

PRESS RELEASE

ADIVASI ADHIKAR SANGHARSH SAMMELAN: JOINT CONVENTION AGAINST THE NDA GOVERNMENT'S ATTACK ON THE RIGHTS OF TRIBALS

Organisations representing tribal communities from across India have joined hands to give a call for a national convention during the forthcoming Parliament session against the NDA government's systematic attack on the rights of Adivasis. At a recent joint meeting held in the Capital, the organisations expressed concern that, at such a time, when every institution and regulation that protects the resource rights of tribals and other forest dwellers is being undercut, the voice of adivasis has not been heard in the critiques of policy making over the last year.

Some of the recent examples of the anti-tribal policies are: the Mines and Minerals Act has been amended to greatly favour private capital over the rights of communities; the Forest Rights Act is being grossly violated, even as the government attempts to dilute it; the Land Acquisition Act has been amended by ordinance to ease the grabbing of land for corporates; and other environmental or land use regulation that exist are being diluted or mangled. The protections embodied in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution are being ignored by every government agency. Meanwhile, those who resist such assaults are being targeted. Tribal areas across the country are facing repression. Thousands of tribals are incarcerated on false charges and denied justice.

Even as this is occurring, Central support has been slashed for schemes that benefit tribals. As per rules, the Tribal Sub Plan is to receive 8.6% of the total budget, but has been allocated less than half of this amount. Schemes to support tribal youth and students have been eliminated, cut or converted into cash transfers. Employment that fits with the rights and requirements of tribal youth is being ignored, even as existing employment opportunities are being reduced and a huge backlog remains. Basic legal and constitutional protections for tribal women are being thrown to the winds. Neither this nor any other government has complied with the basic legal and constitutional requirement that development and welfare schemes in tribal areas should be undertaken through a democratic process controlled by the communities themselves.

It is imperative that a joint and united voice be heard from all those struggling against this criminal loot of the most oppressed people of our country. With this goal in mind, the undersigned organisations have decided to convene an **Adivasi Adhikar Sangharsh Sammelan** on August 5th, 2015, at Mavlankar Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi which will highlight these issues and take forward the joint struggle for an end to the attack on adivasi rights and resources and for alternate policies.

Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch

Adivasi Mahasabha

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