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India stifles all inquiry into Maoist/Naxal movements



The Government of India has warned what it calls “sympathisers” of the Maoists / Naxalites in the country that they face action under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**. The state’s warning that it can take such action simply means that the expectation of inquiry and dialogue into the causes underlying Maoist / Naxalite programmes is a misplaced one.

[The statement by the Ministry of Home Affairs](#) is titled ‘Government Asks People to Be Vigilant of CPI (Maoist) Propaganda’ (Thursday, May 06, 2010):

“It has come to the notice of the Government that some Maoist leaders have been directly contacting certain NGOs/intellectuals to propagate their ideology and persuade them to take steps as would provide support to the CPI (Maoist) ideology.

“It is brought to the notice of the general public that under Section 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, any person who commits the offence of supporting such a terrorist organization with inter alia intention to further the activities of such terrorist organizations would be liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years or with fine or with both. General public are informed to be extremely vigilant of the propaganda of CPI (Maoist) and not unwittingly become a victim of such propaganda.”

“This is being issued in public interest so that the general public are aware that the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and all its formations and front organizations are terrorist organizations whose sole aim is armed overthrow of the Indian State and that they have no place in India’s

parliamentary democracy. CPI (Maoist) continues to kill innocent civilians including tribals in cold blood and destroy crucial infrastructure like roads, culverts, school buildings, gram panchayat buildings, etc. so as to prevent development from reaching these under-developed areas.”

[The Times of India](#): “The dire warning, which marks a significant escalation and carries the risk of confrontation with influential rights activists, also represents a rebuff to the post-Dantewada clamour for a relook at the use of force against Naxals. This comes at a time when several such activists have been named in the FIR along with Kobad Ghandy for helping the alleged Naxalite leader in waging war against the state. A senior Delhi Police officer said there was ‘growing evidence’ that a section of the intelligentsia was helping the Naxal leaders flee states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and West Bengal to set up base in colonies of east and south Delhi. ‘Besides this, these individuals are also helping various frontal organizations of the Maoists to raise funds,’ said the official.”

[The Telegraph](#): “Human rights activists immediately saw in the warning a precursor to a large-scale countrywide crackdown on civil liberties outfits, writers, lawyers, academics and journalists. The move is exceptional in that such a public warning through a media note has probably never been made even against fundamentalist outfits.”
Lawyer Prashant Bhushan saw in the warning ‘a highly unusual step that clearly shows the intention of the government to try and browbeat and terrorise human rights activists and other intellectuals who have been questioning the motives and actions of the government in dealing with tribals and dissidents in the guise of an ant-Maoist drive’.”

[Hindustan Times](#): “Civil society representatives raising voices in favour of Naxals may find themselves in legal tangles as the Home Ministry has warned of action against them under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.”

[Indian Express](#): “Stating that it had noticed some Maoist leaders had been directly contacting certain NGOs and intellectuals to propagate their ideology and persuade them to take steps to provide support to the CPI(Maoist) ideology, the Centre on Thursday said anybody supporting Maoists would be liable for punishment under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.”

[The Hindu](#): “The Centre has warned civil society groups, non-governmental organisations, intellectuals and the general public to refrain from supporting the CPI(Maoist) ideology as it will attract action under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.”

Activist Gautam Navlakha of the **Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR)** has said that the warning from the government harks back to the years of the **Emergency**. “In two months, it is going to be 35 years of the Emergency (imposed by Indira Gandhi from 1975-1977) and UPA-II [United Progressive Alliance] is de facto recreating the conditions of that period,” he said. “Instead of exploring more sensible and imaginative policies to deal with the Maoists and the tribals who live in the same zones where huge mining deals have been signed, the government is taking recourse to authoritarian and dictatorial measures,” he said.

Navlakha has written an account in the [Economic and Political Weekly](#) of a visit to Bastar he made with the Swedish writer Jan Myrdal.

“I am convinced that this is one rebellion which will test the resilience of the Indian state as never before. Precisely because it is a rebellion in which people are fighting to save their land, forests, water and minerals from being grabbed and they are convinced that they have an alternative vision.

“The Maoists are certainly not saints or sinners, but as mortals they show what an unflinching commitment to bringing about social transformation actually means and how far even limited resources can go to help people. Here was an alternative development model being put into practice by the Maoists in the course of which many aspects of social relations have been democratised quite significantly.” (‘Days and nights in the Maoist heartland’, April 17, 2010 vol xlv no 16, EPW.)

<http://makanaka.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/the-indian-state-stifles-all-inquiry-into-maoistnaxal-movements/>