

Appeal for Immediate release of Deme Oram and 21 villagers of Bondamunda

This is to urgently appeal for immediate release of Deme Oram and 21 other people who are still under arrest since yesterday and their location is still unknown. Yesterday (28th March) Deme Oram and 200 displaced villagers of Bondamunda were initially arrested while they were sitting on an indefinite dharna since 16th of March demanding justice and implementation of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) recommendations. They were taken to some reserved ground and later released everyone except these 22 people who have been taken to an unknown location. The police are not revealing any further details.

Deme Oram had apprehended such police action and had apprised the situation with the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and had also contacted Jual Oram who is the Member of Parliament from Sundargarh constituency. He had also shared a solidarity appeal with the civil society

groups to take actions.

This is to urge each one of you to please call the Additional Superintendent of Police Shri Bikram Keshari Bhoi (who confirmed the arrest of these 22 people today but did not reveal any further details) and write an email to the Superintendent of Police, Shri Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo. The contact details are mentioned below. Please also write to the Governor, the CM, NCST Chairperson and others whose details are mentioned at the end of the earlier appeal. It will be extremely helpful if you could mobilise your media contacts too.

Shri Bikram Keshari Bhoi

Additional Superintendent of Police, Rourkela
Mobile- 9439288212

Shri Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo

Superintendent of Police, Rourkela
E-mail: sprkl.orpol@nic.in

Below is the appeal from Deme Oram that he shared few days back:

This is to urgently appeal for your solidarity to more than 700 Land Displaced Adivasis of in and around Bondamunda and members of Anchalika Surakshya Committee, Bondamunda are sitting on an indefinite dharna since 16th of March 2022 protesting any further displacement and demanding justice and implementation of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) recommendations.



Figure 2 Displaced villagers on an indefinite dharna



Figure 1 200 displaced villagers who were arrested yesterday

There is an attempt by the Odisha Government and Railway Authority to threaten the Adivasis with deployment of heavy police force to forcibly take possession of our lands. The land of about 4,000 acres in and around Bondamunda was purportedly acquired in the years 1956-64 for

setting up of Marshalling yard Bondamunda Project under the provisions of Land Acquisition Act 1894, the process of acquisition and the applicability of Act is in question. The Government is not in possession of any details of the land that was not in its possession since then.

A large contingent of police force has been deployed at the construction site at Kukuda gate Bisra in Sundergarh district of Odisha. The Sundargarh district is declared as Scheduled Areas. The displaced Adivasis are demanding for the long due compensation and no further displacement.

The matter was raised at the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and the Hon'ble Commission after making a field visit in 2018 on the issue of Land Acquisition for Marshalling yard, Bondamunda, issued an order that clearly stated, "in many villages, the LDPs (Land Displaced People) are living in pathetic conditions where no facilities have been provided to them. Following is the 2018 recommendations from NCST:

- i) Implementation of the Govt. of Odisha circular (No- AG-40/2005/49777/CSR &DM) dated 26.11.2008 that has provision for allocation of 5 acres of unirrigated land and 2 acres of irrigated land to each of the displaced Adivasi families.
- ii) Adivasi persons settled on acquired land must not be evicted until they have received adequate resettlement and rehabilitation as required under law.
- iii) The Railway Recruitment Board's letters of April 2006 and July 2010 for the displaced Adivasis must be implemented and an action taken report must be placed before the Commission.

Following the non-implementation of these recommendations, the Commission has reiterated in yet another order in November 2019 making specific directions as under:

- i. Immediate allocation of 5 acres of unirrigated land and 2 acres of irrigated land to each of the displaced Adivasi families. This should be completed in the next 2 months.
- ii. No form of construction should be undertaken in the acquired land by the administration and railway department without the consent of the displaced Adivasi families. No deployment of police force unless deemed necessary.
- iii. The candidates from displaced Adivasi families should be given priority for the appointment of Junior positions in the Railway department.

The local administration earlier having given false assurances to the local communities, have been violating the NCST's orders and is now harassing, intimidating and creating an environment of fear for the local communities.

To express your solidarity, please take the following actions:

1. Write to the Chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) to urgently take action on this matter and ensure immediate implementation of the recommendations.

Shri Harsh Chouhan

Chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

E-mail: chairperson@ncst.nic.in

Fax: 011- 24624628

2. Write to the Sundergarh Collector to immediately stop construction activities, withdraw police force and implement the NCST recommendations.

Shri Nikhil Pavan Kalyan

Collector & District Magistrate, Sundargarh

E-mail: dm-sundargarh@nic.in

Fax: 06622-273166

3. Write to the Chief Minister of Odisha to immediately stop construction activities, withdraw police force and implement the NCST recommendations.

Shri Naveen Patnaik

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha

E-mail: cmo@nic.in

Fax: 0674-2535100

4. Write to the Governor of Odisha towards the responsibilities laid out as per Article 244 (1) and Article 338 A (7)

Prof. Ganeshi Lal

Hon'ble Governor of Odisha

E-mail: govodisha@nic.in

Fax: 0674- 2535581

5. Write to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to immediately stop construction activities, withdraw police force and implement the NCST recommendations.

Shri Arjun Munda

Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Tribal Affairs

E-mail: arjun.munda@gov.in

arjun.munda@gmail.com

Fax: 0674- 23070577

6. Write to the ST & SC Development department, Govt. of Odisha to immediately stop construction activities, withdraw police force and implement the NCST recommendations.

Smt. Ranjana Chopra

Principal Secretary, ST & SC Development department, Govt. of Odisha

E-mail: stscdev@gmail.com

Fax: 0674- 2393249

7. Odisha civil society groups can visit the dharna site to express solidarity.

8. Issue a solidarity statement and widely share it with your networks, media groups and on social media.

In solidarity,

Members of Mineral Inheritors Rights Association