire at them. The Maoists returned fire. This led to the deaths of three boys, including two from Kodenaar village, who died of police bullets. We found no record of the three boys' deaths anywhere. We heard these boys have been buried in the grounds of Geedum police station. Whether this is true or not, this shows that the police are expected to commit the worst excesses.

Sonia, an anganwadi worker in village Kamaloor was beaten, stripped and dragged by her hair and detained by some Naga IRB soldiers on 9 March. She is among the very few who have spoken up against the security forces. We could not meet her, but the mainstream media has covered her story.

In Mankeli village, villagers said that they dared not go to the police station to file FIRs against the security forces for the five deaths that occurred there (see Mankeli account above), fearing that they would be forced to live in camps and because they felt that the police had no interest in filing FIRs against their own crimes! There was no post mortem of those killed, the bodies were left in the village by the police and the last rites were performed by the villagers. This was reported to us in Kotarapal as well. The police only recorded crimes committed *by* the Maoists, and the district administration only maintained records of compensation paid to the victims *of* Maoist violence. A senior correspondent in Raipur told us that there is a government directive to keep silent over any killing by the Naga IRB. We could not confirm this, but the facts on the ground do indicate that non-registration of crimes by Salwa Judum and the security forces across Dantewada is so routine that this amounts to giving them *carte blanche*. Such selective recording of crimes also makes it appear that the only killings and violence are those committed by Maoists. This enables the government to fuel ill-feeling against them and create an opinion in favor of a crack-down.

In addition, such non-registration of FIRs in cases of killings by security forces denies compensation to the families of those killed. In an audio CD released by the Maoists to the Chhattisgarh press in August 2005, the SP Bijapur is heard complaining that the Jangla police station had foolishly allowed the deaths of two of the 9 'Maoists' killed by the police in Kotarapal village to be incorrectly registered as killings by Maoists. This, he said, would allow the dead people's relatives to claim compensation, which in turn would be used to post bail for Naxalite sympathisers in jail.

On the night of 30 November, while returning to Dantewada, we saw five people being loaded onto a truck. Villagers told us that the Maoist Abujmarh secretary had been arrested. We followed them to the Geedam police station where we met the detainees, which included two old and infirm people, a one-eyed man, and a young girl. They all said that they happened to be in Sattuva village, from where most people had already fled to camps. The river was in flood, one said, and they had been left behind because no more boats were available (boats had been stopped by the security forces for two days, as we discovered when we tried to cross the Indravati to reach Markapal village). He had an old mother, wife and three small children whom he had to take across. The girl said she had been grazing cattle when she was picked up. Another old man, a resident of Jhadka village, said he had come to stay with his brother in Sattuva and cultivate his fields there. They said they had been sitting in a house discussing how to go across the river when they were detained.

The police claimed that these five had been arrested while possessing tiffin bombs the earlier evening (29 November). There was no FIR showing the charges against them, let alone any arrest warrant. When we again visited Geedum police station on 1 December, the detainees complained that they had been beaten in custody. When we asked the station-in-charge whether an FIR had been filed, he said that the 'operation' was still on, and they were waiting for it to conclude to register the FIR. This appears to be

## **Box 6**

### **Case of Kamlesh Paikra: Threat to Independent Journalists**

Kamlesh Paikra, 27, is a local journalist from Cherpal village, who till recently was working as Bijapur correspondent of *Hindsatt* (a daily published from Jagdalpur), when he fell foul of the administration. Since he had been regularly reporting about the naxals in Dantewada, the SP Bijapur began to pressurize him about his naxal connections, and in April 2005, proposed that he reveal his sources to the police in complete violation of accepted journalistic practice the world over. When Kamlesh refused, the SP warned him of dire consequences.

In September 2005, Salwa Judum gangs burnt down approximately 50 houses in Mankeli village, near Bijapur. There were unconfirmed reports of several deaths. Following Kamlesh's reporting of the incident (*Hindsatt*, 8 September), a CPI team visited Mankeli. After this, Kamlesh's harassment by the administration and Salwa Judum took a serious turn.

In addition to being a journalist, Kamlesh ran a fair price shop in Bijapur. He used to buy rice from the Food Corporation of India at the BPL rate of Rs 5.70 a kilo and sell it at the 'saptahik bazaar' for Rs. 6.15. For this, he had to renew a permit every week. After his 8 Sept news report, first his quota of rice for the weekly bazaar was refused him. Then his permit was cancelled. No reason was given. Despite approaching the Food Inspector, the Assistant Collector, and the police, the permit was not renewed. His movement around Bijapur was also restricted. He was not allowed to visit the villages affected by Salwa Judum and the camps where displaced people are living.

A PUCL team visited Dantewada between 26- 29 November. They asked Kamlesh to accompany them; in spite of their presence, he was prevented from visiting the effected villages and camps. He was directly blamed for inviting both the CPI and the PUCL teams. Then they began to target his family. His elder brother Tarkeshwar Singh was a 'prabhari' in Cherpal High School. The police claimed that naxal literature and uniforms were recovered from Tarkeshwar's house and jailed him on 1 Dec 2005. He was later charged in a bomb explosion case that happened in Padera village in which 1 jawan was injured. Tarkeshwar was released on bail two weeks later, but the case is still on.

After further harassment, and fearing for his life, Kamlesh moved to Dantewada town in the third week of December with his wife and parents. He does not have a job nor his fair price shop.. This seems to be the price for being a honest journalist. Kamlesh Paikra is a member of the Chhattisgarh Shramjivi Patrakar Sangh. They submitted an application on his behalf to the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, the Governor and the leader of the opposition. Nothing came of it. He is still afraid for his life.

Kamlesh is not the only one. Another journalist, Lakshman Singh Kusram, also from Bijapur, reported on the molestation of some adivasi women by the CRPF jawans in Kutru. Now the police has reached his house, and have been threatening him.

Shockingly, this violation of journalistic freedom is explicitly part of the administration's policy. The workplan of the Dantewada Collector maintains that there is need to institute restrictions on the media. This document argues that "media coverage of Naxalite attacks makes it look as if they are gaining the upper hand. By reporting what the Naxalites are doing as against reporting how ordinary people [read salwa Judum] are responding, the media indirectly gives the Naxalites a voice." It advocates controls on the media, beginning with a meeting between the administration and all news publishers/media channels reminding them of their accountability to the people.

the norm being followed in Dantewada. The DSP Dantewada also told us that FIRs showing arrests are recorded only when an operation concluded. When he was reminded that such delays in registering FIRs amounted to flouting the binding directive of the Supreme Court (in the D.K. Basu judgment) to record arrest within 24 hours of detention, he claimed, shockingly, that in the midst of an 'undeclared war' such delays are not unusual.

## 7. The Breakdown of Civil Administration

The civil administration is expected to be the interface between the people and the government. It is supposed to, apart from enforcing the policies and programmes of the government, act as a grievance redressal mechanism for ordinary people. It has not done that nor provided anything that can be seen as development for ordinary people.

And due to the intensified conflict in recent times between the Maoists and the Salwa Judum, the police, which in theory is meant to be the civil institution for the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of rule of law, has become part of the war-like operations here, a euphemism for para-military formations. The situation we found in Dantewada has serious and frightening consequences for the formal functioning of democracy because the civil administration now operates on the whims of the Salwa Judum activists and the security forces, against common people.

Although the District Collector assured us that our team members were free to move anywhere, it was apparent that on the highway (NH 16) the situation was different. While the CRPF or the Naga Battalion or the District Armed Police manned some checkpoints, it was even more disconcerting to note that Salwa Judum activists were manning their own checkpoints in full view of the government forces. They carried out searches of our vehicle and demanded to know the purpose of our visit. Salwa Judum members man checkpoints on roads, search people's belongings and control the flow of transport. We heard reports of how they had earlier been harassing bus drivers and had looted shops in Bi-

japur. The police simply look on at the checkpoints where Salwa Judum activists operate. While we were in Bijapur, Salwa Judum leaders kept walking into the SDM's house and shouting at him for letting us visit the villages. The Salwa Judum made every effort to see that we did not go to Mankeli village. They also did not let us take local journalist Kamlesh Paikra with us (see *Box 6: The Case of Kamlesh Paikra*).

Also, the civilian population is being provided arms and training by the government, an alarming militarization of civil society. At all the camps we visited between Geedam and Bijapur, namely Matwada, Bhairamgarh, Meertur, Nelasnar, Bijapur and Gangaloor, young men were undergoing training to become special police officers (SPOs). The SPOs, according to the District Collector and the station-in-charges at Bhairamgarh and at Meertur, comprised either former sangham members or young adivasi men related to the Salwa Judum activists. It is not clear whether these SPOs will be provided guns or not (the District Collector is clearly opposed to it), but their training involves learning to handle a gun. The District Collector told us that village defence committees (VDCs) are being set up and that some of these young men will become SPOs attached to VDCs.

As mentioned, SPOs under training have been promised Rs 1,500 per month, a honorarium set by central government for the SPOs as part of its counter-insurgency operations. We observed that some SPOs have been armed with guns, while bows and arrows have been distributed on a large scale to villages that join the Salwa Judum. The administration claims that these are the people's traditional weapons, but the Collector's work plan makes it clear that distributing bows and arrow is part of the administration's plans (*Collector's Work Plan*). All this calls into question the very notion of a civil administration; an administration that has failed to be accountable to the people is covering up its failures by co-opting common people.

The local civil authority in Dantewada is unable to assert itself before the Salwa Judum activists. The government has consciously al-

lowed the local civilian authority to be weakened at the hands of the Salwa Judum leadership. When the SDM of Bijapur did not assert his authority despite appearing visibly uncomfortable by the unruly behaviour of the Salwa Judum activists who entered his house at will, we realized that he exercised little control over them. In contrast, at Meertur, the local thana-in-charge sent a word to the village mukhia (a Salwa Judum member) to collect people so that we could talk to them! Clearly, police and official state forces work closely with the Salwa Judum forces. That the police officers brazenly explain that whatever is taking place is because of the state of “undeclared war” not only contributes to the breakdown of civil administration but is also conducive to creating a climate of impunity.

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## CHAPTER THREE

# Undeclared War

## The Militarisation of Adivasi Society

It is as though a new chain of command exists on the ground in Dantewada. This is based on a policy that considers groups such as the Salwa Judum of critical importance to fight the Maoists, and in which the security forces call the shots. There is evidence to show that the degree of lawlessness that operates in Dantewada district is a direct result of an all-India policy to fight “Naxalism”. Annual reports of the Ministry of Home Affairs provide some insights into what passes for official policy. Read together with a work proposal prepared by the district collector of Dantewada the logic of the prevailing lawlessness becomes evident.

In chapter 1, we had briefly narrated some attempts in the past to promote a ‘Jan Jagran Abhiyans’. Some of the dramatis personae remain much the same, such as Mahendra Karma. What is new is the overt involvement of the district administration this time. The presence

of the district collector in most Salwa Judum meetings, the fact that Salwa Judum camps are set up next to police stations, that the training of SPOs takes place in close proximity to the camps their family members live in these camps, and food and work is offered to them under various government schemes makes this an unequal but symbiotic relationship between the administration and the Salwa Judum. In keeping with this, the administration is even turning a blind eye to the criminal pasts of some of the Salwa Judum leadership, such as Mahendra Karma, Ajay Singh, Vikram Mandavi etc, who have been implicated in corruption and even murder. In an interview given to us, Lakshman Kashyap in fact confirmed the rampant corruption among the local leadership. However, they form part of the section which is “anti-naxal” and hence their chequered past is of little consequence for the administration.

## **Box 7**

### **Excerpts from Home Ministry's Annual Report 2004-05**

"3.122 Keeping in view the overall dimension of naxalism in nine States, a high level coordination Centre headed by the Union Home Secretary with Chief Secretaries and DsGP of naxalite affected States meets regularly and reviews and coordinates steps taken by the States to check naxal activities (p. 45)..

"3.123 The important decisions taken by the Coordinate Centre include ... long-term deployment of Central Police Forces, inclusion of more districts and items under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, modernisation and upgradation of State Police forces and fortification of Police Stations for anti naxalite operations, ... effective implementation of various developmental schemes in the affected areas and creation of Local Resistance Groups (p. 45).

"3.129 Nineteen IRBns. [Indian Reserve Battalions] have so far been sanctioned to the states affected by naxalism (Andhra Pradesh,-5, Bihar-2, Orissa-2,Chhattisgarh-2,Maharashtra-2, West Bengal-2, Jharkhand-2 and Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh-1 each). The state governments are being advised to expedite raising of IR Bns. (p. 47).

"3.134 To enable the States to undertake more effective anti-naxalite action, the Ministry of Home Affairs [MHA] has a scheme since April 1996 namely, Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme. ... Presently, 76 districts in nine states are covered and the Ministry reimburses 75-100% of the expenditure incurred on security related items, such as ex-gratia grant paid to families of the victims of naxal violence, providing logistics and camp facilities to the CPFs, amount spent on special training given to State Police personnel, provision of insurance for State Police personnel involved in anti-naxalite operations, *a lump sum grant to Village Defence Committees (VDCs)/ Nagarik Suraksha Samitis (NSSs) for security related expenditure, honorarium to the Special Police Officers (SPOs)*, lump sum amount per naxalite surrenderee, expenditure incurred on publicity material, and hiring of vehicles including helicopters, weapons or communications equipment etc. Up to February 2005, a sum of Rs 125.56 cr under the SRE scheme has been reimbursed to the affected State Governments (pp. 47-48).

"3.137 The MHA took special initiative in getting the badly naxal affected districts (55) included under the Backward Districts Initiative component of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana scheme of Planning Commission which provides Rs 15 crore per year per district for a period of 3 years to fill in the critical gaps in physical and social infrastructure. This works out to Rs 2,475 crore, which will help accelerate the pace of development in the naxal affected districts. While 35 districts were covered in 2003-04, the remaining 20 are being taken up in the current fiscal year" (p. 49).

"3.138 [Additionally], for construction of roads in naxal-affected areas, the Ministry of Rural Development has given a special allocation of Rs 37.50 crore per annum for naxal -affected States under the PMGSY" (p. 49).

*Note: Paragraph numbers and page numbers refer to the original document.*

Moreover, when this patronage is read together with the central government's advocacy of:

(a) "creation", "promotion", "encouragement" of "local resistance groups"; (b) its funding between 75-100% of the expenditure incurred by states fighting this war against the naxalites, and (c) the formation of VDCs, recruiting of SPOs etc, it becomes evident that this is part of an all-India policy to fight the so-called "menace" of "naxalism" militarily, financed and coordinated by the central government. So much so that even posters and pamphlets put up along the highway between Geedam to Bijapur are funded by the central government under reimbursement of "expenditure incurred on publicity material" (See *Box 7: Ministry of Home Affairs [MHA], Annual Report 2004-05*).

The Dantewada district collector's work proposal (see *Box 8: Excerpts from the Collector's Work Proposal*) also reveals the symbiotic relationship between the administration and the Salwa Judum. According to the proposal, Dantewada is an "entirely naxalite affected district", and people from "200 villages" (the number of villages had gone up to 400 by the time he spoke to us in end-November 2005) have started "a people's awareness campaign against them". But the Collector also says "it is imperative that the campaign receive administrative support" and identifies three areas, namely "a common leader"; "adequate security"; and provision for "transport" as well as "food and a place to stay". It appears that this is being undertaken in so far as Mahendra Karma is projected as the leader, and the district administration is providing transportation, food and camps to put up people. While this can be glossed over by the officials as relief and rehabilitation of displaced people what cannot be ignored is the other aspect of this policy. This concerns the formation of Village Defence Committees (VDCs) and training of Special Police Officers (SPOs).

VDCs and SPOs have been a part of the counter-insurgency policy followed by the Indian government for many years. These have been tried out and fine-tuned over the years in

various places as far apart as the North-East, Jammu & Kashmir, and Jharkhand (where they are called Nagarik Suraksha Samitis). These are funded through lump sum grants provided by the MHA every year. In Chhattisgarh these are coming up now and forms part of the government's answer to the sanghams, the basic units of the Maoists at the village level. The Collector's work proposal states that the "real strength [of Maoists] lies in sangham membership who are from among the villagers....who help in operations of the naxalites". And insists that "it is not enough to kill naxalites but more important to crush and destroy their system". Constituting VDCs comprising "village head person, panch, sarpanch as well as young men" (in opposition to the sanghams) is considered vital to the success and consolidation of the war against the Maoists. Not only is physical annihilation of naxalites considered necessary, it is "only when people see naxalites fleeing or getting killed" will they side with the administration.

The manner in which VDCs are constituted shows their counter-insurgency roots. Information about a village's population, the number of families, and distance from the police station is first collected. Then the entire area is divided into sectors of 8-10 villages. Security forces are deployed in these, with each sector having a VDC as well. Each VDC in a cluster will have between 40-50 members. The VDCs' composition overlaps with that of the Salwa Judum in so far as the VDCs comprise "village headperson, panch, sarpanch as well as young men". Surrendered sangham members and young men and women from villages get trained to become SPOs. These SPOs are vital to this plan because they will be located in the villages and "used for regular searches". In other words, the official policy seeks to build up the fighting capability of the administration by creating a network of informants and combatants from the village-level upwards. Salwa Judum is an intrinsic part of this because this enables the administration to: (a) establish its authority in Maoist strongholds, in villages to which entry was hitherto difficult; (b) identify whom to enlist/recruit in

**Box 8**

**Excerpts from the District Collector's  
Work Proposal for Salwa Judum, 2005**

*"Common Man's Awareness Raising Campaign against Naxalites, 2005.  
Work Plan to Make the Campaign Successful; District South Bastar, Dantewada (Chhattisgarh)"*

"Dantewada district is an entirely naxalite-affected district. The district has 11 development blocks. Currently, in two out of 11 blocks, namely Bhairamgarh and Bijapur people from 200 villages falling within Kutru, Farsegarh, Bedre, Jangla, Bijapur, Bhairamgarh and Nelsnar police stations, fed up with naxalite excesses, have started a people's awareness campaign against them. This campaign has now spread to 60 villages from Bade Tumnar and Barsur area of Geedam block and people from these areas too are present at meetings. In the coming days this campaign will spread to three other development blocs namely Usur, Bhopalpatnam and Konta"(p. 2).

"Naxalites prohibited all their (villagers) activities and tyrannise them on a daily basis. They demand that villagers hand over young boys and girls to join their dalam. Refusal carries threat to their lives. Those working hard are left with ten sacks of paddy and rest is forcibly taken away. They do not let any development work take place, oppose all administrative work thus progress of villages is halted, and basic amenities cannot reach villages, people do not get jobs, all this has resulted in the problem of starvation"(p. 3).

"So far, the campaign has held meetings in thirty places and in six places rallies have been held. In the meetings people from 30-35 villages meet on an agreed date at a designated place"(p. 4).

"Considering the village by village conditions operating it is imperative that the campaign receive administrative support. ... Firstly, the campaign needs a common leader who can direct the campaign in a planned way. Secondly, adequate security must be provided to the participants so that they can overcome pressure from the naxalites. And thirdly, during the campaign, villagers must be provided transport as and when needed, as well as food and a place to stay at government expense"(p. 5).

"(C)ollecting information about village population, number of families, distance from police station to the village"; "of constituting village defense committees which should comprise village headperson, panch, sarpanch as well as young men..."(p. 9).

"It is proposed that young men and women from the villages be made Special Police Officers. Depending upon the size of the village 5-10 SPOs would be needed. These SPOs will receive Rs 1,500 per month as honorarium"(pp. 9-10).

"Apart from imparting training to the villagers, providing them with traditional weapons such as bow and arrow, *farsa*, axe, stick, *ballam*, etc is extremely important. Although such weapons are with most villagers but to encourage them people should either be given arrows or iron to prepare arrows. While villagers are asking for guns or license to use them, this is not advisable. Even if licensed guns are provided they can be looted by naxalites or the licensee could be killed to get his gun ... Besides, an armed person can later on join a naxalite organization which will enhance the strength of the naxalites. Therefore, the villagers' request [for guns] is not worth accepting and they should only be provided traditional weapons"(pp. 10-11).

*continued on next page*

*continued from last page*

“If we look minutely at police work in naxalite affected areas, it is more defensive and less aggressive. Now the time has come when the police ... have to become more aggressive. Although sometimes because of reasons beyond one’s control some excesses do take place and some innocents do get affected. But keeping in mind the overall context of major operations, it is important that the higher-ups remain silent” (pp. 13). ... Only when people see naxalites fleeing or getting killed will they side with the administration. Therefore, this policy must be pursued strictly. And for this police officers should be given a target”(pp. 14). ...

(A)ppointing, temporarily, a DIG for Bijapur police district who can oversee the progress of the campaign on a daily basis...”(pp 16).

The work plan argues for widening the definition of “naxalite” for the purpose of rehabilitation of surrendered naxalites, to include “sangam members”. The current definition restricts it to those in uniform, carrying arms or a member of a dalam. The “real strength [of Maoists] lies in sangam membership who are from among the villagers. ... Villagers are common people who side with whoever is powerful and follow whatever is demanded of them. Sangam membes are the actual workers of the naxalites who help in operations of the naxalites. ... To end the problem of naxalites, it is not enough to kill naxalites but more important to crush and destroy their system operating at the village level”(pp. 15–16).

The work plan proposes to divide the area into sectors comprising 8-10 villages (pp17). These clusters of villages will have deployment of security forces. It suggests a company for each cluster. And each cluster will contain village defence committees and the newly enlisted SPOs would be used for regular searches (pp 18).

The collector also argues that “media coverage of Naxalite attacks makes it look as if they are gaining the upper hand. By reporting what Naxalites are doing as against reporting how ordinary people (read Salwa Judum) are responding, the media indirectly gives the Naxalites a voice”. He advocates controls on the media, beginning with a meeting between the administration and all news publishers/media channels reminding them of their accountability to the people (p. 25).

*Note: Page numbers refer to the original document*

their war against the Maoists and finally (c) to gather information vital for fighting the ‘war’.

Besides, with 400 villages already “combed” (by November) according to the Commandant of the IRB in Dantewada, the administration proposes to recruit 5-10 SPOs for each village (totalling 2,000-4,000 SPOs for the district). Further, each sector of 8-10 villages will have a deployment of a company of roughly 100 police personnel. Each VDC in a sector will have SPOs attached to them. The total known strength of paramilitary forces provided by the central government (and other states) as of now is 7,000 and is likely to increase as there is a demand to deploy more troops. Thus a total force strength of

roughly 13-16,000 is currently deployed to fight naxalism in a district with a total population of merely 7.2 lakhs (2001 census); in other words, a forces to people ratio of 1:45! And this is not just any police, but armed police. (In comparison, the total police to people ratio for an already highly policed Delhi is 1:179. That too, 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of this police force in Delhi are civil police.)

Alongside this, other developments are taking pace in Dantewada. The District Armed Police Force is being upgraded. Existing police stations are being reinforced, and new camps and police stations being set up all across the district. While Dantewada and Bijapur police districts have 37 police stations, 33 new police sta-

tions are being set up. According to the MHA annual report 2004-05, apart from the District Force (DF), two India Reserve Battalions have been sanctioned for Chhattisgarh. There are currently already five battalions of CRPF, one Naga IRB and at least one battalion of the Gujarat Armed Police. If Lakshman Kashyap is to be believed, then the Salwa Judum has been requesting a few more battalions of the Naga IRB. The Home Minister of Chhattisgarh had informed the state assembly on 16 May 2005 that his government had sought five battalions of armed police from Gujarat and Punjab. The Chhattisgarh Home Secretary too has stated that the administration has requested a few more battalions of the Naga armed police. (See 'Naxalwatch' weblog, 23 January 2006).

Even this by no means completes the picture. Chhattisgarh now boasts of a new Jungle Warfare Training School at Kanker, headed by an army Brigadier. The GOC-in-C of the army's Southern Command is now involved in regular meetings with the administration in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh to monitor the progress of anti-naxal operations. Helicopters and aerial surveillance have been mentioned in official statements. There is talk of deploying helicopter gun ships and/or using them for ferrying combat troops.

Just to give an idea of the extent of deployment of troops in Dantewada, the 23 kms of road from Bijapur to Gangaloor has three CRPF camps and two of the Naga IRBs. Each camp comprises between 20-50 jawans. Squads of five

CRPF jawans, armed with three assault rifles, one 2-inch mortar launcher and a stengun, cycle up and down the road between their camps. At Meertur, the police station appeared to be a fortified area with barbed wire fences and a watch tower, and with security force personnel carrying light machine guns, possessing mortar launchers etc.. This conforms to providing "carpet security" cover in this area.

Even road building has a security angle more than anything else. Work on the highway (NH 16) between Jagdalpur and Nizamabad (via Bhopalpatnam) is being carried out by the Border Roads Organization (BRO), the road construction wing of the Army. As the name suggests, it's meant to build and maintain roads in border areas of the country. Its involvement in "difficult and militancy prone areas of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh" ([www.bro.nic.in](http://www.bro.nic.in)) reveals the mindset of the administration which perceives the situation in Bastar – a region with no international border – to be one which requires the services of the army's road construction agency.

To advocate the physical annihilation of Maoists and giving police officers a "target" to fulfil and/ or to seek to destroy "their system operating at the village level" is to pursue and promote blood-letting. The militarization of society through the formation of VDCs and SPOs and arming them indicates that what is going on in Bastar is not remotely a "peace campaign" but the government is waging a war on its own people.

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The team's observations on the fact-finding can be briefly summed up as follows:

1. Several villages are virtually deserted. The few we came across said they come to the villages during the day to harvest the paddy crop and return to their camps as evening falls. Those who are now kept in camps some distance from their homes can't even do this. Many people are accommodated in houses built close to the highway and not too far from a police station. While some are being offered jobs on daily wages for construction work/schemes of the government and others are being trained to become SPOs, nothing is said about their land and fields left behind in their villages.

2. There is a pattern in evicting people from their villages. Sometimes the entire village is evacuated; in other instances, only a few families are moved out. A meeting is announced to be held in a targeted village. On that date, a Salwa Judum crowd accompanied by security forces descends on the village and asks people to come to the camp and sangham members to surrender. If villagers show reluctance, they are attacked, belongings looted, houses burnt and some people either lynched or killed by soldiers. Thus if 'guerillas' are like fish in the water then evacuation/forced migration of some or all families seems to be to drain the water or to force people out from precisely those villages where naxalites enjoyed support, in order to deny them sustenance.

3. Across Dantewada and Bijapur police districts and especially all along the national highway, security forces and Salwa Judum members man checkpoints. The Salwa Judum activists question people, check their belongings and even enjoy the power to stop a person from traveling in this area.

4. Police stations do not maintain records of or investigate crimes committed by the DF, Naga IRB, CRPF and Salwa Judum members, fostering a situation of complete impunity..

5. While 'development' is said to be the flip side of the security approach towards naxalites, 'development' in this area is nothing more than an appendage of security. Road building in Dantewada, both on the highway and in interior areas, repairing culverts and small bridges, etc is geared towards easy accessibility for security forces into forest areas.

6. The administration is undertaking a systematic militarization of Dantewada through the arming of the village population, setting up of VDCs, training SPOs, and financing such operations as part of the central government's anti-Naxal policy, of which the Salwa Judum is an integral part.

This kind of militarization of sections of village society in the form of the Salwa Judum on the one hand, and the brutal attacks on Maoist strongholds on the other, make for an incendiary situation. The atmosphere reeks of coercion. In such a climate anyone who does not accept the official point of view is automatically suspect and is regarded as being pro-naxal, and therefore, an enemy who brooks no respect as a fellow citizen. The District Collector does not deny that Maoists have been successful in organising local villagers, and yet people's political choices are being completely negated. Sanghams, states the Collector's document, have to be "crushed and destroyed" as they form the strength of the Maoists at the village level.

There is the conspicuous absence of any attempt by the government to understand the context of what are the genuine problems of the people of the region, and why and how Maoists took roots here. The reference in the district collector's work proposal to the pathetic conditions of the tribals who are "uneducated", "extremely poor", "lack basic facilities", amounts to an indictment of successive governments, that have willfully remained oblivious of this for six decades! It is only when the Maoists entered this area and began to organize the tribals that the administration awoke from its stupor. The little

development work by the government has been prompted by or caused by umpteen struggles: against forest officials, strikes for better price for plucking tendu leaf, wages under government schemes, etc.

A confrontation under the prevailing conditions is to exploit the resulting divide within tribal society in such a way that the already privileged sections of the tribal and settler communities are arrayed against fellow tribals who are sympathetic towards Maoists. By promoting through Salwa Judum precisely that section of tribal and non-tribal society which benefited from the debilitating conditions imposed on the tribals, the ordinary villagers are once again being pushed back into a situation of being manipulated and exploited. By arming one section of society against another, all the government is doing is legitimising the need for resorting to violence as a means of resolving political differences.

We have referred in the report to the fact that, unlike in the past, the Salwa Judum is part of a war-making exercise of which officials in Dantewada openly speak. Why is the war taking place *now*? Besides the political motivation of defeating the Maoists, there appears to be another increasingly pressing reason. Bastar comprises some of the largest untapped mineral resources in the country and recent months and years has witnessed an intense opening out of mineral resources to domestic and foreign capital in Chhattisgarh, MP and Orissa. The *Industrial Policy (2004-09)* announced by the Chhattisgarh government also seeks to invite investments to exploit the mineral and other resources of Bastar as part of its development strategy. It has signed a number of MOUs with large private companies, a number of which are located in Dantewada district. With Orissa and Jharkhand opening up its tribal areas to attract huge private investments there is additional pressure

to open up Bastar. Targeting the Maoists through the Salwa Judum is also targeting some of the potential resistance to this pattern of forced 'development', of which most poor locals have always been only the victims.

In this sense, the conflict in Dantewada gets pushed to a higher plane where the war against the Maoists also ties in with the struggle over ownership and control over land, water, forests and mineral wealth. The vagueness of an-all India policy hiding behind "security" and "development" reveals itself as nothing but a crude struggle for occupying tribal land. Chhattisgarh has been the scene in the past of several important struggles of the tribals against projects that sought to usurp control over their land, forest and mineral wealth unmindful of their interests. Under these circumstances, we fear that what the central and state governments are preparing to prosecute in Bastar is a bloody, brutal and a long war.

The maintenance of democratic practices by people's movements is particularly important in furthering a progressively democratic society. However, the Maoist movement, with significant numbers of people backing it in this region, cannot be dealt with as a law-and-order situation through what is essentially a counter-insurgency approach. To resolve this civil war-like situation, the issues of the life and livelihoods of the ordinary public need to be addressed seriously, not undermined even further as the government is doing now. The government ought to create a situation in which progressive demilitarization can be sought and conflict replaced by political dialogue. The importance of dialogue – which ought to incorporate a way to address people's root problems – cannot be overstressed in this situation in which people's lives, social, economic and political structures, their cultures, and indeed their very survival is at stake.

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## **WE DEMAND**

1. That the government stop using people as a shield and creating armed Village Defence Committees as part of its anti-naxal operations;
2. That paramilitary forces be withdrawn from the area and the civil administration be restored;
3. That all killings by the state, the Salwa Judum and the Maoists be stopped.
4. That sincere dialogue with the Maoists be initiated, and a political resolution to the situation be found;
5. That FIRs be registered for all crimes committed by the Salwa Judum and security forces and the culprits be prosecuted;
6. That the government and the CPI (Maoist) ensure that people return to their homes in peace and security;
7. That people be assisted in regaining their livelihoods in their villages and camps be dismantled.

| <b>Annexure I: Killings by the Salwa Judum / Security forces</b> |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Village</b>   | <b>Date</b>                                  | <b>Killed</b>   | <b>Detail</b>  |
| *Hiril<br>(* also told to CPI)                                   | 01.09.05                                     | Karam Pandu (45)  | Killed by Naga IRB after burning houses  |
| Dumri Paralnar   | 11.08.05<br>1-2.9.05                         | Aatam Boda<br>Tamo / Lamo Sukhram (20)<br>Maadvi Kopaal (35)<br>Budhu (35)<br>Unknown (30)  | DAKMS<br>DAKMS   |
| Paralnaar  | 01.10.05<br>11.10.05                         | Markam Channu<br>Baarse Somu  | Sangham member<br>ABS President  |
| Aakwa  | 01.09.05                                     | Name Unknown (12)   |  |
| Pullum / Pulladi   | 1.09.05                                      | Kadli Payyaal (45)<br>Emla Rekaal (50)  |  |
| Aalvoor  | 31.08.05                                     | Madkaam Kummaal (40)  | Sangham member   |
| Hindri   | 1.09.05<br>3.09.05                           | Tellam Bugru (55)<br>Madvi Messa (35)   | Sangham member   |
| Pottem / Polem   | 05.09.05                                     | Lekham Lakhmu (50)<br>Madvi Somu / Somara (35)<br>Aalam Mahadev (30)<br>Modium Boddaal  | Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member   |
| Karremarka   | 16.08.05                                     | Lamo/Tamo Rama (35)   | Committee president  |
| Jangla   | 27.08.05<br><br>12.09.05                     | Lekham Lakku (35)<br>Maadvi Paaklu (35)<br>name unknown (18)<br>Four unnamed<br>Two unnamed   | Baal Sangham member<br>Sangham secretary<br>Sangham member   |
| Gongla   | 02.09.05<br>20.09.05                         | Poddaam Sonu<br>Sandeep Gullu   | DAKMS secretary  |
| Kotarapal  | 01.07.05<br>12.09.05<br>11.08.05 (?)         | Uike Sannu (50)<br>Vanjam Mangu/Manda (55)<br>Lekam Budhram (35)<br>Aatam Bodi (30)<br>Three unnamed  | Sangham member   |
| Munder   | 28.08.05<br>03.09.05<br>10.09.05<br>15.09.05 | Boggam Sannu (18)<br>Kadli Kummal<br>Kadli Kamlu<br>Kalmu Badru   | Sangham member<br>DAKMS<br>DAKMS<br>DAKMS  |
| Ariyaal / Iriyaal  | 02.09.05                                     | Kadli Chinna (40)<br>Kadli Sannu (35)<br>Kadli Kamlu (35)<br>Kadli Aaylu (40)<br>Kadli Raamaal (45)<br>Kadli Kummaal (12)<br>Uji Masaram (40)<br>Uji Jayraam (40)<br>Emla Shukku (40)<br>Kadli Badru (35) | Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Baal Sangham<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member<br>Sangham member |

|  |                                      |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Dorum  | 01.09.05                             | Tamo Kotlal (40)<br>His wife (36)  |  |
| Dokham   | 01.09.05                             | Bogmi Kislal (40)<br>Bogmi Sobari (36)   |  |
| Mankeli  | 15.09.05<br>25.09.05<br><br>03.10.05 | Modium Badhru (20)<br><br>Korsa Shuklu<br>Punem Kanda<br>Emla Kova<br>Kosa Aaytu (45-50)   | DAKMS<br>SJ meeting held here. 30-40<br>houses burnt 5 women and<br>2 children taken by police<br>Sangham member<br><br>GPC secretary<br>Sangam member   |
| Pulgatta   | 02.09.05                             | Santo<br>Korsa Salo (20)   | KMS Committee  |
| Mookavelli   | 05.10.05<br><br>08.10.05             | Vedinje Nangi<br>Vedinje Malli   | The two wives of Vedinje Chinnal<br>shot while tending to field. One<br>year child also shot at. One<br>woman was pregnant. She was<br>killed after removing her foetus.<br>10 houses burnt. Village looted. |
| Belnar   | June 05                              | Bokkaal<br>Gulaab  |  |
| Pooslakka  | July 05                              |  | Somaru   |
| Markapaal  | July 05                              |  | Manku  |
| Kiringed   |                                      | Budhram  |  |
| Karkawada  |                                      | Buggur   |  |
| Pallewaya  | 22.09.05                             | Madvi Laxman   |  |
| Dimdi  | 01.09.05                             | Mellam Dagur   | Father of Dalam member   |
| Pusnaar  | 12.09.05                             | Poddaam Charri   | Sangham member   |
| Kondam   | 03.09.05                             | Vesa Joga  | Committee member   |
| Pedda Korma  | 01.10.05                             | Mudiami Shukko<br>Kursaam Lekhten  | KAMS pres. on RPC<br>KAMS CS<br>Killed by Nagas (also told to CPI)   |
| Etepaar  | 05.10.05                             | Madkam Channi  | Sangham member   |
| Pabeda   | 13.09.05                             | Aapka Seenu  | Militia  |
| Gornaam  | 15.09.05                             | Sodi Kosa  | Militia  |
| Punwaar  | 01.09.05                             | Punem Budhu  | Militia  |
| Paamra   | 02.09.05                             | Paaklu (Aasa Channu)   |  |
| Mosla  | 09.10.05                             | Emla Lakshu<br>Dugga Guruji (Teacher)  | Range Committee  |
| Bomra Keshlulul  | 11.07.05                             | Madvi Reeja  |  |
| Rajug  | 1-7.10.05                            | Five women and one man   | SJ and police raped and killed the 5<br>women.   |
| Kutru  |                                      | Salwa Judum getting people to this camp, where they are tortured and<br>killed. Dead bodies thrown nearby or in Indravati river. Four headless bodies<br>have been thus found. |  |
| <i>(Source: Press Statements of CPI [Maoist] Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, issued on 10<br/>October, and 20 November, 2005.)</i> |                                      |  |  |

**Annexure-II****Killings by Maoists during the Salwa Judum Operation**

*This is the list given to us by the Collector, Dantewada; According to the Collector, each of these deceased's families have been compensated with a sum of Rs 1 lakh.*

| <b>Name of Deceased</b> | <b>Village</b> | <b>Tehsil</b> | <b>Date of Incident</b> |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Miccha Dishru           | Bandeparre     | Bhopalpatnam  | 19/6/05                 |
| Mohan Singh             | Naimed         | Bijapur       | 19/6/05                 |
| Bhuvneshwar Thakur      | Jangla         | Bijapur       | 26/6/05                 |
| Kotadu                  | Rekhavaya      | Bijapur       | 28/6/05                 |
| Potti                   | Dunga          | Bijapur       | 29/6/05                 |
| Murami                  | Nendur         | Bijapur       | 29/6/05                 |
| Sodi Barre              | Chintagupha    | Konta         | 5/7/05                  |
| Vijay Giri              | Bijapur        | Bijapur       | 7/7/05                  |
| Kohrama Kanglu          | Kotarapal      | Bijapur       | 11/7/05                 |
| Evda Vacham             | Karkeli        | Bijapur       | 15/7/05                 |
| Vacham Gunda            | Karkeli        | Bijapur       | 15/7/05                 |
| Arki Gangaram           | Uskapatnam     | Bijapur       | 16/7/05                 |
| Telam Pijja             | Uskapatnam     | Bijapur       | 16/7/05                 |
| Todsam Ganpat           | Ambeli         | Bijapur       | 16/7/05                 |
| Kishore Enka            | Ambeli         | Bijapur       | 16/7/05                 |
| Budhram                 | Ambeli         | Bijapur       | 16/7/05                 |
| Badrinath               | Aalnaar        | Dantewada     | 18/7/05                 |
| Vacham Chaitu           | Jaramarka      | Bijapur       | 19/7/05                 |
| Satish                  | Tumla          | Bijapur       | 21/7/05                 |
| Sai                     | Pondum         | Bijapur       | 23/7/05                 |
| Betti Lalu              | Karremarka     | Bijapur       | 27/7/05                 |
| Kohrami Ramsingh        | Karremarka     | Bijapur       | 27/7/05                 |
| Hemla Lakhu             | Bodlui         | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Poonam Lakhu            | Kothrapara     | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Kadti Aaytu             | Pharasmundal   | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Poonem Mangalram        | Pinconda       | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Kadti Mangu             | Pharasmundal   | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Kadti Koya              | Kodli          | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Barsa Nehru             | Pondum         | Bijapur       | 28/7/05                 |
| Karam Kanhaiya          | Arjunli        | Bhopalpatnam  | 5/8/05                  |
| Podiyami Dhandhu        | Bodenar        | Bijapur       | 6/8/05                  |
| Sukku Karma             | Pharaspal      | Dantewada     | 9/8/05                  |
| Sukhram                 | Pharaspal      | Dantewada     | 9/8/05                  |

|                   |              |           |          |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Pandru            | Jangla       | Bijapur   | 14/8/05  |
| Ramu              | Jangla       | Bijapur   | 14/8/05  |
| Jaggu Kadiyam     | Chidrapal    | Bijapur   | 23/8/05  |
| Rajendra          | Manjhiguda   | Bijapur   | 3/9/05   |
| Shrinath          | Pusnar       | Bijapur   | 22/9/05  |
| Potam Budhu       | Gongla       | Bijapur   | 22/9/05  |
| Suryapal          | Gongla       | Bijapur   | 22/9/05  |
| Mahadev Manjhi    | Padiharpara  | Bijapur   | 29/9/05  |
| Madvi Jagra       | Padiharpara  | Bijapur   | 29/9/05  |
| Anthas Kispota    | Padiharpara  | Bijapur   | 29/9/05  |
| Darshils Minjh    | Padiharpara  | Bijapur   | 29/9/05  |
| Hemla Pandu       | Gangaloor    | Bijapur   | 29/9/05  |
| Anil              | Kodoli       | Bijapur   | 29/9/05  |
| Mudiyam Budhram   | Saagwahi     | Bijapur   | 1/10/05  |
| Paspul Linga      | Cherpal      | Bijapur   | 3/10/05  |
| Poyami Budhu      | Ambeli       | Bijapur   | 14/10/05 |
| Mehtar            | Chihka       | Bijapur   | 16/10/05 |
| Hapka Mangu       | Ghumra       | Bijapur   | 22/10/05 |
| Hemla Sannu       | Gangaloor    | Bijapur   | 23/10/05 |
| Hemla Dashrath    | Bhogamguda   | Bijapur   | 23/10/05 |
| Jumdi Lakshmaiyya | Cherpal      | Bijapur   | 28/10/05 |
| Kodiyam Lakhmu    | Koyaeetpal   | Bijapur   | 3/11/05  |
| Pujari Budhram    | Gongla       | Bijapur   | 3/11/05  |
| Hapka Aaytu       | Hallur       | Bijapur   | 5/11/05  |
| Munnaram Vetti    | Gumalnaar    | Dantewada | 6/11/05  |
| Beko Chaitu       | Badepotenaar | Bijapur   | 6/11/05  |
| Kumar Ella        | Padedda      | Bijapur   | 6/11/05  |
| Samlu             | Padedda      | Bijapur   | 10/10/05 |
| Hemla Budhram     | Gangaloor    | Bijapur   | 10/10/05 |
| Purushum Mangu    | Pedapal      | Bijapur   | 17/11/05 |
| Fagnu             | Ketulnaar    | Bijapur   | 22/11/05 |

1

*From the People proceeds the power of the State.*

–But where does it proceed to?

Yes, where is it proceeding to?

There's some place it's proceeding to.

The policeman proceeds through the station gate.

–But where does he proceed to?

etc.

2

Look, there's the whole lot on the march.

–But where are they marching to?

Yes, where are they marching to?

There's some place they are marching to.

They wheel through the gate and under the arch.

–But where are they heeling to?

etc.

3

The power of the State turns right about.

Something is in the air.

–What can be in the air?

There's something in the air.

The power of the state gives a piercing shout

And yells: Get moving there!

–But moving why and where?

It yells: Get moving there!

4

There's something standing in a crowd

Something which queries that.

Why should it query that?

What cheek to query that!

The State just shoots-for that's allowed-

And something falls down flat.

What was it fell down flat?

What made it fall like that?

5

The power of the State sees something spill.

Something lies in the shit.

What's lying in the shit?

Something's lying in the shit.

There's something lying deadly still

–The People, why, that's it!

Can that really be it?

Yes, that is really it.

**-Bertolt Brecht**