

ADVERTISEMENT

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/over-150-organisations-protest-centre-s-fresh-bid-to-surreptitiously-dilute-forest-rights-act>

Home India Over 150 organisations protest Centre's 'fresh bid' to surreptitiously dilute Forest Rights Act

# Over 150 organisations protest Centre's 'fresh bid' to surreptitiously dilute Forest Rights Act

*A new joint communiqué by the Union Tribal Affairs and Union Environment & Forests Ministries to the States seeks to undo the very FRA that was enforced by sustained Adivasi struggles*

Darshan Desai | Updated: Monday, August 16, 2021, 04:12 PM IST



HANIF SINDHI

ADVERTISEMENT

## RECENT STORIES

Viral Video Exposes Horrifying Domestic Violence Incident in Etawah, Uttar Pradesh



Bhagalpur Bridge Collapse; See pics



Malini Parthasarathy Resigns From The Hindu Group Publishing, Cites 'Narrowed Scope' For Editorial...



Civil Aviation Ministry Urges Airlines to Self-Monitor Surge Pricing on Certain Air Routes Amid...



'Till Death Do Us Part': UP Couple Dies Of Cardiac Arrest On Wedding Night, Cremated On Same Pyre



More than 150 organisations working for tribal rights and women farmers in as many as 24 States, including Gujarat, have raised a huge protest over the July 6, 2021, "joint statement" by Union Environment and Forests Ministry and Union Tribal Affairs Ministry sent to all State Governments on the implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

In a representation to the Tribal Affairs Ministry, the organisations have

asserted that this "joint statement" hides more than it reveals. "We are concerned that it could further undermine the implementation and provisions of this important law. The contents of this letter deviate from the very spirit of the FRA and undo the entire history of Adivasi struggles that led to the enactment of the FRA," the representation reads.

MAKAAM, or Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch, a forum of 120 organisations, the Campaign for Survival and Dignity, a national platform of Adivasi and forest dwellers' movements, as well as several other civil society organizations and alliances have submitted this representation opposing the "intent and content" instructed to the State Governments.

#### Read Also

**Madhya Pradesh: Tribals, forest dwellers devoid of their rights, PIL filed; Four months time to...**



The two union ministries had sent a joint communication to Chief Secretaries of all state governments for the "expeditious implementation" of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. The joint statement apparently looks promising, but activists and experts working for the rights of tribal people say it is counterproductive.

The Forest Rights Act was framed to entrust the traditional forest dwellers the control over the forest area and its resources. However, according to these organizations, this statement seems to give the Forest Department "backdoor control over the forest and its resources." The Forest Rights Act is under the sole purview of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. With the joint communication, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has also been pitchforked into the purview.

The protesting organizations say this is a surreptitious attempt to give more power to the Forest Department in conserving, protecting and managing the forest and its resources, which, in turn, could dilute the rights of the forest dwellers as prescribed in the Forest Rights Act.

The joint statement or communication to the States was issued by Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda and Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) Minister Prakash Javadekar.

Condemning the move, the Campaign for Survival and Dignity in a statement asserted that, "The Act (FRA) says that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs will be the nodal agency for issuing directions on forest rights. In fact, and indeed at the time of the Act's passage, the government's Business Rules were amended to place the rights of forest dwellers in the Tribal Ministry's domain. This was done deliberately to ensure that forest officials do not attempt to hijack the law."

#### Read Also

**FPJ Impact: Unemployed tribal youth in Raigad district gets job offer soon after completing guide...**



The joint statement is seeking to undo the FRA by asking both ministries to take "a collective view" and the over 100-odd organizations describe this as a

## You May Like

**Mumbai News: Prominent builders seek de-registration of 88 housing projects following...**

Free Press Journal

**Horrific video! Man lifts his wife & jumps on Kolkata metro track on seeing train's arrival, here's...**

Free Press Journal

**'Call The Police, G\*\*\*u': Ex-Pak Army Chief General Bajwa Heckled, Abused By Afghan M...**

Free Press Journal

**As A Poor Single Mother, I Have No One Else To Help Us!**

Ketto

Learn More

**Ultra Luxury 3.5&4 Bed at India's Tallest Tower, Mahalaxmi**

Shapoorji Pallonji Minerva

Learn More

**200+ acre Integrated Township with 25+ Amenities at Wisecity**

The Wadhwa Group

Learn More

by Taboola

“backdoor entry” to the Forest Department to control the implementation of the law without having statutory powers to do so – rather the FRA expressly denies it this role.

The Forest Rights Act clearly guarantees the tribals and their gram sabha the “rights to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use.” But this communiqué to the States says that “the frontline staff of the state forest department should extend assistance to the institutions or communities” for preparing conservation and management plans for community forest resources.

The organizations and experts working for the tribal communities add that this move gives more power to the Forest Department without any legislative support to infringe on the rights of the gram sabhas, which have the actual judicial as well as executive powers in recognising the rights of the tribals.

*(To receive our E-paper on WhatsApp daily, please [click here](#). To receive it on Telegram, please [click here](#). We permit sharing of the paper's PDF on WhatsApp and other social media platforms.)*

Follow us on



ADVERTISEMENT

### As A Poor Single Mother, I Have No One Else To Help Us!

I'm too poor to afford his treatments on my own. I need your support. Please donate!

Ketto | Sponsored

Learn More

### Ultra Luxury 3.5&4 Bed at India's Tallest Tower, Mahalaxmi

Ultra Luxurious 3.5 & 4 BHK With Scenic Views of the Arabian Sea and Mahalaxmi Racecourse

Shapoorji Pallonji Minerva | Sponsored

Learn More

### 200+ acre Integrated Township with 25+ Amenities at Wisecity

Plan well now in Panvel with 1,2 & 3 BHK Residences starting ₹49 Lacs\* at Wadhwa Wisecity

The Wadhwa Group | Sponsored

Learn More

### Belly Fat Removal Without Surgery In Mumbai: The Price Might Surprise You

Thanks to the latest technology

Affordable Liposuction | Sponsored

Learn More

### Mumbai - Unsold SUVs Are Being Sold for Almost Nothing

Luxury SUV Deals | Search Ads | Sponsored

Search Now