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India

Condemn the mass killing of Maoists

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Radical Socialist condemns the mass killing of at least 24 Maoists or alleged Maoists, in what the police are calling an encounter, in the Odisha side of the Andhra "Odisha border area. From the reports issued by the police, it is evident that they had surrounded a meeting of the Maoists, at best.

We say at best, because it is well known, and has been revealed latest in the case of the killing of Madkam Hidme, [1] that adivasis [2] are killed at random to make up tales of police-military heroism, dressed in so called Maoist uniforms, etc. So without independent evidence one cannot take the words of the police as the truth. As the identification of bodies takes place, it has been alleged by activists, such as Varvara Rao, that some at least among those killed were villagers who had kept in touch with the Maoists rather than being Maoist cadres themselves.

In the first place, even if everyone had been a Maoist, there is a need to know exactly what the Andhra police was doing, with arms, in Odisha. If the Maoists were holding a meeting, and if there was a need to apprehend them, why not only the Odisha police.

The use of Greyhounds, trained to attack and kill, suggests that the operation was planned as a killing operation from the outset. Varvara Rao's description of it as a fake encounter is therefore apt.

We stand by what we have said in the past. If the Indian state claims to be a democratic state, it has to use normal laws, and compel its police forces to follow regulations and procedures. The use of special forces, whether the Greyhounds in Andhra and Telangana, or other types including in Jammu and Kashmir and North East India, flouts the democratic rights of the people of India. India's people need protection far more from the state than from real or spurious terrorists.

Abolish all so-called anti-terrorist laws that are deliberately worded in a vague and broad manner so that they can be and are used to terrorise ordinary people.

Abolish special police forces trained to kill and count score for bonus. We need law, not bounty hunters.

27 October, 2016

[1] Madkam Hidme was killed after being raped in another fake encounter in June 2016; <http://www.eyearcollective.com/the...>

[2] adivasis is the term for indigenous peoples of South Asia