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Many police officers are reluctant to work in Jangalmahal

No, it is not in fear of the Maoists, but being unable to cope with the pressure from the government. They do not want to be a party to the state-sponsored terrorism. They cannot support the random and mindless killing of poor tribal people by branding them as 'Maoists'. Some are forced to take transfer. Some of the junior officers had to resign as they could not follow the order of seniors.

One officer who has worked in the tribal belt of Bengal for some time said – it is more to please the ruling party that some of the police officers are unnecessarily torturing the jungle people. And as a consequence of this torture many of the common men have joined the 'Maoist' group.

Another sub-inspector of police who joined duty at *Jangalmahal* in 2002 and is posted at another *thana* [precinct] at present recounts his tale of horror. "Our camp was at an old mansion in Belpahari. One day while returning from our usual round through an almost deserted village, we saw an old man on the verandah of a hut. On the instruction of our senior inspector three or four of us picked up this old man and literally carried him to our van. Some of the policemen even kicked him in the stomach calling him '*Janajuddho*' (People's war group). But I know the old man was doing nothing but boiling some leaves in a vessel. All of us knew that this bent old man could never be a militant terrorist. But he was anyway sent to the lock up as a man of the people's war group."

Soon after the explosion in the Jhitka jungle, the then additional Police Superintendent Sumeet Chaturvedi abruptly took a transfer from West Midnapur to Delhi. In his two years' tenure in the state before he was posted at the jungle, he was under constant pressure. This young officer had witnessed how the CPM party was using the police force to keep the tribal people under pressure and was branding them as 'Maoists'. These more humane officers had seen what enormous atrocities could be meted out to the starving or ill-fed poor people by the 'loyal' policemen always trying to please the ruling party. Before taking transfers, these men had expressed their painful tales of woe to their near ones.

Parveen Kumar, who was the Superintendent of police in W. Midnapur earlier for a long time was well-known for his strategies to counter Maoist insurgencies. He was close to the leaders of the ruling party and managed to get favorable postings. This Parveen Kumar on his return as the DIG [Deputy Inspector General of the police], Midnapur range supposedly had some difference of opinion with the government's decisions. In June this year, soon after leading the attack by joint forces in Lalgah, he abruptly took a transfer from this state. It is heard that he does not intend to return to W. Bengal before 2013-2014....

...Another police officer who has worked many years in the tribal area blamed the police atrocities along with lack of development in the region for the rise of today's 'Maoists'.

Many junior officers faced the wrath of seniors as they refused to follow their unethical orders. Additional police superintendent Sisir Das had to resign under such circumstances when he could not bear the pressure of unjustifiable instructions by his seniors. Most of these orders were not written down. So whenever there were any untoward incidents as results of these verbal orders, the junior had to bear the brunt, said one such officer.

All the trouble started when there was a small blast near the Kolaichondi canal on the chief minister's convoy on 2 November, 2008. The police started severe action in Chhotopelia village. They picked up school boys from this village 70 kilometers away from the incident, tortured women and humiliated teachers. A

veteran officer posted in *Jangalmahal* argues [that] there are many who had been wrongly arrested as 'Maoists' and detained, who later really turned into Maoists.

Who is responsible for this?

Many police personnel who kept quiet in fear of seniors for so long are now expressing their opinion. They are agreeing that as in Lalgarh, even in Nandigram they had to launch severe action from the beginning only to please the CPM. ...

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