

## PRESS STATEMENT

### **FACAM CONDEMNS THE KILLING OF AN INFANT IN THE NAME OF AN ANTI-NAXAL OPERATION IN BIJAPUR**

*5<sup>th</sup> January 2023*

It has to our attention through appeal made by Moolwasi Bachao Manch (Bastar) and Media reports that a 6-month-old Infant was killed in an encounter by the security forces against the Maoists on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 in Mutvendi Village of Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh. While the Bastar IG P Sunderraj has claimed that the death occurred as a result of crossfire in an encounter between the Maoists and the security forces, the father of the slain infant, Sodi has alleged that there was no encounter with the Maoists at the time of the incident. In an interview with a Hindi media outlet, he has alleged that the security forces came from the forest and indiscriminately fired on Massi Vadde, who was feeding her child. The bullet pierced through her hand and killed the infant. **The villagers have reiterated the same version of events, denying any encounter with the Maoists at the time of the incident.** They have also asserted that 3 new paramilitary camps have come up in the region. Today, on 5<sup>th</sup> January, the people have buried the 6-month-old infant under the soil that they fight to save from corporate land grab, the infant who was ruthlessly murdered by trigger-happy security personnel intoxicated by the state impunity in anti-naxal operations.

It is pertinent to mention that State has established above mentioned 3 paramilitary camps in Palnar, Dumriparalnar and Kavadgaon in December 2023. With the rampant militarization through multiple paramilitary camps, which are being built without the mandatory permission of Gram Sabhas and are subsequently resisted by the locals, these kind of incidents of Fake encounters, sexual violence, and arrest of Adivasi farmers on the pretext of being Naxalite; have intensified. Moolwasi Bachao Manch, an umbrella body that is leading almost 35 movements against Camps, big roads, fake encounters etc., has been facing the brunt of state repression. Multiple leaders of various such movements have been arrested on the pretext of being a Naxalite to quell their democratic movement against land grab and destruction of Jal-Jungle-Jameen.

It is very important to understand that these paramilitary camps and coordinated attacks on the leadership of the mass movements against land grab to render them leaderless and directionless is part and parcel of Operation SAMADHAN-PRAHAR, brought by the Brahmanical Hindutva Fascist government led by BJP-RSS to further corporate loot of people's resources to fill the coffers of Adani-Ambani and Foreign corporates. Unless the rising militarization of mineral rich regions are resisted and the corporate loot is countered by the struggling people of these regions with active solidarity from the democratic section of the country, devastation of these peasant Adivasi communities is bound to continue in such a violent and brute manner. At last, we iterate that even in situations of encounter with the Maoists, the state cannot justify the killing of an unarmed civilian, let alone an infant. Launching a military operation on guerillas, while they are in the presence of unarmed locals cannot be understood as anything other than sheer disregard of civilian life by the State; security of which should be of paramount importance.

Forum Against Corporatization and Militarization condemns the abhorrent act of killing of the infant child and injuring her mother by the security forces and calls for an independent inquiry to be setup and stringent punishment be awarded to the security personnel and commanders responsible for the same. We also urge all the democratic, Justice and peace-loving people to unequivocally condemn this inhumane act and oppose operation SAMADHAN-PRAHAR.

**DEMANDS:**

- 1. Initiation of an independent inquiry commission comprising of prominent democratic rights activists and headed by a retired Supreme Court Judge.**
- 2. The perpetrators, including the commander of the unit must be punished strictly.**
- 3. Grant compensation to the family of the victim as demanded by them.**
- 4. Withdraw paramilitary camps from Palnar, Dumriparalnar and Kavadgaon.**
- 5. Stop Operation SAMADHAN-PRAHAR.**



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**STOP Operation SAMADHAN-PRAHAR**

**FORUM AGAINST CORPORATIZATION AND MILITARIZATION**

(AISA, AIRSO, AIRWO, BASF, BASO, bsCEM, Collective, CTF, DSU, Fraternity, Nazariya Magazine, PLA, MAS, TUCI, VCF)