

Where: At the Consulate in New York City (3 East 64th Street)

When: On August 13 at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK CITY - Sanhati, and other organizations and individuals, are organizing a protest against the Indian government's insidious war, named "Operation Green Hunt," which has been unleashed on the inhabitants of the forested regions of East-Central India. The protest will approximately coincide with Indian Independence Day (August 15) to emphasize that the promises of independence have remain largely unfulfilled for a large section of the population, including the tribal peoples. In its current phase, this war is concentrated primarily in the forested regions of East-Central India, stretching from the states of Chhattisgarh to Jharkhand and West Bengal. This region is home to significant amounts of natural resources.

Big corporations, both Indian and foreign, are plundering these natural resources for quick profits and plan to continue doing so while paying almost no attention to the enormous environmental and human costs inherent in their ventures.

The state and central governments continue to welcome these big corporations with open arms by signing an unknown number of memoranda of understanding with them-whose details have been kept secret. A recent report by the Ministry of Rural Development, on the other hand, described these trends as one of the biggest land grabs since the time of Columbus.

Yet these forested areas house not only natural resources. This region is home to a large section of India's roughly 100 million Adivasis (i.e., the tribal population). Using all means at their disposal, the Adivasis resisted the government's efforts to forcibly drive them from their ancestral lands. Drawing on the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which is devoted to Adivasi rights and provisions for their protection, Adivasi activists challenged the government's expropriations.

Instead of addressing the genuine grievances of the Adivasis, the Indian government has cracked down on their legitimate protests in violation of the letter and intent of the Indian Constitution. Peaceful resistance movements across this region have been met with police

brutality and military might; this forced the arming of a section of the resistance movement. State-assisted vigilante groups like the Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh and Harnad Bahini in West Bengal were a response of the state to the armed resistance of the Adivasis.

When that failed, Operation Green Hunt-a further escalation and militarization of the State's response-emerged. Such militarization is facilitated by the Indian government's military cooperation with the United States and Israel.

Sections of civil society have been urging the central government to stop Operation Green Hunt and begin negotiations with the diverse people's organizations opposing the looting of natural resources. The response of the government to the idea of dialogue has in general not been encouraging in view of the plans of increased militarization, human rights abuses committed by the security forces, suppression of dissenting voices, and abductions and killings of the leaders of people's organizations.

In this context, Adivasis in India, and all the people who are with them in this struggle for freedom from exploitation and oppression, need your support. Join us to protest against Operation Green Hunt and the increasing violence of the Indian State on democratic movements on August 13, 2010 at 11 a.m. in front of the Indian Consulate in New York City.

Oppose the biggest land grab since Columbus!

Oppose Operation Green Hunt!

Oppose the war on people!

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Sanhati ( [www.sanhati.com](http://www.sanhati.com) ) is a forum of activists, professionals, workers, academics and intellectuals that stand in solidarity with peoples' struggles against corporate capital and for the upholding of democratic rights in India. The group strives to be an integral part of the international search for alternatives to the capitalist social order.

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Background Note

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India Shining, so claimed the BJP-led government. Today, the Congress-led regime might boast that it successfully increased annual economic growth from 5.6% to 8.3% in the last six years, while criticizing the previous BJP-led alliance.

Between the 5.6% and 8.3%, there lurk other stories. About three-quarters of India's people live on less than Rs. 20 per day, while almost half of the women in India are still illiterate and about 80% of households do not have access to safe drinking water.

Between 1997 and 2006, there lurk other stories. Nearly 170,000 farmers committed suicide by drinking pesticide because they could not keep up with demands to repay their loans. In addition to the agrarian crisis, whatever little access the poor had to common property resources has come under increasing attack by the Indian government in the guise of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and other "development" projects related to mining, industrial development, information technology parks, and so forth.

Immeasurable stories such as these are grafted onto the underbelly of neo-liberal economic "development" in India. A recent report, penned by the Indian Ministry of Rural Development, described these trends as the biggest land grab since Columbus. In truth, it wouldn't be hard to keep citing official statistics revealing not only the shadows within the Shining India myth, but huge pockets of darkness. To be perfectly honest, none of this is new. If there is one image of India that has persisted in the Western media, it is the image of bone-thin, bare-bodied children with swollen bellies, scavenging for food-crumbs in trash-cans next to stray dogs and wild birds.

But something has changed in the last five years. India, like many other parts of the world, has seen the emergence of a whole spectrum of mass movements challenging the global neo-liberal onslaught in many different ways. These movements are not attempts to "brainwash" the masses by English-spouting city-bred students or intellectuals with romantic dreams of social change. On the contrary, these movements are being led by the very people who have been persistently excluded from reaping the benefits of development and growth - in short, the people who live in the pockets of darkness within the so-called shining India.

The proverbial *aam aadmi* has spoken. The oppressed of India have shown an unwillingness to stay oppressed for eternity, despite the policy of the government to "kill the poor and not the poverty." These struggles are primarily about defending their lands, rivers and homes from corrupt officials and swindlers. Moreover, these movements have demonstrated that not only has the government failed to deliver on the promises of the basic rights of the Indian constitution itself, the interests of the most economically disadvantaged people have seriously been compromised by its almost total and unconditional submission to the interests of corporations like Mittal, Vedanta, Tata, Essar, Salim, Jindal, and POSCO.

Instead of improving governance while addressing dissent and discontent in an inclusive way, as be-fitting any democratic government, the Indian government has unleashed severe state violence. The government of India has launched an insidious war nicknamed Operation Green Hunt. While the terror initiated by the government since 2009 is by no means unique in view of the history of the state repression across India (e.g., West Bengal, Orissa, Kashmir, the Northeastern states, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh), Operation Green Hunt is unprecedented both for its array of military force and its media mobilization.

Since last year, more than 100,000 military and paramilitary troops have been sent into Adivasi (i.e., indigenous) areas. Moreover, it was recently announced that 36 battalions of Indian Reserve Forces will be added to the 105 already raised, along with 16,000 more "Special Police Officers" (civilians trained and armed by the government) bringing their total strength to 30,000. Through this new military campaign, which almost brings to mind histories of colonial occupation of land, the military "occupiers" are to gradually spread into one "sanitized" area after another.

Some additional relevant facts:

Twenty Warfare Training Schools are being built in India.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh recently spent \$18 billion in the US to buy huge amounts of military supplies and munitions. This included state-of-the-art global positioning systems and night-vision-capable automatic rifles.

Drones are being purchased from Israel and the Israeli Mossad is training Indian police as snipers. The aim of the training is to enable assassination of the leaders of diverse mass movements. The recent murder of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) spokesperson Azad, who was also the party's emissary for negotiations on a ceasefire, clearly reflects one aspect of the government's modus operandi (i.e., targeted killings).

According to numerous reports, dozens of indigenous people are being killed each week in the Adivasi regions.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) has been declared India's "gravest internal security" threat and has been banned. Bans have also been imposed on other democratic organizations on the claim that they are frontal" organizations of CPI (Maoist) and the witch hunt against these civil rights activists continues unabated.

The last few months have seen the arrests of increasing numbers of media personnel, journalists, writers, and intellectuals who have shown the slightest sympathy to people's struggles in the Adivasi heartland. The discussions within the ranks of the police forces in the state of Chattisgarh as to whether the Booker Prize winning writer Arundhati Roy is to be charged under an "anti-terrorism" law following the publication of her essay *Walking With the Comrades* is a case in point.

The state of Gujarat has joined Operation Green Hunt by alleging that "Maoists" are attempting to expand their networks into Gujarat and in particular the tribal regions of South Gujarat. Several activists have been arrested. This witch-hunt of the Gujarat police amounts to a systematic effort by the state government to suppress all manner of dissension and opposition.

Operation Green Hunt includes widespread incidents of rape committed by the security forces. Recently, about 50,000 women tried to march into Jhargram town in West Bengal to protest against these rapes (see photograph above). The marchers included school students in uniform, teachers, housewives and even many elderly women. Widespread rape is a progeny of Operation Green Hunt.

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), one of a number of anti-democratic Acts, continues to give Indian troops immunity from civil legal action and promotes human rights violations. The Naga People's Movement for Human Rights has aptly observed that this Act is a systematic tool of the Indian government that contributes to terrorizing and dehumanizing civilian populations. This Act also protects security personnel in Kashmir guilty of killing and torturing the people of the valley.

The Indian state, in other words, has declared war on its own people. It has declared war precisely on those sections of the population who have always been at the receiving ends of multiple forms of systemic and institutional oppression. Instead of addressing the genuine grievances of Adivasis facing forcible displacement and dispossession, the Indian government has cracked down on their legitimate protests in flagrant violation of the letter and intent of the Indian Constitution.

Foreseeing the disastrous impact that Operation Green Hunt will have on the common people in those regions, different sections of civil society have called for a dialog between the state and various sections of the resistance, including the CPI (Maoist) and different people's organizations, involved in struggles in the Adivasi regions. Several attempts to make progress in these efforts failed, with different politicians, bureaucrats and security officers continuously attempting to scuttle negotiations.

A glimmer of hope had risen due to the civil society initiative represented by Swami Agnivesh, with the Union Home Minister and Azad, as spokesperson of CPI(Maoist), responding to him in a letter detailing the suitable conditions under which a dialog might begin. It is reported that Azad was on his way to consult other members of CPI (Maoist) in order to decide future steps for proceeding with this initiative when he was allegedly abducted and killed, thus throwing the possibility of negotiations into disarray. The murder of a spokesperson of a political organization, with which dialog is supposedly being planned at this crucial juncture, raises serious doubts regarding the government commitment to such a dialog.

In this situation, the activists in India need your presence support. Join us to protest against Operation Green Hunt and the increasing violence of the Indian State on democratic movements on August 13, 2010 at 11 a.m. in front of the Indian Consulate in New York City. We have chosen August 13, as this date roughly coincides with Indian Independence Day, when the country became a sovereign nation-state following its colonial occupation by Great Britain. We would, therefore, like to record our protest and remind the public that the promises of the Indian independence have not only remain unfulfilled, but the current Indian government has resorted to military repression to quell democratic dissent in a way uncannily similar to the erstwhile British "overlords." We invite all in diaspora, the international community of media activists, human rights workers, academics and intellectuals and artists to join us.

**San Francisco: Aug 13 Protest against the Indian Government's "Operation Green Hunt"**

Where: Indian Consulate in San Francisco

(540 Arguello Boulevard)

When: 11 am, August 13 2010

The Government of India has launched a domestic war named Operation Green Hunt in the forested regions of East-Central India, stretching from the states of Chhattisgarh to Jharkhand and West Bengal. This region is home to significant amounts of natural resources.

Big corporations, both Indian and foreign, are plundering these natural resources for quick profits and plan to continue doing so while paying almost no attention to the enormous

environmental and human costs inherent in their ventures. The state and central governments continue to welcome these big corporations with open arms by signing an unknown number of memoranda of understanding with them-whose details have been kept secret. A recent report by the Ministry of Rural Development, on the other hand, described these trends as one of the biggest land grabs since the time of Columbus.

This forested region, rich in natural resources as it is, is also home to a large section of India's roughly 100 million Adivasis (i.e., the tribal population). Using all means at their disposal, the Adivasis resisted the government's efforts to forcibly drive them from their ancestral lands. Drawing on the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which is devoted to Adivasi rights and provisions for their protection, Adivasi activists challenged the government's expropriations.

Instead of addressing the genuine grievances of the Adivasis, the Indian government has cracked down on their legitimate protests in violation of the letter and intent of the Indian Constitution. Peaceful resistance movements across this region have been met with police brutality and military might; this forced the arming of a section of the resistance movement. State-assisted vigilante groups like the Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh and Harnad Bahini in West Bengal were a response of the state to the armed resistance of the Adivasis.

When that failed, Operation Green Hunt-a further escalation and militarization of the State's response-emerged.

We, a group of concerned individuals, urge you to join us in this protest.

Oppose the biggest land grab since Columbus!

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