

Condemn Violent suppression of workers and people at Lanjigarh!

The CPI(ML) strongly condemns killing of the activist Dani Batra at the gate of the Vedanta Alumina refinery plant at Lanjigarh in Kalahandi district on the morning of March 18. Over 50 people were badly injured in the brutal lathi charge by the Odisha Industrial Security Force (OISF) and admitted to the Lanjigarh hospital.

The contract workers were sittinga in front of the gate demanding permanent jobs, education for their children and provision of jobs for more people. Villagers from Rengopali, Chatrapur and Bandhaguda too joined the protest. the OISF resorted to unwarranted and brutal lathi charge with the aim of suppressing contract workers of the Lanjigarh plant and on people from surrounding villages.

Their demands are an outcome of years of simmering discontent ever since the company had acquired their land by making false promises of employment, education, health care facilities among others. The Odisha state government too has failed completely in making the company fulfil its promises. Instead of listening to their just grievances on March 18, 2019, it let loose a reign of terror.

It is deplorable that instead of the government implementing the 2013 Gram Sabha verdict, the local administration has only increased the presence of CRPF and its surveillance. The entire of Niyamgiri has been subject to relentless state repression ever since the gram sabha verdict. It is evident from the more recent arrest of Lingaraj Azad who has been at the forefront of the struggle of the people against bauxite mining.

The people living around Lanjigarh plant at the foothills of the Niyamgiri mountain have been putting up with untold suffering. The pollution caused by effluents discharged into the River Vamsadhara has caused both deaths and diseases among the people dependent on the river. The creation of ash ponds too has been the biggest environmental hazard to the Niyamgiri habitat with its rich diversity of flora and fauna. Indeed, the corporate greed for bauxite from the mountain is making the company flout all existing laws while the state government aids in providing security forces and crushing the voices of its citizens.

We urge all democratic and progressive forces to protest against corporate violence against people!
