

# **Oppose the Union Government Amendments to Exploit Adivasis and Handover Forests to Imperialists**

## **AIKMKS Appeal to the People**

The Union government has come up with The Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 to handover forests to Imperialist, corporate forces, in the present Parliamentary sessions. The Center is now trying to grab the few rights of the tribal societies, like Gram Sabhas. It is hastening the process of evicting the tribals from the forests all the while declaring that it stands for the welfare of the tribals.

### **Attacks on the Adivasis Right to Live**

The Forests (Conservation) Act of 1980 declared that those residing in the forests without the consent of the government are all illegal occupants. That means, the tribals who are the original inhabitants of forests since ages, who do 'shift cultivation' and who are protecting forests againsts all odds are considered as criminals. Through this act many attempts were made to evict Adivasis from the forests; many Adivasi dwellings were burned to ashes.

Against these atrocious attempts to displace the Adivasis from the forests rose the nation-wide Adivasi democratic movements and as a result started the process to identify Adivasis. It held that injustices were meted out to Adivasi communities historically and promulgated the Forest Rights Act- 2006. But even through this the government tried to restrict the free dwelling Adivasis to specific areas. Further, it didn't identify the hill farms cultivated by the Adivasis.

Sixteen years have passed since the Act was made, yet the question of Adivasi Rights is not yet concluded. It is understood that the intention of the act is to nullify the claims of Adivasis by creating various hurdles.

In 2019, the Center, through the Supreme Court brought the order to forcefully evict those forest dwellers who are unable to get recognition as Adivasis and hence are considered as criminals. This ruling, though stayed for a while, still hangs on the necks of the Adivasis.

Added to these, is the Wildlife (Protection) Act, that decides the rights of Adivasis in Sanctuaries and National Parks. All these acts and their amendements are being used to forefully evict Adivasis from the vast forest lands.

### **Ploy to Handover Forests to Corporates**

These forest acts brought by the governments are, on the one hand criminalising Adivasis as encroachers and on the other, intensifying the appropriation of Forest wealth by the corporates. Between 2019-2021, 5543 Sq. KM (55300 Hectares) of Forest land is diverted to corporate exploiters for non-forest activities like mines and mega projects.

The proposed Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022, further 'eases' the transfer of forest lands to corporates. The bare minimum condition of getting the approval of gram sabhas for allocating forest lands to other purposes will be removed with this new amendment.

### **Aim of the Adivasis Struggle**

At a time when manmade climate change made extreme weathers the norm, the central government is making amendments to Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill-2022 in the present parliamentary session, by reducing environmental violations from serious crimes to mere fines. This helps the exploiters to extensively grab forest lands. Not just that, incidents like the leakage of poisonous gases from Union Carbide and LG Polymers which led to the death of many will no more be considered as criminal offences. The government will give some compensation to the families of those who died and put some fine on the company involved.

So, Adivasis and the people as a whole should rise against the proposed amendments that promote the grab of our forests and pollute our environment; Adivasis for their right to live, the people, for their right to healthy environment.

On this World Tribal Day, the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, we request the entire people to fight against the anti-people, anti-national policies of the governments by taking inspiration from the Adivasi and anti-imperialist movements. We call upon the people to liberate land, forest, water and environment from the clutches of the capitalist exploiters.