

PRESS RELEASE

19 March 2010

Condemn the Illegal Abduction and Detention of Azad, the Spokesperson of CPI(Maoist) by the Andhra Pradesh Police! Ensure the safety of Azad's life and his immediate production in a court of law!

The Central Committee of the CPI(Maoist) informed the revolutionary poet Varavara Rao that Azad, senior leader, Polit Bureau member and the spokesperson of the CPI(Maoist) has remained untraceable from 12th March 2010 onwards. There is a strong possibility that Azad has been kept in illegal custody by the Andhra Pradesh police since then. Given the history of the AP police and its special anti-Naxal force Greyhounds and intelligence wing of the AP police in gross human rights violations, whereby it has repeatedly resorted to fake encounters and custodial killings, there are grounds to believe that his life is in grave danger. Last week itself, as the media has reported, two senior leaders of the CPI(Maoist), Sakhamuri Apparao and Kondal Reddy, who were arrested by AP police from Maharashtra, were abducted, subjected to brutal torture and killed in cold blood. Thereafter the dead bodies were taken two separate districts of Andhra Pradesh, the police claiming that they were killed in 'encounters'. Such illegal acts of repression have been regularly committed by the AP police in the name of countering Naxalism, and Azad might also meet a similar fate.

We demand that Azad be produced before a court of law as per the legal requirements, if there are any cases pending against him, or should be immediately released. The Union Home Minister P Chidambaram must not allow Andhra Pradesh police or any others to kill the CPI(Maoist) spokesperson Azad, and produce him in a court of law. We demand that the Central Government immediately halt its war on people named Operation Green Hunt, and initiate a dialogue with the concerned organisations.