

Naxal Conflict Monitor

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EVALUATE ANTI-NAXAL POLICIES OF THE CHHATTISGARH GOVERNMENT

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I. Killings of security forces surpass the civilians and alleged Naxalites

According to the estimates of Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), 144 persons including 27 civilians, 80 security forces and 37 alleged Naxalites have been killed during January-March 2007 in the Naxalite conflict in India. Out of these, 101 persons or 70% were killed in Chhattisgarh, followed by killing of 25 persons in Andhra Pradesh.

For the first time, the number of security forces killed in the Naxalite conflict surpassed the number of civilians or alleged Naxalites. This indicates the increasing striking capability of the Naxalites and that the conflict is further intensifying with its disastrous consequences on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In its 15th meeting, the Task Force on Naxalism consisting of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the government of India and the Naxal affected State governments concluded that “The Naxal violence in all the States, except in Chhattisgarh has been under control. The increase in Naxal violence in Chhattisgarh was due to greater offensive by Naxal outfits to derail Salva Judum.”¹

The statistics collated by Asian Centre for Human Rights also repeatedly highlighted disproportionate rate of killings in Chhattisgarh.

Table I: Killings in Naxalite conflict, January - March 2007

| States | Civilians | Security Forces | Alleged Naxalites | Total |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 8 | 2 | 16 | 25 |
| Bihar | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Chhattisgarh | 8 | 76 | 17 | 101 |
| Jharkhand | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Karnataka | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Maharashtra | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Orissa | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Bengal | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 27 | 80 | 37 | 144 |

II. Killings by the Naxalites

The Naxalite were responsible for the killing of 107 persons including 80 security forces and 27 civilians. The killing of 55 security personnel at Ranibodli under Bhairamgarh

¹. http://mha.nic.in/press-release/2007/pr_Naxal%20Task%20Force220207.pdf

police station in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh on 15 March 2007 had substantially increased the number of security forces killed in the Naxalite conflict.²

However, the Ranibodli killings cannot be considered as an isolated incident. In the past two years, attacks on state and government facilities – including Jehanabad jail in Bihar on 13 November, 2005, security and electricity installations in the town of Udayagiri in Orissa on 24 March, 2006, and the detention of the Tata-Kharagpur passenger train in the forests of Jharkhand on 10 December, 2006 – show that the Maoists are not another rag tag armed opposition group.

Earlier, on 8 February 2007, six persons, including five security personnel and a civilian, were killed in a landmine explosion at Phundri village in Bhairamgarh area in Dantewara district of Chhattisgarh. Twelve others, mostly civilians, were injured in the explosion.³ On 9 February 2007, one of the injured civilians died in hospital, taking the toll to seven.⁴

Table II: Killings by the Naxalites

| SI No. | States | Security Forces | Civilians | Total |
|--------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| 2 | Bihar | 1 | | 1 |
| 3 | Chhattisgarh | 76 | 8 | 84 |
| 4 | Jharkhand | | 5 | 5 |
| 5 | Karnataka | | | |
| 6 | Maharashtra | | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | Madhya Pradesh | | | |
| 8 | Orissa | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | Uttar Pradesh | | | |
| 10 | West Bengal | | 2 | 2 |
| | Total | 80 | 27 | 107 |

Though the killing of General Secretary of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, Mr Sunil Mahato on 4 March 2007 at Bakuria village in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand⁵ drew national attention, the Naxalites have been killing political party activists for not paying extortion money, politically opposing them or on the charges of being police informers.

Some of the political party activists killed by the Maoists were:

² MIDNIGHT MASSACRE – Red raid on police post claims 55 lives, The Telegraph, 16 March 2007

³ Five security men among six killed in Chhattisgarh blast, The Pioneer, 9 February 2007

⁴ Ulfahand in Naga deaths – Chattisgarh Maoists borrow explosion knowhow, The Telegraph, 10 February 2007

⁵ Naxals kill JMM MP, The Asian Age, 5 March 2007

- Boyapati Chinna Ramaiah, a leader of Telegu Desam Party killed on 19 January 2007 at his house at Yachavaram in Ardhaveedu Mandal in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh;⁶
- Lakkireddy Rangareddy, a leader of the Youth Congress killed on 23 January 2007 of Lakshmipuram village in Ardhaveedu Mandal of Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh;⁷
- Erava Tirupal Reddy, a Telugu Desam Party leader, shot dead on 23 February 2007 at Erlupalli village of Giddalur mandal in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh;⁸
- Komati Prakash, a Mandal Parishad member of the Congress party at Marikal village under Peddakottapalli Mandal in Mahbubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh killed on 5 March 2007;⁹
- Rampada Singh, member of the CPM's Belpahari local committee and Parikshit Singh, CPM member of Simulpal gram panchyat in West Midnapore district, West Bengal were killed on 30 March 2007.¹⁰

Many civilians were also killed by the Maoists after accusing them as police informers. Some of the victims were Gorle Ramesh of Pathakota village under Rayavaram mandal in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh on 20 January 2007;¹¹ Gemeli Venkat Rao of Boddamanupakalu in Visakapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh on 1 February 2007 after abducting him along with two others on 30 January 2007;¹² Jangam Narayan of Komatlagudem village in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh on 11 February 2007;¹³ and T Appa Rao whose dead body was recovered near Qotagedda village on the morning of 24 February 2007 after being kidnapped from the market in GK Veedhi Agency Mandal in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.¹⁴

The Naxalites continued to organise *Jana Adalats*, Peoples Court, to impose their Kangaroo justice. On the intervening night of 7 and 8 January 2007, the Naxalites allegedly killed a villager identified as Alam Sannu, son of Bhuja of Koitpal under Bijapur police district of Chhattisgarh, after dragging him out from his house. He was interrogated him in front of other villagers about the *Salwa Judum* campaign and the

⁶. Maoists kill TD leader, The Deccan Chronicle, 21 January 2007

⁷. Maoists kill one more leader, The Deccan Chronicle, 24 January 2007

⁸. Maoists, kill TD leader, The Deccan Chronicle, 15 February 2007

⁹. Maoists kill Cong worker in Andhra, The Pioneer, 6 March 2007

¹⁰. Maoists spill CPM blood, The Telegraph, 31 March 2007

¹¹. Tribal youth shot dead, The Deccan Chronicle, 22 January 2007

¹². Tribal killed by Maoists, The Deccan Chronicle, 3 February 2007

¹³. Naxals kill coin box operator, The Deccan Chronicle, 12 February 2007

¹⁴. Maoists shoot tribal dead, The Deccan Chronicle, 25 February 2007

movement/operational strategies of the police. Later, the Maosits slit his throat with a knife in full public view.¹⁵

On the night of 16 February 2007, Maoists allegedly beat to death Suklu Korsa on the spot at Ghumra village under Bijapur police district of Chhattisgarh while his brothers Somlu Korsa and Panduram were seriously injured for allegedly supporting Salwa Judum.¹⁶

On the intervening night of 28 February and 1 March 2007, Maoists reportedly beat to death two villagers identified as Sarharam of Chindbhata village and Kogeram of Temrupani village “after awarding them death sentence” in a *Jana Adalat* at Temrupani village under Durgakondal police station in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh.¹⁷

On the night of 28 March 2007, two villagers identified as Teklal Mahto and Bhola Mahto were reportedly beaten to death by the Maoists following their trial in a *Jana Adalat* held at Sohrai forest in Giridih district of Jharkhand. The deceased were among the nine villagers whom the Maoists abducted from Badgawah and charged them with collecting levy posing as Maoists. The *Jana Adalat* held four villagers guilty and released the rest. The status of the two other victims was not known.¹⁸

III. Killings by the security forces

Table III: Killings by the security forces

| SI No. | States | Alleged Naxalites | Civilians | Total |
|--------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh | 16 | | 16 |
| 2 | Bihar | | | |
| 3 | Chhattisgarh | 17 | | 17 |
| 4 | Jharkhand | | | |
| 5 | Karnataka | | | |
| 6 | Maharashtra | 2 | | 2 |
| 7 | Madhya Pradesh | | | |
| 8 | Orissa | 2 | | 2 |
| 9 | Uttar Pradesh | | | |
| 10 | West Bengal | | | |
| | Total | 37 | | 37 |

The security forces have also been responsible for torture of innocent civilians especially during cordon and search operations. Following the killing of a Central Reserve Police

¹⁵. Maoists kill villager, The Hitavada, 9 January 2007

¹⁶. Naxal beating claims one, The Hitavada, 18 February 2007

¹⁷. Ultras beat two villagers to death, The Hitavada, 3 March 2007

¹⁸. Maoists kill two, The Telegraph, 30 March 2007

Force (CRPF) personnel in a bomb blast by alleged Maoists on the Republic Day (26 January 2007), the CRPF personnel reportedly arrested two youths on the evening of 26 January 2007 and beat up at least 20 innocent residents of MV-66, MV-126 and Gamphakunda village in Malkangiri district during operations against the Maoists. Four of the victims were seriously injured in the beating. Orissa Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik asked the State Director General of Police to probe into the allegations of torture by the CRPF personnel. It was also reported that the villagers in several Naxalite-affected areas of Malkangiri district have been living under fear of police action during combing operations in their localities.¹⁹

The security forces often claim to have killed Maoists in armed encounters. Some of the incidents of alleged Maoists killing are given below:

On 31 January 2007, two alleged woman Maoists identified as Swarnakka and Arunakka were killed in an alleged encounter at a place thirty kilometres away from Peruru under Vezedu mandal under Khammam district in Andhra Pradesh.²⁰

On 12 February 2007, Special Operation Group of the CRPF and State Police of Orissa shot dead two alleged Maoists including an alleged “Deputy Area Commander” in an alleged encounter under Kalimela police station in Malkangiri district of Orissa. Security forces also claimed to have recovered grenade, explosives, literatures, kit bags and polythene sheets from the spot.²¹

On 26 February 2007, two alleged unidentified Maoists were killed by the police in an alleged encounter in Tadgaon area under Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.²²

On 3 March 2007, security forces comprising Nagaland Armed Police (NAP), Chhattisgarh Police and Special Police Officials (SPOs) shot dead an alleged woman Maoist in an alleged encounter near Korrapad under Dornapal police station in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh. The victim could not be identified.²³

On 29 March 2007, two alleged Maoists were killed by the police in an alleged encounter near Mukundapur village in Nalgonda of Andhra Pradesh. The deceased have not been identified.²⁴

The claims of encounter killings cannot be verified. In such alleged encounters, often victims cannot be identified.

19. Alleged police excesses to be probed in Orissa, *The Hitavada*, 1 February 2007

20. Two killed in encounter, *The Deccan Chronicle*, 1 February 2007

21. Maoist 'dy area commander' gunned down in Malkangiri, *The Pioneer*, 13 February 2007

22. 2 Naxalites killed in Gadchiroli, *The Indian Express*, 27 February 2007

23. Woman Maoist killed in encounter, *The Hitavada*, 6 March 2007

24. Two Naxals killed in Hyderabad, *The Times of India*, 29 March 2007

IV. Evaluate Chhattisgarh's anti-Naxal policies

The meeting of the Task Force on Naxalism on 13 February 2007 was followed by the first meeting of the Empowered Group of Ministers (eGoM) on Naxalism in New Delhi on 19 February 2007.²⁵

In order to address the Naxalite conflict, the Central government sanctioned Rs. 385 crores for Naxal-affected States during 2007 under the Police Modernization Scheme and another Rs. 100 crores are on the pipeline.²⁶ The Central government also allocated financial assistance of Rs 2,475 crore to 55 Naxal-affected districts in nine States under the Backward District Initiative component of the 'Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojna'.²⁷

Given that over 50% of the incidents and killings in the Naxalite conflict have been consistently reported from Chhattisgarh, the Central government of India and the State government of Chhattisgarh must evaluate the anti-Naxal programmes of Chhattisgarh government and take corrective measures. It is clear that involvement of the civilians in conflict through Salwa Judum campaign, recruitment of Special Police Officers had disastrous consequences.

Instead of learning from the failures of the Chhattisgarh government, State government of Maharashtra launched a programme in January 2007 to support formation of the Village Defence Committees (VDCs) to counter the Naxalites. Each village is being offered Rs 2 lakh for formation of VDCs and the proposals from 28 villages have already been approved.²⁸

The State has the responsibility to ensure right to life of the citizens. Involving civilians directly in armed conflicts only increases the risks to their lives and prolongs the conflicts. Common citizenry cannot be asked to provide security against the armed groups. However, various State governments have been increasingly involving civilians in the conflict with the Naxalites.

²⁵. States asked to strengthen intelligence, police to check Naxalism, The Kashmir Times, 20 February 2007

²⁶. http://mha.nic.in/press-release/2007/pr_Naxal%20Task%20Force220207.pdf

²⁷. Rising Naxalism worries Centre, Deccan Herald, 27 March 2007,

<http://www.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/mar272007/national2146192007326.asp>

²⁸. Village groups to tackle attacks, The Indian Express, 8 January 2007