

APPEAL TO OBSERVE ONE YEAR OF DR. BINAYAK SEN'S UNJUST DETENTION

On May 13th/14th, 2008 Dr. Binayak Sen, an activist with a lifelong commitment to the issues of community health and human rights, will complete his first year of unjust imprisonment at the Raipur Central jail in Chhattisgarh. Organizations across the globe will be holding events on the evening of May 13th, 2008 to mark one year of his imprisonment. We appeal to your organization to hold rallies, candlelight vigils or lectures against his unconstitutional detention. Please let us know at freebsen@gmail.com if your organization would endorse this appeal.

Dr. Sen's life has been focused on providing healthcare to the most marginalized sections of the society. By setting up the unique Shaheed Hospital, the community-driven work of Rupantar and his broader involvement with Jan Swasthya Abhiyan – the Indian circle of the People's Health Movement, Dr. Sen has made healthcare available to people who have been ignored by government or private systems.

As the State Secretary of People's Union for Civil Liberties of Chhattisgarh and the national Vice President, Dr. Sen has uncovered human rights violations by the state and other armed groups. He has highlighted starvation deaths, dysentery epidemics, poor conditions of under trial prisoners, custodial deaths and extra judicial killings. Dr. Sen has also worked on the issues of right to food, work, health and education. He has been amongst the most vocal opponents of Salwa Judum, a private militia movement armed by the Chhattisgarh Government to combat Maoist insurgency – that has contributed to a spiraling increase in violence and displacement of thousands of tribals. Even the Supreme Court of India has issued a strong disapproval of the Salwa Judum, citing concerns similar to those raised by Dr. Sen.

On May 14th, 2007 Dr. Sen was arrested in Raipur under the repressive Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005 (CSPSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 2004 (UAPA) on charges of sedition, conspiracy to wage war against the state and conspiracy to commit other offences. The continuing detention of an activist committed to non-violence and social justice is a mockery of justice itself. His trial began on April 30th after a year in prison without bail, including a cruel spell of solitary confinement.

Dr. Sen is victim to an increasing trend of arresting human rights activists in India for challenging state authority. Lachit Bordoloi, a human rights activist from Assam; Prashant Rahi, journalist from Uttarakhand; Govindan Kutty, editor of People's March in Kerala; Praful Jha, a journalist from Chhattisgarh; Vernon Gonsalves, an activist from Nasik; Arun Ferreira, Ashok Reddy, Dhanendra Bhurule, Naresh Bansode, activists from Vidarbha have all been charged under the UAPA and kept under prolonged detention without bail.

We appeal to the international community to speak out against the stifling of pro-poor and democratic voices such as Dr. Binayak Sen's. The international community has already shown its appreciation by bestowing the Jonathan Mann award for public health and human rights on him. In addition, the UAPA and the CSPSA must be repealed, and the Chhattisgarh government should stop its support for Salwa Judum.

Endorsed by:

International Organizations:

- Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia, MIT (<http://www.alliancesouthasia.org>)
- Alliance of South Asians Taking Action, San Francisco (<http://www.asata.org>)
- Amnesty International, USA (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/>)
- A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition, Act Now to Stop War and End Racism -San Francisco (<http://www.answersf.org>)
- Association for India's Development (<http://www.aidindia.org>)
- Association of South Asian Political Activists (ASAPA), Berkeley (<http://asapa.berkeley.edu>)
- Asian Law Alliance (<http://www.asianlawalliance.org>)
- Birmingham Anti-SEZ Campaign, UK
- Boston Coalition for Justice in Bhopal (www.boston4bhopal.org)
- Boston Mobilization (<http://www.bostonmobilization.org>)
- Campaign against Forced Displacement, UK (http://www.ilps-web.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79)
- Campaign to Stop Funding Hate: CSFH (<http://www.stopfundinghate.org>)
- CMC Vellore Alumni Association - UK Branch
- DEEP - Defenders of the Environment and Ecology of Panjab, UK
- Dharma Megha, East Lansing, Michigan
- Friends of South Asia: FOSA (<http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org>)
- Gadar Heritage Foundation, Fremont (<http://gadar.homestead.com>)
- Hillingdon Asian Women's Communication Service, UK (<http://www.hillingdonwomenscentre.org.uk>)
- India Foundation, East Lansing, Michigan
- Indian Muslim Council, USA (<http://www.imc-usa.org/>)
- Indian Progressive Study Group-L.A. (IPSG)
- Indian Workers Association (GB)
- India Relief and Education Fund, Fremont (<http://iref.homestead.com>)
- International Accountability Project (<http://www.accountabilityproject.org>)
- International League of People's Struggles, UK (<http://www.ilps-web.com>)
- International Service Society, Okemos, Michigan
- International South Asia Forum: INSAF, NYC (<http://www.insaf.net>)
- Massachusetts Global Action (<http://www.massglobalaction.org>)
- Matahari: Eye of the Day (<http://www.eyeoftheday.org>)
- National Lawyers' Guild (<http://www.nlg.org/>)
- Our Developing World (<http://www.magiclink.net/~odw>)
- Peace and Human Rights Trust: UK
- Peninsula Peace & Justice Center (<http://www.peaceandjustice.org>)
- Peoples Health Movement, USA (<http://www.phmovement.org/cms>)
- Sanhati (<http://www.sanhati.com>)
- San Jose Peace & Justice Center (<http://www.sanjosepeace.org>)

- SANSAD (South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy), Vancouver, Canada (<http://sansad.org/Sansad>)
- SAPAC: South Asian Progressive Action Collective, Chicago (<http://www.sapac.org/>)
- Seva International, Okemos, Michigan
- Sikh American Heritage Organization
- South Asian Alliance, UK: (<http://www.southasianalliance.org>)
- South Asians Stepping in Solidarity, Harvard: SASS
- South Asia Solidarity Group, UK: (<http://www.southasiasolidarity.org>)
- Students for Bhopal (<http://www.studentsforbhopal.org>)
- The 1857 Committee (<http://1857.org.uk>)
- Vaishnava Center for Enlightenment, Okemos, Michigan
- Vedanta Society of East Lansing, Michigan
- Western States Legal Foundation (WSLF) (<http://www.wslfweb.org>)
- Women's International League for Peace & Freedom - San Jose (http://www.wilpf.org/US_WILPF)

Indian Organizations:

- All India Secular Forum (<http://www.pluralindia.com>)
- Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union-APVVU
- Association for Protection of Democratic Rights: APDR, West Bengal
- Centre for Health and Social Justice: CHSJ (<http://www.chsj.org>)
- CIEDS Collective, Bangalore (<http://ciedsindia.org/>)
- Environics Trust (<http://environicsindia.in>)
- Forum for Fact-finding Documentation and Advocacy (<http://www.ffdaindia.in>)
- Ganmukti Parishad, West Bengal
- Gender, Livelihoods and Resources Forum (GLRF), Jharkhand (GLRF-Tribal at googlegroups.com)
- Manushi (<http://www.manushi-india.org>)
- Medical College Democratic Students Association , Kolkata
- National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – NCDHR (<http://www.ncdhr.org.in>)
- Narmada Bachao Andolan/National Alliance of People's Movements
- Naz Foundation Chapter, New Delhi (<http://www.infinityfoundation.com/naz.htm>)
- People Tree, New Delhi (<http://www.peopletreeonline.com>)
- People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (<http://www.pvchr.org>)
- UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternatives), Dhaka, Bangladesh (<http://membres.lycos.fr/ubinig>)
- World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) (www.wffpfishers.org)

For more information, please see:

- A petition to free Dr. Sen: <http://www.petitiononline.com/Binayak/petition.html>
- Statement of solidarity with Dr. Sen from internationally renowned intellectuals: <http://monthlyreview.org/0607sen.htm>
- Announcement of the Jonathan Mann Award for Dr. Sen: <http://www.globalhealth.org/news/article/9833>
- Statement by Human Rights Watch <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2008/04/29/india18681.htm>

- Resources on Dr. Sen and the status of the trial:
 - <http://www.freebinayaksen.org/>
 - <http://www.savebinayak.ukaid.org.uk/index.html>
- An article on Dr. Sen's imprisonment in the context of the political economy of Chhattisgarh: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/amr140607.html>
- Medico Friend Circle Brochure on Dr. Binayak Sen: <http://www.mail-archive.com/greenyouth@googlegroups.com/msg03256.html>
- An analysis of Dr. Sen's case from the PUCL website: <http://www.pucl.org/Topics/Human-rights/2007/sen-case-analysis.html>
- Background information on the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2006 <http://oldcontent.newswatch.in/news-analyses/attacks-on-scribes/3893.html>
- Background information on the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 2004 from Human Rights Features: <http://www.hrhc.net/sahrdc/hrfeatures/HRF106.htm>
- Information on other activists under the UAPA, 2004:
 - Amnesty International on journalists Prashant Rahi, Govindan Kutty and Praful Jha: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGASA200032008>
 - Frontline Defenders on Lachit Bordoloi of MASS: <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/1360>
 - Background on the arrest of Vernon Gonsalves, Shridhar Shrinivasan and Adv KD Rao: <http://www.lawyerscollective.org/content/letters-0>
 - Background on Arun Ferreira http://in.news.yahoo.com/hindustantimes/20080411/r_t_ht_nl_general/tnl-naxal-prisoners-protest-torture-in-n-7244580.html

Information about Salwa Judum: When the State Makes War on its Own People—A report from human rights organizations in India, 2006 <http://www.pucl.org/Topics/Human-rights/2006/slawajudum.htm>

- Article by Anand Patwardhan, on Binayak Sen winning Jonathan Mann award, Times of India, 27 Apr 2008 "About a Jailed Doctor" http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Review/About_a_Jailed_Doctor/articleshow/2986925.cms
- "Talk to Naxalites, says govt panel", http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Talk_to_Naxalites_says_govt_panel/articleshow/2989145.cms
- A motion moved in the House of Commons, UK, on 7 June 2007 regarding the arrest and detention of Dr. Binayak Sen in Chhattisgarh : <http://www.ahrchk.net/statements/mainfile.php/2007statements/1058/>