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Karnataka

## 'Historical injustice': Adivasi families in Nagarhole demand land under Forest Rights Act

*At a press conference held on May 3 in Bengaluru, the Samithi spoke about how even claimants whose applications had been approved for four hectares of land had received only tiny parcels of land.*



Written by: Ishita Malakar 



The protests by Adivasi groups in the Nagarahole forest area in Karnataka are set to intensify with tribal families set to occupy their traditional lands from Monday, May 5. For years now, the tribes of Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba, Yarava and Paniya have been demanding implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) but have made no headway in being granted land in the area, in accordance with the Act.

“In 2018, the Forest Department were told to reconsider the applications they had rejected. There are more than 2,000 applications. It is 2025, and nothing has moved so far,” said Shiva JA, secretary of the Nagarahole Adivasi Jamma-Pale Hakku Sthaapana Samiti (Nagarahole Adivasi Forest Rights Establishment Committee).

Over the years, the Samithi members have met everyone from Chief Ministers to local legislators to numbers officials, but their applications have not moved forward.

The Adivasis have been fighting against their displacement for years, as they consider themselves to be the original inhabitants of the forest. The latest move of returning to their original places is expected to go on for the next few days. “For now, 52 families in Kardikallu will reoccupy their place,” Shiva said.

### [Inside a march by Adivasis of Karnataka’s Nagarahole fighting for forest rights](#)

At a press conference held on May 3 in Bengaluru, the Samithi spoke about how even claimants whose applications had been approved for four hectares of land had received only tiny parcels of land.

The Samithi is also upset with former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests BK Singh, who recently wrote a letter to

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asking him to stop the grant of three acres of land in *hadlus* (grasslands) to claimants in the area comprising Nagarhole National Park and Tiger Reserve.

BK Singh argued that the Forest Rights Act was being violated and that it was only meant to recognise the rights of those who were in occupation as of December 13, 2005, and was not meant to be used as a means to grant land.

Saying that he had personally visited many *hadlus* in January 2011, he said that he did not find any signs of occupation of any family in the area. He warned that granting land in *hadlus* would exacerbate the human-animal conflict in the area and threaten the habitats of many herbivores, including elephants and gaurs.

President of the Samithi, Thimma JK, "BK Singh is misdirecting the government by telling them not to recognise our forest rights. This is the law guaranteed to us under the Constitution. Despite our demands for more than four years, they have withheld our rights and continued the historical injustice to our people. This continuous attempt to deliberately withhold rights by forest officials, ex-officers and conservators amounts to atrocities on our people. This is an offence punishable under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989."

Karnataka



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