

## **Release of Dr. Binayak Sen, Vice President National PUCL, from imprisonment**

To: Honorable President of India

Honorable  
Prime Minister of India

President  
National Human Rights Commission

Honorable  
Governor, Chhattisgarh

Subject: Safety and liberty of Dr. Binayak Sen, General Secretary of the Chhattisgarh PUCL and Vice-President of the National PUCL who has been imprisoned.

Respected Sirs,

This letter is to request your good offices on behalf of a very respected and beloved old student of Christian Medical College, Vellore who has been imprisoned this afternoon (May 14, 2007) at Bilaspur for activities in defense of the rights and liberties of tribal people in Chhattisgarh.

His name is Binayak Sen. He had a distinguished academic career in Vellore, graduating in Medicine and later acquiring an M.D. in Paediatrics. From 1976 to 1978, he was a faculty member at the Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He left his academic appointment to work in a community based rural health centre in Hoshangabad district of M.P. focusing on problems of tuberculosis. During the late seventies, he became an active member of the Medico Friend Circle, a national organization of health professionals working towards an alternative health system responsive to the needs of the poor. This involvement continues till today.

Binayak worked with mine workers in Dalli Rajahara towards addressing their health needs, helping them set up and manage their own Shaheed Hospital. When this hospital no longer required his leadership, Binayak moved to a mission hospital in Tilda where he worked in Paediatrics and Community Health. After the death of Shankar Guha Niyogi with whom he was closely associated, Binayak moved to Raipur. From 1991, he has worked in developing relevant models of primary health care in Chhattisgarh. He was a member of the state advisory committee to initiate the community based health worker programme across Chhattisgarh, now well known as the Mitandin programme. He also gives his services to a weekly clinic in a tribal community in Dhamtari district. He continues to provide health care to the children of the marginalised, especially the migrant labourers. In recognition of his work, the Christian Medical College, Vellore conferred on him the Paul Harrison Award in 2004, which is the highest award given to an alumnus for distinguished service in rural areas. He continues to be an inspiration to successive generations of students and faculty.

Binayak has been active and effective in defending the liberties of the disadvantaged, especially through the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). He has served as the General Secretary of the State

PUCL Committee for the past five years and as Vice President of the National Committee for the last three years. As General Secretary of the Chhattisgarh PUCL, he helped organize fact finding campaigns into human rights violations in the state including custody deaths, fake encounters, hunger deaths, dysentery epidemics and malnutrition. In recent times he has worked intensively to bring large scale oppression and malgovernance within the so called Salwa Judoom in Dantewara to national and international attention.

One of the individuals being defended by the PUCL in Chattisgarh is Mr. Piyush Guha, presently in police custody. This in turn has led to threats and allegations against Binayak. He is being accused of absconding and of channeling illicit communications. We are anxious for the safety and well being of this beloved and respected student of ours.

We request you to employ your good offices to ensure that Dr. Binayak Sen is not subjected to mistreatment, continued unlawful imprisonment or worse. The instruments of the government failed to save the life of his mentor Niyogi. It will be a grievous failure if they do not now ensure the safety and dignity of Binayak Sen.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sincerely,