

PRESS RELEASE-#India- Don't allow Govt to ram through land acquisition bill

CAMPAIGN FOR SURVIVAL AND DIGNITY

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To:

Smt. **Meira Kumar**

Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha, New Delhi

Sub: The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill – request that the same may be sent to a **Standing Committee** as it has been extensively modified after being tabled in Parliament, depriving the public and in particular affected communities of any possibility of comment

Dear Madam,

We are a national platform of adivasi and forest dwellers' organisations from ten **States**. We write to bring to your notice that the government is seeking to ensure the swift passage of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill and we understand that it may attempt to do so in the next day or two. In this context we wish to draw the following to your attention:

- The government reportedly intends to move more than 150 amendments to the original Bill.
- As per the amendments tabled in Parliament in December, these include many areas which were never addressed by either the Standing Committee's report or the original Bill.
- In particular, **we are dismayed to find that the amendments contain several provisions that adversely affect the rights of **Scheduled Tribes** and forest dwellers, and in particular permit the destruction of community forests on**

the payment of arbitrary cash compensation as well as undermining the powers of local bodies under the Forest Rights Act and the PESA Act. Many of these provisions were not in the original Bill and were certainly not recommended by the Standing Committee. Further, they also violate international law.

In light of the fact that the **tribals and forest dwellers of this country have been the worst-hit victims of decades of illegal, brutal and inhuman displacement at the hands of the state, basic respect for their democratic rights demands that this Bill be referred to a parliamentary committee for a full review. The government cannot be permitted to use its majority to simply ram through legislations while making a mockery of parliamentary procedures and public consultation.** This would be a tremendous disservice to the people of this country and in particular an injustice to those who have already suffered as a result of the callousness of the state.

We trust you will not permit this government to bypass democracy in order to perpetrate one more historical injustice against the tribals and forest dwellers of this country.

Sincerely,

(On behalf of the Convening Collective)