

URGENT ACTION

INDIAN ENVIRONMENTALIST RELEASED FROM JAIL

Ramesh Agrawal, one of the two human rights defenders and environmental rights campaigners who has spent two months in the state of Chhattisgarh, was released on bail on the night of 12 August. He and Dr Harihar Patel had been arrested on false charges on 28 May.

Ramesh Agrawal, who works for the environmental rights organization Jan Chetna, was released on the night of 12 August following a decision by India's Supreme Court. He and **Dr Harihar Patel**, who practices indigenous medicine, were arrested on 28 May in Raigarh town. They had been actively campaigning against the pollution caused by existing industrial projects and the potential negative environmental impact of proposed industrial projects in central Chhattisgarh, and had raised their concerns in mandatory consultations conducted by the authorities. After his arrest, Ramesh Agrawal was kept chained to a bed in a hospital where he was being treated for hypertension. After three days, the police removed the chain following protests that he was being treated in a cruel, inhuman and degrading manner.

Dr Harihar Patel was released on bail on 28 July.

The two activists are at the forefront of the campaign for the public disclosure of information relating to these projects which affect Adivasi (Indigenous) communities and for ensuring that this information is available to the communities. Amnesty International believes their arrest was intended to stop their peaceful campaign activities. They have been charged with "circulating defamatory material", "disrupting public order" and "causing alarm and panic among the public" at a mandatory public consultation held by the state authorities at Tamnar on 8 May 2010.

No further appeals are requested at present. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.

This is the third update of UA 165/11. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/025/2011/en and www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/035/2011/en

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