

URGENT ACTION

CAMPAIGNERS AGAINST MINE ABDUCTED BY GUNMEN

Two leaders of the Dongria Kondh indigenous communities, campaigning against a proposed bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri Hills in the eastern Indian state of Orissa, were abducted by unidentified gunmen on 9 August 2010. The authorities have not yet begun an investigation.



Amnesty International has received reports that the two leaders – **Lado Sikaka** and **Sana Sikaka** (pictured left) – were kidnapped by many gunmen, who arrived in Izrupa, in the foothills of Niyamgiri, in two vehicles on the evening of 9 August. The gunmen were armed with automatic weapons.

The two leaders, from Lakpaddar and a neighbouring village in Niyamgiri, were on their way, along with other activists, to catch a train to Delhi to campaign against the bauxite mine project. The proposed project would be developed by Orissa Mining Corporation and Sterlite Industries India, a subsidiary of UK-based Vedanta Resources.

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 (MoEF).

A lawyer, who was at the scene of the abduction, informed Amnesty International that the gunmen, who spoke Oriya and Telugu languages, drove away with the two leaders. Later, he registered a complaint with the police at Lanjigarh at the foothills of Niyamgiri. As far as Amnesty International is aware, there has not been any investigation into the complaint so far.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Expressing your concern over the abduction of the two Dongria Kondh leaders and calling on the Governments of India and Orissa to take all necessary measures to ensure their 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 21 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
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.

**AMNESTY
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

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