

**Founder:** Jayaprakash Narayan; **Founding President:** V M Tarkunde**President:** Prof. Prabhakar Sinha; **General Secretary:** Dr. V. Suresh**Vice-Presidents:** (all names in alphameric order) Binayak Sen (Chhattisgarh); Ravi Kiran Jain (Uttar Pradesh); Sanjay Parikh (Delhi); P.B. D'sa (Karnataka).**Secretaries:** Chittaranjan Singh (UP); Mahipal Singh (Delhi); Kavita Srivastava (Rajasthan).**Treasurer:** Ritu Priya (Delhi)E.mail: [puclnat@yahoo.com](mailto:puclnat@yahoo.com) & [puclnat@gmail.com](mailto:puclnat@gmail.com) Please visit PUCL website at <[www.pucl.org](http://www.pucl.org)>C: \PUCL\EmtaInld **OFFICE VISIT BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** Please always use **Pin Code**12<sup>th</sup> January, 2013**PUCL Statement on Latehar Incidents, Jharkhand**

The PUCL condemns the recent incident of mutilation and placing IEDs inside the bodies of CRPF personnel killed in an encounter with Maoist forces in forests of Latehar in Jharkhand. Placing IEDs inside the abdomen or stomach of dead men seriously endangers lives of uninvolved others like doctors and medical personnel who perform post mortems. Such acts of desecration of dead bodies is unacceptable and inhuman, constitutes a violation of all acceptable norms of human rights and robs the dead of their dignity.

It is the PUCL's understanding that under no circumstances can acts of brutality be justified, even if they be in response to equally heinous and brutal acts unleashed by the security forces, as we are seeing presently. We equally stress that whatever the circumstances, the security forces must act within the bounds of law.

As pointed out by the PUCL national council resolution of August 2012, '*Operation Greenhunt*' launched by the security forces and police of the Central and State governments in nine states across central and eastern India, purportedly to counter the Maoists has, apart from claiming hundreds of lives of both Maoists as also the police and Central Forces, killed thousands of ordinary tribals and others caught in the cross fire. Vast areas of mountainous regions in these states have become cordoned off by Central Forces and a virtual siege of terror launched by the CRPF, para military and police forces against local citizens. This has resulted in unending spirals of violence resulting in encounter deaths, disappearances, torture, killings, sexual assaults, mass burning and destruction of villages; many other acts of untold miseries has made life for adivasis in these areas one of a 'living hell'.

In this scenario, the PUCL would like to reiterate its resolution of the Ranchi National Convention held on 31st Oct and 1st December, 2009 and calls upon the Government and the Maoists to cease all hostilities and engage in a dialogue. We also believe that open and free access to the public, civil society and the media should be permitted in these areas so that all information gets reported, and no restrictions should be placed due to threats of the Government or Maoists or other Naxalite groups. We also reiterate the urgency of equitable development in the tribal areas. The PUCL also firmly believes that for every death, including as a result of action by the security forces and the police, an FIR should be lodged followed by fair investigation and just trial.

We have had a consistent stand on the question of violence as a means of settling disputes or conflicts of whatever nature, whether socio-economic or political. This was articulated in the PUCL National Convention held on March 7 1982, at Madras (now Chennai), "The PUCL reaffirms its faith in the democratic way of life. It appeals to all to use to the utmost the agencies and methods available in an open society. Apart from other factors, violence, even for laudable objectives, will legitimise counter-violence by the State and other groups". We reaffirm that even those who have taken to violence are entitled to due process of law. We believe that this commitment is the very faith of an open society and also that adhering to this commitment is an effective way of converting all to the democratic and peaceful path.

We would like to point out that when Indian citizens are abducted or killed as 'informers' or public servants are killed, it is the responsibility of the State to bring the guilty to book. The State must assert its authority, but strictly within the bounds of the law. We hold that a Maoist is an Indian citizen, who might have violated the law of the land and is entitled to be tried by a court of law like any other citizen who might have violated some law. A Maoist, no matter how serious the allegation against him, is entitled to be tried like Nathuram Godse and Ajmal Kasab. Godse had killed Gandhiji and Kasab was not even an Indian citizen. No matter how serious the situation, the State must act within the bounds of the law. Equally, when the personnel of the agencies of the State violate the law and commit brutalities and human rights violations, it is important that they be prosecuted and not granted impunity and protection.

The spirals of violence and counter-violence in the troubled areas of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and other states is grim and life threatening. The PUCL, through this appeal, is therefore giving a national call for a '**HUMANITARIAN RESPITE**' and appeals to the Central and State Governments, the security forces and also to the Maoists, to agree to an immediate ceasefire, stopping of armed engagements and engage in talks.



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