

Oppose the Repressive Action taken by the Police on the Fishing Residents of Uran Raigarh

Friends!

You might have known that the life of most of the Koli fisherman community depends on the sea. They go to the sea everyday and run their livelihood by catching fish from their small boats and selling them in the market. Along with this, by staying in the sea most time, they inform us about the external dangers also. The environment is also safe from the Mangroves. On 7th February, the officials of CIDCO, which is a semi-government organisation, with the help of the police, want to remove the mangroves and build a road on the Gulf land. The Koli fisherman community is opposing the construction of a road on the Gulf land to save their traditional occupation. A petition has been filed in the High Court in this context. But, with the help of the police, the CIDCO officials forcefully started the construction of the road, when the affected Koli community gathered together and told the CIDCO officials that their source of livelihood is the sea and their boats reach the sea through this Gulf only.

Moreover, legally it is prohibited to make any kind of project on the bay. Breaking of mangroves is also prohibited. When the residents protested, the police came in large number and arrested about 31 people. Several sections of crime have been imposed on them. District court refused to grant bail. Next hearing is scheduled to be held on 18th February. On one hand jobs or work to earn is unavailable, and on the other hand, in the name of development for road construction project the livelihood has been snatched from the people. Laws are being flouted but there is no relief even from the court. There is no support from the local MLA and leaders of other parties. In such a situation, there is a need for a comprehensive solidarity with the deprived sections of the society, with mutual cooperation. We alone will not be able to win any battle in this struggle. We have received the support of some lawyers and human rights organisations. We hope that other sections will also cooperate. This struggle is not against development as some people are propagating for development, it is necessary that people should get proper employment. Here people's employment is being ended. In whatever projects are made, people are getting petty earnings from 12 to 20 thousand rupees only. This is the development of only a few people, not many. We condemn the action of the police and demand the withdrawal of the charges against the arrested people.