

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST DETAINED ON FABRICATED CHARGES

Journalist Santosh Yadav has been in detention in Chhattisgarh, central India, since 29 September on what are believed to be fabricated charges as a result of his work reporting on human rights abuses by the police.

Santosh Yadav is a freelance journalist. He was arrested on 29 September by the Chhattisgarh police for allegedly being involved in rioting, criminal conspiracy, murder, and being part of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) armed group, among other offences. He is being held under the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act – both of which violate international human rights standards – and other laws. It is believed that he is being targeted for his work among the Adivasi Indigenous communities in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, and that the allegations against him are fabricated.

Santosh Yadav's lawyer, said, "Santosh Yadav is one of the few journalists who reported on police brutality on Adivasis in the region. He has also been the contact person for national and international journalists and was crucial in getting media attention to the plight of Adivasis in the conflict-torn region. He has also been instrumental in helping Adivasis get legal aid."

On 5 October a local court remanded Santosh Yadav in judicial custody until 20 October.

According to his lawyer, Santosh Yadav has previously faced harassment by the authorities. He said that in June he had been stripped and beaten by the state police. Journalists in Bastar district say they are regularly targeted for their work. Journalists across the state are planning to protest against the arrest if the state government does not prove the allegations within a month.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on the Chhattisgarh authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Santosh Yadav;
- Pending his release, demanding that they ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and given regular access to his lawyer and family;
- Urging them to ensure that journalists in Bastar can carry out their work without intimidation or harassment, and take prompt action against those who violate their rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

<u>Chief Minister</u>	<u>Inspector General of Police, Bastar</u>
Raman Singh	SRP Kalluri
Civil Line	IG Office
Raipur	Bastar range
Chhattisgarh – 492 001	Chhattisgarh – 494001
India	India
Email: mail@cmo.cg.gov.in	Salutation: Dear Sir
Salutation: Dear Sir	

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activists and human rights defenders in Chhattisgarh frequently face false charges and imprisonment for highlighting the human rights situation in the region. Human rights groups have highlighted several instances where laws have been abused, with the use of fabricated evidence and false charges, to detain activists defending the rights of Adivasi communities and peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Parts of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act do not meet international human rights standards and are likely to lead to human rights violations. Amendments to the Act in 2008 extended the minimum period of detention of suspects from 15 to 30 days and the maximum period of such detention from 90 to 180 days. These amendments also avoided adequate pre-trial safeguards against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of detainees. They reversed certain evidential burdens of grave crimes and required, in certain circumstances, the accused persons to prove their innocence. The Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act also contains broad and vaguely worded definitions of 'unlawful activity'. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders has called for the repeal of both laws.

Name: Santosh Yadav

Gender m/f: Male

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