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## Students Slam 'Violent Conservation', Protest Adivasi Evictions In Nagarahole

CNAPA activists ask government not to consider Adivasis as intruders but as the first and finest protectors of forest.



CNAPA activists stage symbolic protest (ETV Bharat)



By ETV Bharat English Team

Published : July 17, 2025 at 7:59 PM IST



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**Bengaluru:** Students held a symbolic protest condemning the recent eviction of 52 Jenu Kuruba Adivasi families from Karadikallu, located inside Nagarahole Tiger Reserve in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

The protest, led by the Community Network Against Protected Areas (CNAPA), came after forest officials demolished six huts on June 18, allegedly displacing families during heavy rains.

Over 250 officials, including armed Tiger Task Force personnel, were involved in the operation. Protesters called it a violation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 and part of a broader pattern of militarised and exclusionary conservation policies.

"This isn't conservation, it's colonisation. They are displacing people who have lived there for generations, while allowing resorts and plantations to thrive in the same forest," said Laxmi, a student protester.

In May, the evicted families had returned to the area led by J A Shivu of the Karadikallu Forest Rights Committee, to reclaim their ancestral land. The FRA recognises historical evictions like theirs as injustices requiring redress. But instead of recognition, they have faced demolition, surveillance, and criminalisation, Laxmi added.

"It's shocking that even in 2025, we're still watching armed forces destroy tribal homes. They are called encroachers on land their ancestors protected," said Aratrika, another CNAPA activist.

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Activists alleged that the conservation model promoted by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has militarised forests, displaced tribal communities and replaced biodiverse zones with teak plantations and tourist infrastructure.

“These groups used Adivasi knowledge to ‘map’ the forests, and now label those same people as threats. The forest needs to be protected with its people, not from them,” said Junaid, a student volunteer.

CNAPA and allied groups have raised key demands namely, withdrawal of armed personnel, recognition of forest rights, implementation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Area (PESA) Act, appointment of members to the SC/ST Commission and Adivasi-led conservation. They also called for media access to report freely from Nagarahole.

As evicted families struggle amid rains, students said that the battle is not just about land but dignity, culture and constitutional justice.

“It’s time the government recognised Adivasis not as intruders but as the forest’s first and finest protectors,” said Laxmi.

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