



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

Central Committee

Press Release

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Fight back the new Forest Conservation Rules

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) strongly condemns the new Forest Conservation Rules made by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) on the 28th of June. The rules made for the implementation of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980 that were amended without following any Constitutional formalities are in violation to all the Acts and rights regarding the indigenous people of the country, mainly the rights of the Gram Sabhas as per the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA), 1996 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The rules allow the imperialist and the comprador bureaucratic bourgeois companies such as the Adanis and the Ambanis to take up projects and mining in the forest areas without difficulty of getting permission from the government.

The present regulations violate the Forest Rights Act of 2006 that provided rights to the tribal farmers cultivating the land for the past 75 years. These are also against the judgment of the Supreme Court in 2013 that made clear the need of permission of Gram Sabha to enjoy the forest land.

The Central government had the authority through a specially constituted Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) to permit non-forestry activity beyond five hectares of forest land. After 2009, the Environment Ministry passed an order that said that the FAC will not go through the proposals unless the state government clears the matter and the Gram Sabha consents. Later, the Ministry gave a number of orders all that went against the rights of Gram Sabha.

According to the new rules that are against the rules originally issued in 2003, the FAC will approve a project and pass it on to the state government for the rest of the process. This means that the local government authorities will have the total powers to approve a proposal. Out of the 240 proposals in the first half of 2019, 193 were recommended by the FAC that would amount to the acquisition of 9,220.64 hectares of forest land for the construction of roads, rail lines, mining, irrigation, infrastructure and hydel power. This reveals that the government had been violating the rights of the indigenous for a long time and now made it formal.

The new Forest Conservation Rules are part of the Hindutva agenda of the Brahmanic Hindutva Fascist central government in the leadership of BJP of 'new India'. There is a severe danger from the rules not only to the tribal people but the natural wealth of the country that concerns all the oppressed classes and sections of the society. So, all the revolutionary, democratic, tribal, human rights organisations, pro-people NGOs and individuals need to mobilise in a big way to fight those back. The CC calls upon the entire oppressed classes, sections and patriots of the country to come together in struggle against the rules, in the spirit of the victorious farmers' struggle. It calls upon to take up a concrete program during the monsoon session of the Parliament that would probably make an ordinance in this regard. It calls upon to take up demonstrations in protest to the new regulations on the International Day of the Indigenous on August 9th.

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