

## **Adivasis face forced eviction in Bodoland**



The Lungsung forest area under Kokrajhar district of Assam has witnessed yet another episode of 'state sponsored terror' on November 22<sup>nd</sup> hardly 3 weeks after the first attacks on October 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. Even as the Civil Society Organisations & activists from the region were trying to find ways of helping the 5975 *Adivasis* who were rendered homeless after the Oct 30<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> attacks yet another 7 villages were set ablaze by the forest officials.

On the fateful day of Oct 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> a gang of 200 (Two hundred) Bodo youths, employed by Haltugaon Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), along with Forest Protection Force and Task Force entered to



Lungtung Forest Block of Gaurang Range under Haltugaon Forest Division to evict the marginalised and helpless *Adivasis*. The eviction team threatened, chased, frightened and ordered the people to leave their houses & properties and set ablaze their houses. The food stock kept safe in the baskets and granaries were burnt, the livestock's - chickens, goats, pigs etc were carried away as booty, the utensils/cooking pots were chopped with *daos*(big knives) and all the way shouting with threatening slogan at the hapless *adivasis* " go away from our land." The houses with movable properties like paddy, rice, household utensils, bicycles, ploughing instrument, clothes etc. were burnt down into ashes. Whosoever was found in their houses, men, women, senior citizens and minors were physically and mentally assaulted. Women who protested were molested and beaten by the eviction team. Seeing their women being molested, the men came out to protest but they were arrested. There are 60 (sixty) villages burnt down, 5975 (Five thousand nine hundred and seventy five) number of people became homeless consisting of 1143 (One thousand one hundred and forty three) families and 33 (Thirty three) *Adivasi* men (Santal & Oraon) have been arrested and sent to Kokrajhar jail. Besides these, there were 9 (Nine) nos of Primary Schools, 3 Churches, 6 Laxhi Mandir and 1 Manjhi Than (Place of worship) were also burnt down.



The *Adivasis* (Santal & Oraon) have been living in Lungtung Forest Block area since early 1960s. In 1974 the Government evacuated the *Adivasis* and Bodos promising land entitlements. The district administration rehabilitated the Bodos in different places in Kokrajhar district while the *Adivasis*

remained displaced in the adjacent villages of the area. When the *Adivasis* did not receive any land even in a decade the people came back to their original settlement in 1984. In July 1996 the same *Adivasis* were driven out from Lungsung by Bodo extremists and they were forced to take shelter and live in crowded & unhygienic relief camps for 14 years. The relief grant provided by the Government in these relief camps was only 400 grams of rice for 10 days in a month. *Adivasis* could not sustain & survive those camps and were forced to go back to the Lungsung area for survival.

The Forest Department enforcing the eviction drive didn't give any notification before evicting the *Adivasis* as per the eviction procedure. It is also noteworthy to mention that in the said forest area there are different communities like Bodo, Nepali, *Adivasis* (Santal & Oraon) who have been living since 1960s but it is regretted that categorically, only the *Adivasis* (Santal & Oraon) are being mostly evicted time and again in large numbers. The departmental eviction clear states the ill motive of the



government against the *Adivasis*.

Who is responsible for this gross violation of Human Rights, Right to Life and Livelihood and the Forest Rights of the *Adivasis* as the victimised women, children, senior citizens and men are struggling without food, shelter and warm clothes at the onset of winter?

Read more <http://jharkhandmirror.org/2010/11/11/why-adivasis%E2%80%99-soldier-is-silent/>  
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