

Raipur Satyagraha for the Release of Dr. Binayak Sen

The Dr Binayak Sen Case: A Fact Sheet

- Dr. Binayak Sen was arrested on May 14, 2007, under sections of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act (CSPSA), sections of the UPA, and the IPC. He remains in jail despite widespread national and international public outcry. Bail application was dismissed by the Supreme Court in December 2007, without a reason being provided.
- He is a 58 year old paediatrician and public health physician with a 25 year record of providing health care to the Adivasi people of Chhattisgarh. His path breaking work has been recognized through the various awards, the Paul Harrison award from his alma mater, the CMC Vellore (2004), the RR Keithan Gold medal from the Indian Academy of Social Sciences (2007), and the prestigious Jonathan Mann Award for Health and Human Rights from the Global Health Council (2008).
- Dr. Sen was also closely involved with civil liberties and human rights work- he was first drawn to this area through his investigations into hunger deaths and the causes of malnutrition in Chhattisgarh. He was General Secretary of the state unit of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and its National Vice President.
- His work was in the voluntary sector, but he cooperated closely with the government, especially in conceptualizing and designing the Mitandin programme in Chhattisgarh that went on to provide the model for the ASHA of the National Rural Health Mission. He was a member of the State Advisory Committee on Health Sector Reforms during the Ajit Jogi government in Chhattisgarh.
- The new state of Chhattisgarh grew more and more disturbed after 2000 as the state's anxieties about Maoist rebels began to increase. In response to this threat, instead of addressing crucial issues like development and displacement, the state chose to institutionalise a vigilante organisation called the Salwa Judum.
- Dr. Sen was among the first to draw public attention to the widespread human rights violations in the wake of the Salwa Judum, and as part of an all India team investigated and published a report on the SJ in November 2005.
- After this report was published, the then DG Police, Chhattisgarh made threatening remarks about PUCL which are on record, specifically that a new law was being formulated that would 'take care' of 'naxal supporters' in the state.
- Dr. Sen, along with the rest of PUCL opposed the passage of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act that gave sweeping powers to the state on the lines of TADA and POTA. He was one of the first victims of the new Act.
- Although Dr. Sen took up the cases of Maoist prisoners among others, and on several occasions, organized legal aid for them, he is a firm believer in peaceful development, and has spent his entire life working for that. He opposes violence in all forms by all individuals and groups. He has gone on record expressly stating that the Maoist approach is invalid and unsustainable. However, **he has also criticized the creation of a state-sponsored militia in the form of the Salwa Judum, a position with which the Supreme Court has since agreed**; and he has criticized fake encounters and human rights violations by the state police. The latter two positions have drawn the ire of the state.
- The targeting of a person like this by the government blurs the middle ground between extremism and state repression. People who are able to view the situation in other than black or white terms and have credibility with the masses, are crucial in the restoration of peace in Chhattisgarh.



- In his trial which began a year after his arrest, and has been proceeding since May 2008, the state has produced no credible evidence or witnesses in support of its charges, despite repeated claims of their existence.
- It is increasingly believed that the purpose of Dr. Sen's arrest and incarceration is to send a chilling message to human rights workers to refrain from challenging or criticizing the government's actions.

You can support the Raipur Satyagraha for the Release of Dr. Binayak Sen by:

- (1) **Joining** the Satyagraha in Raipur on a specific Monday.
- (2) **Doing** shramdaan in Raipur.
- (3) **Signing** the petition at - <http://petitions.aidindia.org/binayaksen09/>
- (4) **Faxing** or posting the petition to the CM of Chattisgarh and others listed in the petition
- (5) **Endorsing** the appeal and sending it to releasebinayak@gmail.com
- (6) **Organising** solidarity events in your cities
- (7) **Making a financial contribution** to the Satyagraha by dropping us a line at releasebinayak@gmail.com and sending cheques made out in the name of INSAF (payable at Delhi) and posting it to:
 INSAF national secretariat
 124-A/6, First Floor, Katwaria Sarai,
 New Delhi-110016
 Ph: +91-11-65663958 Telefax:+91-11-26517814 (ask for Lun)
 E-mail: insafdelhi@gmail.com
- (8) **Question national leaders** of the BJP and the Congress touring your states for election campaign. Ask them questions to immediately release Dr. Binayak Sen's continued incarceration and restore democracy.

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