

URGENT ACTION

ABDUCTED INDIGENOUS CAMPAIGNER RELEASED

Sana Sikaka, a leader of the Dongria Kondh indigenous communities who was abducted by gunmen on 9 August, has been released. Another leader is still being held.

Sana Sikaka, one of the Dongria Kondh indigenous community leaders in the eastern Indian state of Orissa who was abducted on the evening on 9 August, was released yesterday evening.



He has informed journalists that he and **Lado Sikaka**, pictured left, were stopped at Izrupa at the foothills of Niyamgiri as they were leaving with a group of activists in a van to catch a train to Delhi. About fifteen men in plain clothes, armed with automatic weapons, had parked their two vans nearby and were hiding in a forest. They surrounded Lado and Sana and said they were taking them. They intimidated the other activists, snatching their mobile phones and the van key and forced them to walk towards Lanjigarh, the nearest town. Then the plainclothesmen, along with Lado and Sanna, walked to the vans and then made a long drive towards the neighbouring district of Rayagada, stopping at a few places en route. Yesterday evening, when they reached Bijepur town, they pushed Sanna Sikaka out of the vehicle,

forcing him to commence a long journey back to Niyamgiri. They appear to have taken Lado Sikaka to Rayagada town and detained him there.

Lado Sikaka and Sana Sikaka are both campaigning against a proposed bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri Hills in the eastern Indian state of Orissa. Research by Amnesty International indicates that the Niyamgiri bauxite mining project, which would be located on the Dongria Kondh's sacred sites, traditional lands and habitats, is likely to result in violations of their rights to water, food, health, work and other rights to protection of their culture and identity. The project is currently awaiting clearance from India's Ministry of Environment and Forests.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Expressing your concern over the abduction of Lado Sikaka and calling on the Governments of India and Orissa to take all necessary measures to ensure his safe return;
- Appeal to the Governments of India and Orissa to launch an investigation into the complaint over the abduction of the two Dongria Kondh leaders, in full compliance with the country's obligations under international human rights law.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 SEPTEMBER 2010 TO:

Chief Minister of Orissa

Naveen Patnaik

Chief Minister of Orissa

State Secretariat

Sachivalaya Marg,

Bhubaneswar,

Orissa 750 001, India

Tel +91 674 2536682

Fax +91 674 2390562

E-mail cmo@nic.in; cmo@ori.nic.in

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

Minister of Home Affairs

P Chidambaram

Government of India

104, North Block

New Delhi 110 001, India

Tel +91 11 2309 2462

Tel +91 11 2301 7256

E-mail hm@nic.in

Fax +91 11 2309 4221

Salutation: Dear Home Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

This is the first update of UA 172/10 (ASA 20/020/2010).

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Dongria Kondh are indigenous communities that have been protesting that the bauxite mine project, which would be located on their sacred sites, traditional lands and habitats, will result in violations of their rights as indigenous communities to water, food, health, work and other rights to protection of their culture and identity.

In July 2010, members of the Dongria Kondh Indigenous community, including the two leaders, testified before some members of a four-member expert committee appointed by the MoEF to examine the local authorities' decision to reject the Dongria Kondh's claims over common resources in Niyamgiri. The villagers testified despite threats from private militiamen, who visited Lakpaddar along with the Orissa police personnel and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel involved in operations against guerrillas of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), a banned organization.

For more information, see Amnesty International, Don't Mine us out of Existence: Bauxite Mine and Refinery Devastate Lives in India, AI Index: ASA 20/001/2010, February 2010, Chapters 1 and 3; Amnesty International, India: Seek free, prior and informed consent of Dongria Kondh on the Niyamgiri bauxite mine project, AI Index: ASA 20/019/2010, 9 August 2010

FU on UA: 172/10 Index: ASA 20/021/2010 Issue Date: 10 August 2010

