

**An Assessment of the Impact of the Salwa Judum on the Lives of Adivasi Women:**  
**Summary Observations by an Independent team of Women Professionals who visited Dantewada and Bijapur districts, Chattisgarh State, between October 7-10, 2008**

**INTRODUCTION**

A team of diverse women professionals consisting of lawyers, social scientists, academics, development workers and social workers, from different parts of the country (Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Delhi,) visited Dantewada and Bijapur districts of Chattisgarh between October 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, to make a first hand assessment of the impact of the controversial “Salwa Judum” counter-insurgency strategy, specifically on the lives and livelihoods of Adivasi women. The team met and interacted at length with a large number of women, men and children some of whom are living as refugees or “internally displaced people” in Khammam district, Andhra Pradesh, others who continue to live partially in the Salwa Judum camps, those who have returned to their villages during the course of the last one year and finally those who continue to live in the forests located near their original villages.

**PART I: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

We present here some immediate observations of the team members, which is followed by testimonies of victims who we spoke to.

1. The Salwa Judum which originated in 2005, has completely destroyed and shattered the lives and livelihoods of the local Adivasi communities. Unspeakable acts of violence have been committed by the Salwa Judum against women, men and children of the region. Despite there being an apparent “lull” in their activities since the past six months in 2008, the Salwa Judum continues to hold the power to evoke deep fear and terror amongst not merely the Adivasi people, but anyone they feel is opposing or challenging their diktat, who they immediately brand as “Maoist supporters”. Families have been torn apart, children separated from their mother and father, and worst of all Adivasi pitted against Adivasi.
2. The Salwa Judum, as described by the Adivasi community, specifically comprises the Special Police Officers (SPOs) and other local leaders (non-tribal and tribal), who have traditionally exploited the adivasis (local traders, business men, sarpanches, large landowners etc), who form the leadership / social base of the Salwa Judum. The former systematically entered village after village, and at gun point/knife point forced men, women and children to leave their homes and live in the camps. If people resisted they were mercilessly beaten up, killed, or forcibly dragged away to the camps, and identified as Naxalites. The ‘Judum’ would also be accompanied by members of the regular Chattisgarh Police Force, and / or from the other para-military forces stationed in the region.
3. Houses and animal sheds were systematically burnt down by the Salwa Judum, and along with it people lost their meager possessions such as their food grains, vessels, clothes, agriculture implements and most critically documents of land titles. The aggressors took away peoples livestock -goats, poultry, pigs and killed their cattle.

3. **We documented the testimonies of victims of violence, many of whom are able to clearly identify the specific SPOs and other Salwa Judum leaders who committed the crimes, and who have been unable to register a single FIR against their aggressors, because of a complete withdrawal of the State's administrative machinery and a breakdown of the legal apparatus:**
- i. Children, women and men were mercilessly beaten up by SPOs and Salwa Judum leaders
  - ii. Children and adolescents, both girls and boys were separated from their families, kidnapped and forced to live in the camps. Some of these children escaped and returned to their families after four to six weeks, while others still remain untraced.
  - iii. Men and women witnessed their family members / friends being killed in their villages and in the Salwa Judum Camps.
  - iv. Women, many of them minor girls, have been the victims of extreme sexual violence, kept as virtual slaves in the camps, and repeatedly raped / gang raped by SPOs within the camps, and in their villages.
  - v. Young boys grazing cattle or carrying grain back from the market along the highway were simply killed by forces passing by.
  - vi. Young girls, barely ten years old, were forced to live and work in the homes of Salwa Judum leaders in the camps, and were also possibly sexually assaulted.
  - vii. Parents reported that their children -- young boys and girls, have been randomly detained by the Police/ Paramilitary forces, falsely charge sheeted as Naxalites, and are now languishing in jails / juvenile homes.
  - viii. There are children have been arbitrarily arrested, and lodged in prisons instead of juvenile homes. In the case of some children who have been lodged in juvenile homes, their families have not been informed by the police about the whereabouts of the children.
  - ix. Women, whose husbands have been killed by SPOs/ Salwa Judum leaders, were taken to police stations from camps and forced by the police and SPOs to register FIRs, accusing the Naxalites of the killing.
  - x. Several hundreds of families have been forced to live in forests and in one instance in a cave under a rock for over a year, not daring to come back to villages for fear of being killed by SPOs.

- xii. There continue to be reports of people missing, and presumed to be killed by the Salwa Judum, but whose bodies have not been found to date.

**The recent report of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) submitted to the Supreme Court in September 2008, has stated that the allegations of rape by SPOs/ Salwa Judum could not be substantiated, and that several acts of violence and killings were based on hearsay. However, we have personally recorded testimonies of these victims and survivors of sexual assault and murder by SPOs. The NHRC report also does not discount the possibility of atrocities by SPOs during security operations against naxalites in para 1.54. Again in para 5.04, the report observes that while the state has initiated action against some SPOs, no action has been taken against SPOs who have targeted innocent villagers during operations against naxalites. It is our contention that these “security operations” were in fact planned attacks on villages, where ordinary villagers were abducted, taken into custody and/or killed.**

5. The Chattisgarh State has withdrawn every single public service to villages in Dantewada and Bijapur districts, since the emergence of Salwa Judum, compounding the difficulties faced by the people. We found that primary schools have stopped functioning, ration shops have been shut down, Auxilliary medical staff and Dais have stopped visiting the villages to provide medical care, Anganwadis and Sarva Shikhsa Abhiyan Centres, have been closed down. Women informed us that all these were functioning/running prior to the onset of Salwa Judum.
6. Due to the current environment of fear and terror unleashed by the Salwa Judum, coupled with the withdrawal of state administrative machinery, thousands of adivasis are being effectively denied the right to submit their individual and collective claims for recognition of rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. This is particularly important in context of a large number of adivasis in the region, who continue to live in forests/forest villages and cultivate their land in forests, without any legal recognition.
7. On the road from Konta to Dantewada we were dismayed to see schools situated along the main National highway 221 taken over by the Para-military forces as their “base camps”.
8. Several Adivasis who were forcibly taken to the camps have gradually returned to their villages during the past one year to cultivate their fields for the first time this year (2008), in 3 years since the Salwa Judum began. Roughly 50-60000 continue to live as refugees in the neighboring states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. There now appear to be between 7000-12000 people living in the camps (largely SPOs and their families and other local Salwa Judum leaders), as compared to roughly 60000 in 2006.
9. Most affected persons have not lodged FIRs as they fear the police especially as most perpetrators are SPOs / police /and armed forces with Salwa Judum members and government backing their actions. Being poor and vulnerable to attack, they do not have access to the justice system. Some of them are willing to lodge FIRs now, but many fear the consequences of doing so. Although the state government has a duty to ensure that the legal machinery is accessible to affected people, it has failed in its duty to offer

protection to marginalised communities. The impunity with which public officials operate further disempowers survivors from accessing the legal mechanisms. †The rule of law has been systematically undermined by the state government.

**On the withdrawal of public services, the NHRC report repeats the assertion by the state that naxalites do not allow public services to function and that they have forced the shut down of schools. Our observations based on testimonies of villagers directly and indirectly affected by the violence unleashed by Salwa Judum, however, point to the fact that services were withdrawn unilaterally by the state, ostensibly because their teachers and nurses would be killed by naxalites. One of our informants however, also informed us of an RTI application that had asked for details of teachers, ANMs and anganwadi workers who had been killed by the naxalites. It turned out that there was no single instance that the government could cite, nor could people recall an incident of this kind. On the other hand, because schools had been shut down, and the government had already begun to use these as bases for paramilitary and police and/or as camps, naxalites have brought down empty school buildings to prevent this. Some of these buildings are being rebuilt by the villagers. Adivasis who have returned to their villages, as also those who continue to be displaced, live in deep fear of the Salwa Judum (SPOs and local leaders). While the aggressive violence carried out between 2005 upto the first half of 2008 appears to have temporarily abated, people are convinced that it will re-emerge with greater violence, as soon as the elections are concluded.**

**It is extremely clear that both the ruling party BJP as well as the Congress, who are in the Opposition right now, completely endorse the Salwa Judum strategy of arming civilians to fight the Maoists, and which ever party comes to power, it will most probably sustain and support this with renewed vigour. Our observations, the findings of previous reports, as also the testimonies of survivors clearly points to the complete support of this strategy by the government agencies.**

**People have only one demand --- which is that the government at both State and Centre must immediately abandon their active support to the Salwa Judum strategy (which includes the recruitment of SPOs) , that the victims of violence are allowed access to the due process of law which presently they are being denied , due to the fear and terror unleashed by the Salwa Judum and the complete breakdown of democratic governance by the State. The people do not make a distinction between Judum and SPO, and use the two interchangeably.**

**The NHRC team observes in para 1.02 that the naxalites gained ground because of lack of development in the area and exploitation of adivasis by non tribal money lenders and liquor contractors. This observation points to maladministration and bad governance in this area which is covered by Schedule V of the Constitution, and is under the President's direct jurisdiction. Paras 1.21-1.29 detail the active withdrawal of development in the area by the**

**state, the responsibility for which the NHRC team loosely attributes to naxalites, virtually exonerating the state of all responsibility for withdrawing public services.**

**PART II: TESTIMONIES** (The names of victims and villages have been changed so as to ensure confidentiality)

Before entering Chattisgarh, the team from Andhra Pradesh stopped at village 1, Khammam district, Andhra Pradesh, where there was a settlement of Gottikoya / Muria Gond families. While the village Patel had come to AP from village 2 in Chattisgarh, about 10-15 years ago, there were several families who fled from CG in the wake of Salwa Judem and came to the village to stay. Today there are roughly 20-30 families in the settlement. The families survive and live by practicing Podu cultivation. The Forest department has burnt the settlement several times and has beaten them up, because they blame them for destroying the forests while they practice Podu.

3 years ago, M K from village 3, M D from village 4 fled their villages in CG and came to village 1. M D came from village 5 near Sukma in CG. M D., M C and S I came a year ago from village 6 in CG. Their villages are located in Panchayat 1 near Sukma . The Salwa Judum destroyed their possessions and they decided to leave and come away here. While they lived in CG after the Salwa Judum began, they would spend the nights in the forest, and work during the day in the village. They left as they feared the Judum.. The Judum would enter the village, destroy houses and beat up, threaten and kill people at will. One B who came to village 1 a year ago, was separated from his wife since one year. He was in village 1 while his wife lived in a camp near Sukma. His wife named M fled to village 1 about 4 weeks ago, on the pretext of going to the market. On an earlier visit to the market, she discovered that her husband was alive and living in village 1. So again on another day she went to the market and instead of returning to the camp, she fled to village 1. Similarly M I had lived for 3 months in the camp. They were given 2 glasses of rice and were asked to cook that every day. According to him, the Judum and Naxalites would visit their village. They would be beaten by either groups who thought they were supporting the other. However the Naxalites came with a concrete and beneficial plan, which was that they redistributed land, cattle, grains etc. to those who were needy and were "asset less". He said that the villagers supported this idea and felt it was good. However later the police came and beat them up for feeding the Naxals and being close to them. After police left, Naxalites, came and beat them up for informing the police. The Salwa Judum threatened to kill them if they didn't come to the camp.

In AP too, the forest department harass them regularly for being "encroachers". None of them have any land or very little land in Sukma. They report there is hardly any local resistance to the Salwa Judum in the villages, and people just flee the village. The people living in the settlement appear to be acutely malnourished.

**Testimonies recorded on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008 between 5 and 8 pm**

### Testimony 1

Name: M A

Gender: Male

Village 7

Tribe: Gottikoya / Muria gond

My son was killed by the SPOs and camp in charges. I will never forget this. I keep remembering the day he was killed. The Salwa Judum would keep coming to our village and tell us to come to stay in the camps, and that nothing will happen to us in the camp. They told us to go and stay in the Camp Mathwada, Bijapur district. . There itself my son was killed. I remember this often and didn't want to stay there. It was also difficult to go to the village & keep traveling from the village to the camp. They took 4 persons away. The SPOs and police killed my son along with 2 others.. The 4<sup>th</sup> person , S, escaped. S was the eyewitness. They had beaten all of us. God will take care of them and punish them.

The reason why they were killed was that the police suspected that they supported and helped the Naxalites in their attack in on the Errabore camp. When the women went to ask about what happened to the men, they were pushed back by bayonets.

### Testimony 2

Name: M A

Gender: Female

Tribe: Gottikoya

Village 7

My husband was killed on Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup> (year? 2008?). We did not report this. This is all their constituency and under their control so to whom do we report ? Where can we report? One of the persons in the camp threatened us saying who will we report this to? S who escaped stayed with relatives and now has gone back to camp. His family is in the village 7 . S sleeps in the camp and goes out during the day.

The roll call in the camp – was done regularly but not so much now

The leaders in the camp asked them to whom they could complain. The day of the incident in the camp The SPO, Patel and the camp in-charge came, One of the SPOs was one M K came and pulled out these 4 people from their huts in the camp. One of them was my husband M V and the second my father-in-law. So he 4 persons taken to be killed were:

M-----(A's husband)

- i. M -----(M V's husband)
- ii. M D (M A's son )
- iii. M S (who managed to escape)

We had no idea of what they were doing to the men. The camp was like a jail. They would not allow us to reach the place where they had taken our husbands. They beat the four of them badly and later we got to know from S that 1 of the persons died while he was being beaten up by the SPOs in the camp. They dragged the body and the other 2 and killed them in the jungle. They dug a Nala (pit) and dumped the bodies inside the nala.

Then in the night, we went out and began to search for our husbands / bodies of the men in the forest and along the river. We searched the whole night and finally and we found the 3 bodies in the pit. We took the 3 bodies to the camp.

When we went back to the camp, the next day Mr Vikram Madakam Saheb , from Janpett ? (Jambra) Panchayat of Bharamgarh, came and asked us whether we had reported this to anyone. We told them no He told us that we should report to the police that the men were killed by the Naxalites. They gave us wrong advise. They said that we should tell them that our people were drunk and fell asleep under the tree, when the Naxalites attacked and killed them. They said if we report the deaths in this fashion, the government would pay us money and give us a reward. The next day they took me (M I) to the thana (police station). Madakam Saheb took me along with three others in a jeep to the police station. The other three were M V's , deceased husbands elder brother, and the third person who was killed , his mother and her son from the camp. While on the way to police station, they threaten to kill us if we did not tell the police that our men had been killed by the Naxalites. When we reached the police station the Patel was already sitting there and they kept reminding us that we have to tell the police that the Naxalites killed our men. I was petrified , so in complete fear and under duress, I told the police that the Naxalites might have killed them, but I was not sure as to who actually killed them. They kept saying I would be given money, but they did not give me any money. They bribed and threatened me and that is why I did not report the truth. I think they registered an FIR that the Naxalites had killed our men. I had to sign twice and they took two signatures from all of us. We returned to the camp from the police station and then we collected the dead bodies, and returned to our native village. We collected the bodies on a Wednesday ( the day after they were killed), and the last rites were performed on Thursday.

We want to go home and live without fear in our villages. We don't want to stay in the camps. Our fear will disappear if we go home and are allowed to live in peace. We fear that at any time the government and the Salwa Judum could attack us. We want to be in our village, do our agriculture and live in peace.

We will not get justice by them giving us money. We lost our lives and our livelihood has been destroyed. Justice for us means the guilty should be punished and they must be put into jails. In our village there was one old lady called G who was killed by the Salwa Judum in the village. She had a bullet in her stomach, and still she was alive. Two members from this old lady's family members were beaten up by the Salwa Judum .Vikaram Bairan Ghat the Salwa Judum leader was killed by Naxalites.

### Testimony 3

Name: M V

Gender: Female

Tribe , Village 7

First they killed my father in law in the village after pulling him out of the house. Then they killed my husband in the camp.

### Testimony 4

Name : M S

Gender: Male

Tribe:

Village 7

I was also taken along with the other 3. My wife and children live in village 7 at the moment. I spend the nights in the camp and during the day I am in the village. The pressure and daily checking/ roll call in the camp has stopped. The pressure from the SPOs has reduced since the past 1 year.

Salwa Judum & police used to raid villages, beat up people & kill them. People used to flee to the forests. People began to tire of hiding in the village, and then later decided to go & live in the camp 150 families in village 7. There was a sangham in their village and the Sangham people fled from the village once Salwa Judum started raiding them. In 2005 they all went to the camp. In the camp they worked as labour building roads. When the police, SPOs and Salwa Judum raided the village they would catch any animal they could like goats, pigs, poultry and kill the animals. Many villagers from Kotrapal brought their cattle to the camps. For the last 2 years we have been unable to do any agriculture. We only began to cultivate our fields this year. People survived by working as labour. 22 persons from our village became SPOs, of whom 14-15 were Thakurs (OBC caste), and about 7-8 of them were tribals.

Whenever they raided the village the villagers were very frightened and would shut our doors and stay inside. If the neighbours were being harassed, we were too scared to interfere as we feared that they might kill us. They came with weapons and we had nothing. Sometimes we thought of doing something but we felt alone and did not protest. Once they took us to the camp at 4 pm and till 7 pm they tortured us like anything. While we were bathing, they beat us black and blue. The SPOs, Police Patel and Madavi Kota beat us. They hit us with shoes from all directions. SPOs tortured all of us and said if we said anything, they would kill us. Finally one of the SPOs intervened, and the beating stopped and they asked us to go away. Their village was a forest village. No one has patta and they stayed there in fear of the Forest Department. The village belongs to Panchayat 2. There was no one in the village who could guide them or represent their problems to the government. 2 months ago they filed forms for claims under the Forests Rights Act. The Patwari & Sachiv went to the camp for getting the forms filled.

#### Testimony 5

Name: M T

Gender: Male

Age: 15/16 yrs

Tribe: Koya

Village 8

According to MT, Village 8 was destroyed and burnt by Salwa Judum in 2006. About 40 people, which included men, women and children, were taken to the Errabore camp, the others ran away to the forest. They were beaten up in the camp. The Salwa Judum came to the village and took his father, brother, (cousin) and uncle to the Errabore camp. They stayed there for 1 month. About 3 days after they reached the camp, the SPOs came and took away his father and the other two saying they needed to talk to them. They beat them up, and they never returned. Later he asked the SPOs as to what had happened to them, and was told that the Naxalites had killed them. Later his mother found their bones. He does not recognize the SPOs who killed his family members but according to him they all spoke Koya and therefore were local people.

In May 2006, they ran away from the camp, fearing they would kill them and escaped to village 9 in Khammam district, where they have relatives. All their land titles got burnt when the Salwa Judum burnt the houses in village 8. His mother returned recently (about 3 months ago), to village 8, along with 20 other families who returned to the village from village 9. Ever since the Salwa Judum started all public facilities

from the government stopped- the schools stopped functioning, they stopped the health centre and anganwadi.

### Testimony 6

Name: M A

Gender: Female

Tribe: Muria Gond / Gothi Koya

Village 8

M A is the older sister of M U who was 12 years old about 3 years ago, when she was taken away by the police and SPOs when they raided and attacked village 8. In 2006 the Salwa Judum raided village 8 and men fled into the forest and hid behind the rocks, and the women were left behind. On that day, 10 persons were taken away as follows:

- 1) 1 old man
- 2, 3) 2 young girls of whom one was M R
- 4,5) B M's 2 children (1 young boy and 1 young girl )
- 6,7) B T's 2 daughters
- 8) B D: (who was killed in the Errabore camp)
- 9) B B (who was killed in Errabore camp)
- 10) M U (M A's sister)

At the time both the sisters were plucking mahua flowers, when the police & SPOs came to the village. Both sisters began to run and flee from the place towards the forests. However M U being younger, was unable to keep up with M A, and was caught by the police and SPOs. M A reached the forests, and clearly saw the SPO and Police dragging her sister away. She has been missing since then. They searched the entire area and as they did not discover any body, they are sure that she has not been killed. They also found her foot prints. Her family consists of her father, mother and 5 brothers. All of them ran away to the forests and continue to live deep inside the forests. They built a temporary hut (jhopadi) in the forests and live there. This year (2008) they decided to cultivate their land and for the first time in 3 years they have grown crops on their land. They do have a patta / title to their land.

17 families from village 8 and village 10 continue to live in the forests. They are 8 Koya families from village 8, 8 Muria Gond / Gothi koya families from village 8 and 1 family from village 10.

### Testimony 7

Name: M R, M B (husband)

Tribe: Muria Gond / Gothi Koya

Village 10

They had gone to Maraipenta Shanty to sell *tora* and to purchase rice. They bought rice and were returning home. 8 of them were on cycles and their son M B who was 16 years, was walking ahead holding a "kawadi" with rice in it. He was walking ahead of the rest of them, and near Injeram, the ones who were on cycles saw the force coming and ran away leaving their cycles behind. M B could not run and was therefore taken away. As soon as this happened M R rushed to the Ashram and reported this to them. U, an ashram volunteer went to the spot and saw the rice fallen on the ground. They searched everywhere for him, but could not find him and thought he was dead. Later they discovered that he was in jail. He has been

falsely accused of being a Naxalite. Since he looked older, he was put in jail, as opposed to the Juvenile Court.

#### Testimony 8

Name: V H

Gender: Female

Tribe:

Village :

V P, who is about 14-15 years old, is in the Juvenile Court in Jagdalpur. He was caught by the CRPF battalion on the same day as M B. V P, her son aged 14/15 years was grazing their cattle. He was grazing his cattle near the road and when he saw the CRPF battalion approaching he got scared and ran away. The CRPF shot him in the leg, and then caught him and accused him of attacking them with a bow and arrow. He was then taken to the Juvenile Court. Vanvasi Chetna Ashram was informed by the Injiram Camp leader that V P tried to attack the force with his bow and arrow and was therefore arrested. We met V P and V H in Jagdalpur on 8<sup>th</sup> October. The boy was limping due to his injury. Some of the charges against him include attempt to murder and other serious charges. The report on his case was expected on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

#### Testimony 9

Name: MD (father), M R (daughter)

Tribe:Koya

Village 8

M R is 12 years old and was taken away from the village in March 2006 along with 10 others- which included one old man, his daughter, B T two daughters, B M's two children, VD, VB, MU and M R. V D and V B were later killed in the Errabore camp.

She was taken away by the Salwa Judem , SPOs and police and taken to Errabore camp. .From Errabore they were taken to Injiram and she was made to stay at Budi Raja's house in the camp. He was the judum leader.

We spoke to MR separately since this was a sensitive issue and the child looked scared. MR spoke softly and said that she was in the Errabore camp first for a week. The other people in the camp were B L, B B, K, B K, B R and MR. B M was the woman with them. MR was later taken to Budu Raja's house. She said that there were four people in the house- two boys who were younger than her and one girl, who was older than MR. She used to wash dishes in the house. MR said that they gave her food. She did not say much and as we probed her further, she started withdrawing and spoke even more softly. The girl appeared to be under some kind of trauma and other people in the community seemed very protective. They also seemed happy to have her back.

## **Testimonies recorded on 9/10/08, 2-5 PM**

### Testimony 10

Name: M K,

Gender: Male

Age: 19/20 years

Tribe: Muria Gond

Village 11

He is married and lives with his father and mother. He owns 5 acres of land. The Judum came to the village in April 2007 at around 2 pm. Consisting of SPOs, local judum leaders and the Naga battalion. They beat all the men and caught the women and girls. They did not know that the Judum was coming to the village and so they were unable to run away. The judum took away all the money they could find in people's homes, along with the goats, poultry and pigs and utensils. The Judum took them to the Jaggargunda camp and they were forcibly kept there for 20 days. Three years ago when the judum began, the government stopped all facilities to the village such as the primary school, anganwadi, the ANM, and the ration shop. All these used to function before the judum began. Many people left the village and stopped doing agriculture. Since the past 2 years they have been cultivating the lands again. He wants the judum to stop immediately. They want cases to be booked against the SPOs. They should be punished, jailed for the torture and violence they inflicted on them and other villagers.

### Testimony 11

Name: S B, 30 years, Male, Naik podu, married

Village 12

S B is married and has five daughters. He owns about 28 acres of land with clear title deeds to the land. 8-9 acres of land was under his possession, but 20 acres of the land was controlled by a Thakur family, whose sons one Mr Vijay Chauhan and Mr Guddu Chauhan became SPOs about 3 years ago in 2005. He owned about 30 cattle, 3 goats and 6 poultry at the time. His house was located near the road. In January 2008 around 12:00 noon, the Salwa Judum along with SPOs from Dornapal police station, came and raided the village and attacked and burnt down homes and attacked the villagers. 2 SPOs Mr Vijay Chauhan and Mr Guddu Chauhan came to his house and first attacked and killed all the animals. They then burnt the house, and the title deeds along with 40 bags of paddy grain, 3 utensils, 7 plates and other belongings were burnt to cinder. He was left with nothing.

### Testimony 12,13

Name: M B, Male, 20 years , Muria Gond , unmarried

Name: M A, Male, 21 years , Muria,Gond , married in 2008

Village 12

The day after S Bs' house was attacked and burnt down, the Salwa Judum and SPOs returned to the village. M B and M A were eating their lunch when 4 persons Mr Jonnaguda Bheema (an SPO), Mr Kunder Oika Somburu (SPO) , Nanda Tellam from Lakkapal camp/village and Mr Karasi Dasudu (SPO) from Meliampalli camp, surrounded them and began to hit them with sticks and guns. They were badly hurt and M A fell down unconscious. They tied them up and hung them upside down and continued kicking and beating them. They then took them to the Chintalnara police station and made them lie on the ground in the sun and resumed beating. Only the two of them were taken to the police station. They told them that they go and meet Naxalites and associate with them, and that is why they were going to be killed. They held a knife to their necks. Then they left them lying on the ground There was a police on duty in the police station who took some pity on them and told them that if they remain in the station , the SPOs would return and kill them. The police helped the two boys to roll out between the barbed wire, and some how they managed to flee from that spot. M A was completely maimed and unable to work. After some month, they ran away to village 13 in Andhra Pradesh and were there for a month , returning to CG in June 2008. According to the two boys, no one from their village went to stay in a camp. They want justice, and want to file a case against the men who attacked them.

### Testimony 14,15

Name: M K, 15/16 years, Female, Muria Gond, unmarried

Name: M J, 15/16 years, Female, Muria Gond, unmarried

Village 11

M K lives with her father, mother, 2 sisters and 2 brothers. Her father was the village Patel. M J lives with her father and mother. M K was at the borewell pumping water and MJ was sweeping her home, when the Salwa Judum , SPOs and Naga battalion, attacked their village in April 2007. The men ran away, and while the girls ran as well, they were unable to escape, and were caught by the SPOs and taken to Jaggargunda camp. The girls clearly identified their captors as being

Bheema- SPO from Jaggargunda camp

Nanda- SPO from Lakkapal camp

Mukesh- SPO from Nagaram

Dasudu – SPO from Melliampalli

All were Muria Gonds and spoke Koya. The Naga Batallion left, but the SPOs stayed behind. The 2 girls were taken to the Jaggurgonda camp and were put into a room. They were beaten , threatened , denied food , sexually assaulted and gang raped every day by 4 SPOs. The SPOs were Bheema, Dasusdu, Nanda and Somudu. They were raped each day. The Naga forces were also there in the camp, but they did not touch them or rape them. After 15 days, K A and M M from village 12 were brought by the SPOs and thrown into the same room. Then all 4 of them were together for a period of 30 days, and continuously gang raped by the same SPOSs mentioned earlier. KA and MM managed to run away after 30 days. 3 days after they escaped, MK and MJ ran away.

When the girls returned home, they told their mothers about what had happened. KA told her friend.

To date they have not filed a complaint or FIR against the 4 SPOs who raped them. MK and MJ want justice and are willing to file FIRs. They want them to be severely punished. They said they hurt them, assaulted and raped them, and thus should be punished and made to feel the same way. They should be jailed. All four girls are sure that they will be able to identify the SPOs who assaulted them.

#### Testimony 16

Name: M M, 19/20 years, Female, unmarried

Village 12

The two women were taken to the Jaggargunda camp and thrown into a room. They were raped by Lakhan Nanda, Dusudu of Millampalli, Somudu of Kunder, and Bheema of Jaggurgonda camp. All were SPOs. They were repeatedly raped at gunpoint. M M was accused of being a sangham member. She along with KA escaped after 30 days of this torture. She says that she had no fear earlier prior to the Salwa Judum. She was engaged to someone in the same village, but the engagement was broken off after this incident. She is staying with her parents in the village now. She wants justice and the SPOs to be punished. She is willing to file an FIR and will be able to identify the SPOs.

#### Testimony 17

Name: KA, 30 years, Female, Married

Village 12

KA is married but has no children. The Salwa Judum and SPOs attacked the village, took away the cattle, goats, hens and burnt houses. She was taken away at the same time as MM. She was raped by the same people. She filed a complaint to the NHRC at Dantewada. Now she is staying with her husband & mother in law in the village

#### Testimonies 18,19,20,21

Village 14

Distance from Sukma: 25 kms,

Tribe: Gond

#### **Women:**

- (i) K S, daughter of G. Age- approximately 16 years. Has four sisters, step mother, father.
- (ii) S M, daughter of S B. Age- approximately 18 years. Lives with parents and has a brother
- (iii) K B, daughter of B. Age- approx 18 years. Lives with parents, two brothers.
- (iv) S N, wife of S Si Three daughters, one son.

All four women said that they did not know about Salwa Judum till they actually came to their village two years ago. Salwa Judum came to their village very often and took away their poultry, utensils and sometimes even food. They usually came in the afternoon, a time when people usually returned from work to cook and eat. The women said that they could not live in peace or even eat as they would have to run to the forests as soon as Salwa Judum came. People who could not run were beaten up or taken to the Dornapal Camp. The women said- when we have our own land, house, cattle and poultry, why should we go to anywhere else?

The women also said that the school in village 14 is now in Dornapal. It is an ashram school (residential school) till the 5<sup>th</sup> standard. Some children come to Sukma where there is a middle school. Since the

village was close to the road, the Salwa Judum could easily access the village. The haat is in Kerlapur but Salwa Judum members check their bags and beat them even in the haat.

They also said that now the visits of Salwa Judum are less frequent and therefore they have gotten back to regular work even though they still live in fear.

Two out of the four women said that they had been raped by Salwa Judum, one woman said that her daughter (who could not come that day) had been raped.

**K S** said that in July 2007 she was cooking in her house when four men entered the house and raped her. The men shut the door from inside so she could not escape. She said that she could not see them as they had covered their faces.

**S M** said that she was fetching water for the house when three men caught her and forced her inside the house and raped her.

**K B** said Salwa Judum men tried to force her into their vehicle, they called her a naxalite, but she managed to escape.

**S N** said that her daughter **S A** (who according to her is about 21 years old) was also raped by Salwa Judum. She said that they were at home and she and daughter were pounding rice when three men came and threw the others out and raped her daughter. SN's husband passed away about two months later. The women said that the men were in khaki clothes, they had covered their faces with black cloth and wore black glasses and therefore they could not identify them. They also said that the Salwa Judum men came in seven vehicles that day. They were talking in Gondi and Hindi. All four women were assaulted on the same day. They said that they could not do anything immediately after the incident as it had been raining and the river was overflowing. Four- five days later they came to Sukma to the CPI office. The men who were beaten up also came. They also said that they went to Kerlapal for medical check up, but it was not clear to us if they went for a medical check up due to the nature of the sexual assault or for treatment for injury.

#### Testimonies 22-29

##### Village 15

##### Villagers:

- i. **V S**, son of **V P**
- ii. **P S**, son of **P E**
- iii. **V S**, son of **V G**
- iv. **M E**, wife of **M B**
- v. **P D**, son of **P D**
- vi. **P D**, wife of **P D**
- vii. **M G**, son of **M N**

**Salwa Judum** has been coming to village 15 for the last three years. The villagers told us that Salwa Judum comes every 10-15 days, beat them and take away their pigs, goats and hens. They also said that Poriyam Pardesi, a local boy from village 15, has joined Salwa Judum. He is an SPO at the Polampalli camp. He has asked other people in the village to join Salwa Judum, but since they have not done so, they are harassed and beaten up.

**M B** (husband of M E who spoke to us that day) was shot dead by Salwa Judum. According to M E, Bhima was shot dead by Poriyam Pardesi. He was working in the fields and refused to go with Salwa Judum when they came one afternoon in 2007.

V S's (**V R**) son was beaten up and was badly injured.

**P D's** son **P J** was shot dead in Polampalli. According to the villagers, in June 2007 he was going to Kerlapur haat to sell mahua and to get rice for the house. The Salwa Judum caught him in Kakaranka base camp and took him to Polampalli. His hands and legs were tied up; he was hit with a gun and then thrown into the nala. The villagers said that Guskeadama (SPO) and Pardesi shot him. His cycle was thrown away.

The villagers said that other people have also been beaten up but they haven't lodged any complain as they have no faith in the police. They had gone to the Chintagupha thana but Pardesi was present there, he threatened to kill them and sent them back.

The village school is now in Dornapal, none of the children go to school as their parents fear that if they go to Dornapal, the Salwa Judum will catch them and put them in the camp. Only two children from the village go to the school in Sukma. Before Salwa Judum started coming to their village, they used to go the haat in Cherla (AP border), but now they have to go to Chintagupha. They also don't have a sarpanch as he died due to an illness. There are no government schemes in the village, no pensions have been given since Salwa Judum started. Pulse polio is the only government programme that is functioning. Lakhma (the local MLA from Congress) has never come to their village. They also said that Pardesi, Guskeadama (Kakaranka village) and Rasa Deva (Puswada cillage) are three local SPOs who have created terror and havoc in the area.

### Testimony 30

Name: M M

Gender: Female

Village 16

She has been living in the village, and has never gone to the camp. She hid in the forests when the Salwa Judum was active. In March – April of this year (2008), they returned to the village. The village had been frequently visited by Dornapal's Salwa Judum. The Salwa Judum would beat people, animals and go away. They would especially target the men. They were beaten up for staying in the villages and not going to the camps. The people did not want to go to camps because they had land and fields in the villages. Her husband had been killed by the Salwa Judum. The body was not recovered. She fled to the forests when the Salwa Judum came. She only heard that he had been killed and did not witness the killing. She went to Chintagoofa police station to find out details about her husband, but did not get any details and returned. She stays with her mother-in-law, daughter and 2 sons. Says she has testified before the NHRC.. She says she fears for her life even now. She said that men do not go to the market out of fear and only women and kids go to the market. She says she lodged an FIR at the Chintagoofa police station.

### Testimony 31

Name: **D H**

Gender: Male

Village 16

According to him, 149 families had lived in the village before the Salwa Judum came. **DH** had 4 sons, out of whom 1 was killed by the Salwa Judum, and 3 fled. He lives with his daughter-in-law named D J - and her 2 minor daughters. He said that 2 women's husbands' bodies had been cut and they were killed, when they questioned the Salwa Judum. He reported that now (at the time of our visit) there are no problems in the village. When they heard that the Salwa Judum people visited their village very infrequently, they returned from the jungles. He said that the Salwa Judum kills whoever they get their hands on. The men fled to the forests and the women usually stayed at home. The Salwa Judum members carry weapons, wear uniform, capa and carry a gun, so they can be distinctly identified. He says that those who have died have died, he keeps wondering how he is going to die. He says that if they think of justice, those who survive will also be killed.

### Testimony 32

Name: D J , Gender: Female

Village 16 (?)

She says she assumes that her husband is dead but did not see him being killed and did not see his body. She is scared of the Salwa Judum but is working on her fields. She deposed in front of the NHRC.

### Testimony 33

Name: G H

Gender: Female

Village 12

She along with 3 others were taken from their village in the middle of the night and taken to Jagergunda camp. 4 were caught, of whom 1 was killed and 3 others including her, M M and K A (all women) were forcibly taken to the camp. They were taken there on suspicion of associating with Naxallites. They were in the camp for about a month. The camp residents used to go fishing every day. One day , they escaped from the camp when they had all gone fishing. They fled across the river and into the jungle on the other side of the river bank. Each one left separately, and it took them the entire night to reach their village.

### **Our Recommendations and Demands:**

1. Immediate closure of all Salwa Judum camps and disbanding of the Special Police Force.

2. Submission of report to the President of India on the administration and problems thereof in Schedule V areas of Dantewada and Bijapur districts, which details the action in the Salwa Judum phase.
3. Detailed information of numbers of naxalites and villagers killed in counter insurgency operations in this three year period must be released forthwith.
4. Detailed information of persons shifted to camps who died within or outside the camps during their residence in the camps must be released forthwith.
5. All information relating to encounters, arrests, prosecutions, convictions and acquittals of police officers to be made part of the state's report.
6. Detailed information relating to police officers killed in naxalite attacks.
7. Release of school buildings, and re-opening of schools at all levels, primary health centres, ration shops, anganwadi centres and restoring all other public services.
8. Implementation of the recommendations of the various reports of Commissions on Tribal welfare and the needs of Schedule V Areas.
9. Facilitation and ensuring of people's right to the process of law, in view of the large number of complaints of murder, abduction, assault and sexual violence not being registered due to fear and coercion.

1. Prof. Kalpana Kannabiran (Phd, LLM), Professor of Sociology, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad
2. Dr Sagari R Ramdas , Director, Anthra, Hyderabad. Veterinary Scientist and Development worker working with Adivasi Communities.
3. Ms Saumya Uma, Advocate & Co-Director, Women's Research and Action Group, Mumbai
4. Ms Shalini Joshi, Co Director, Nirantar, Centre for Gender and Education, B-64, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi.
5. Prof U. Vindhya (Phd), Professor of Psychology, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad

**JANUARY 2009**