

# Petition Against Military Offensive in Central India

Date: November 16, 2009

Subject: Petition Against Military Offensive in Central India

Please read and sign the below petition at

[http://aidindia.org/main/index.php?option=com\\_facileforms&Itemid=431](http://aidindia.org/main/index.php?option=com_facileforms&Itemid=431)

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## Petition Against Military Offensive in Central India

Dear Mr. Chidambaram, Hon'ble Home Minister of India

cc. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India

cc. Mrs. Sonia Gandhi

We the undersigned are alarmed at the Government's adoption of a military solution to the conflict in the tribal belts of central India. Operation Green Hunt will exact a toll in terms of innocent human lives and a long-lasting hatred in the hearts and minds of those who survive. We strongly believe that what is being called the war against Maoists will result in a war against *adivasis*, even if that is not the intention, because military operations will directly impact all the *adivasis* in the geographical area.

We stand against violence of all forms, structural and physical, from all sides, whether it is from Maoists, the State, corporate powers or independent citizens and groups, or dispossession, loss of livelihoods and endemic malnutrition. Instead of a paradigm of meaningful and participatory development, India's recent decades of growth has exacerbated disparities in society. Surely, your government realizes that such uneven development will only intensify the cycle of violence without any promise of real or lasting benefits for the poorest. There is ample evidence around the world, and in history to suggest that uneven development and State-sponsored violence leads to a breakdown of democracy - to failed States and "puppet governments." In Chhattisgarh too, the State-backed Salwa Judum has only added fuel to the ongoing conflict.

We strongly urge you to hold talks with civil society groups that work very closely with the people to understand ground realities better. These groups can provide valuable advice for long lasting peace and justice in the region and should not be dismissed or penalized as "Maoist sympathizers".

Vanvasi Chetna Ashram (VCA), a Gandhian organization has been working in southern Chhattisgarh for the last two decades on issues of health, education and empowerment of the *adivasis*. Led by Mr. Himanshu Kumar, VCA has courageously worked for the rehabilitation of villagers made refugees on their own lands by the atrocities of Salwa Judum and by the cyclical violence resulting from it. We urge you to hold talks with Mr. Himanshu Kumar to understand and adopt this alternate paradigm of development.

In the interest of innocent tribal families living in the forests who will surely come in harm's way through the planned Operation Green Hunt, we demand that:

1. The government retract military operations in Central India with immediate effect.
2. Hold meaningful conversations with *adivasi* representatives and development workers such as Mr. Himanshu Kumar.
3. Disband Salwa Judum with immediate effect and end covert militarization through arming of civilians as Special Police Officers.
4. Support rehabilitation of refugees and ensure responsible governance so people can return to their homes, pursue their livelihoods and democratically participate in the development process.
5. Initiate action against government functionaries who have perpetrated or promoted extrajudicial violence.

Sincerely,

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