



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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19 January 2026

Excellency,

I write to inform you that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (“the Committee”) received information under its early warning and urgent action procedure in relation to the situation of the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples in the Bastar district, the State of Chhattisgarh.

According to the information received:

- The Indigenous Adivasi Peoples represent around 70 percent of the population of Bastar, a region rich in natural resources that has witnessed an armed conflict for the past few decades between security forces and non-State armed groups affiliated with the Communist Party of India.
- Since January 2024, there has been a reported sharp increase in the scale of operations against the non-State armed groups, leading to widespread and unprecedented violence, as well as violations of the human rights of the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples. This sharp increase in operations is reportedly a result of implementing a strategy by the State Party to eliminate the non-State armed groups by March 2026, as reflected in a statement made by the Union Home Minister in August 2024.
- The increase in security operations is also linked to the increase in law enforcement presence in Bastar. For example, at least 300 new security bases have been established since 2019, and the number of police stations has increased from 65 to over 500 in the last ten years. These new security bases have been constructed on the ancestral lands and territories of the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples without consulting them or obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent, as required by the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the Forest Rights Act of 2006, the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 (PESA), and international standards.
- At least 500 Indigenous Adivasi Peoples, including civilians, have been killed between January 2024 and October 2025 as a result of security operations carried out by law enforcement. Official records, including those of the National Human Rights Commission, are inconsistent with numbers verified and reported by civil society

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organizations and human rights defenders who are monitoring the situation in the Bastar district. Furthermore, between 2021 and 2025, security forces used aerial bombing in at least five cases, targeting villages, agricultural fields, and forest areas inhabited by Indigenous Adivasi Peoples.

- Press releases by local authorities indicated financial rewards and promotions for law enforcement officials following operations that involved cases of extrajudicial killings of members of the non-State armed groups and civilians belonging to the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples.
- The intensified security operations have also resulted in an increase in arbitrary arrests and detentions of individuals belonging to the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples, particularly civilians. These individuals are arrested and detained under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Special Public Security Act (CSPSA) for extended periods of time without conviction or due process.
- Law enforcement officials have applied excessive force during operations in Bastar, leading to grave violations against civilians. For example, in May 2024, law enforcement officials fired upon villagers and farmers in the Bijapur district, killing at least ten civilians and arresting around fifty others. In another incident in February 2025, law enforcement officials stormed civilians' houses in the same district in the early morning, forcing civilians to flee to nearby forests while arresting around 25 people.
- The Chhattisgarh Government revised its Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy in March 2025 to provide surrendered members of the non-State armed groups with financial support and rehabilitation. However, it is reported that, members of the non-State armed group, who are predominantly indigenous Adivasi, are also deprived of their liberty without due process under these programs. At one centre in the Bijapur district, around 200 individuals, including at least 60 women and children, were arbitrarily detained and forced to perform menial labour.
- Human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and lawyers are subjected to intimidation, surveillance, harassment, threats, reprisals, and arbitrary arrests and detentions as a consequence of their work to protect and monitor the rights of Indigenous Adivasi Peoples.
- In October 2024, the Governor of Chhattisgarh declared the Moolwasi Bachao Manch (MBM), a local movement promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, an unlawful organization for a period of one year in accordance with the CSPSA. Despite the MBM's representatives filing a request in November 2024 to review the decision by an independent advisory board, no response has been provided so far. MBM representatives also filed a petition with the High Court of Chhattisgarh, which was dismissed in May 2025.
- There is a lack of effective, thorough, and independent investigations into human rights violations perpetrated by security forces against Indigenous Adivasi Peoples,

including extrajudicial and unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions, and the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials.

- There is systematic racial discrimination against Indigenous Adivasi Peoples in the judicial system, manifested by labelling individuals belonging to these peoples who were killed during law enforcement operations as members of a non-State armed group and categorizing the killings as self-defence by law enforcement officials in judicial records. This categorization prevents family members of the victims from accessing judicial remedies. Furthermore, family members and witnesses belonging to the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples are not involved in or invited to investigations initiated within 48 hours of any death during law enforcement operations, as required by Section 176(4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- Recent mining and exploration permits and projects on the lands of the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples are approved and issued by local authorities without consulting them or obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent in accordance with the provisions of the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the Forest Rights Act of 2006, and the PESA. For example, in early 2025, the authorities issued a "composite license" to explore and mine two forest blocks within the Bailadila Reserved Forest in Dantewada district, which contains sacred sites for Indigenous Adivasi Peoples, without conducting a consultation process or obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent.

The Committee is concerned that the allegations regarding the situation of Indigenous Adivasi Peoples, if verified, would infringe their rights protected under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Specifically, the Committee is concerned about reports that members of the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples are subjected to human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by security forces during the intensified security operations and other measures to combat non-State armed groups, including unlawful killings and arbitrary detention. It is further concerned about allegations that measures to combat non-State armed groups have created a restrictive atmosphere for human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and lawyers to exercise their rights to freedom of opinion and expression and to freedom of association. The Committee is also concerned about the reported lack of independent and impartial investigations into human rights violations and abuses faced by members of the Indigenous Adivasi Peoples, such as unlawful killings and arbitrary detention, during measures to combat non-State armed groups, including security operations. It is also concerned about allegations that law enforcement bases and development projects are established on lands owned by Indigenous Adivasi Peoples without a consultation process or obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent.

The Committee recalls its General Recommendations [No. 36 \(2020\) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials](#); [No. 35 \(2013\) on combatting racist hate speech](#); [No. 31 \(2005\) on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system](#); and [No. 23 \(1997\) on the rights of indigenous peoples](#). It also recalls its previous concluding observations concerning India ([CERD/C/IND/CO/19](#), para. 19).

In accordance with Article 9 (1) of the Convention and Article 66 of its Rules of procedure, the Committee requests the State Party to provide information on the above-mentioned allegations and the situation of Indigenous Adivasi Peoples in the Chhattisgarh State by 17 April 2026.



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Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of India with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Balcerzak". A short horizontal line is drawn to the right of the signature.

Michal Balcerzak

Chair

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination