

INDIA

Pavitri Manjhi: Harassed for protecting ancestral land



Women human rights defender Pavitri Manjhi is taking a stand. She is the elected head of her village council in the Adivasi Indigenous community of Bhengari, and has inspired other women to take up leadership roles in their community. The community risks being forced from their land to make way for two power plants. They could lose their farms and livelihoods. Pavitri is leading the fight.

Pavitri and other community members say that beginning in 2004, two companies forced residents of Bhengari and other villages — through fraud, coercion, and misinformation — to sell their homes to make way for a thermal and a biomass power plant. Pavitri says the companies did not consult the communities and failed to get their freely-given consent. The Adivasis began to understand the devastating effect of their actions when over time, they were prevented from tilling their lands.

Although some Adivasis never moved after the sales, the companies have gradually taken physical possession of the lands. Villagers making a livelihood from the land are increasingly at risk of losing everything. In January 2018, one company started digging an ash pond over disputed land without consulting or informing the villagers.

Pavitri is one of a group of people who founded an organization to help Adivasi and Dalit villages file formal complaints around their rights to the land. They have brought people together to file nearly 100 of them. For that she faces ongoing intimidation and threats of physical assault. In one incident last April, two men came to her home and pressured her to withdraw all the complaints. They told her, “Everyone who helped you file the complaints are outsiders. They will not be able to save you and we will silence them.” The men returned in the following days to make more threats. Pavitri reported the harassment to the police but the police have taken little action.

Women human rights defenders in India may be targeted because of their gender as well as what they are advocating for. Pavitri isn't going anywhere and she refuses to be silenced. She is determined to help her community protect their ancestral lands.

Ask India to protect Pavitri from harassment. Take action on the next page.

*Everyone has the right to security of person.
Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living including housing.*

*Articles 3 and 25,
Universal Declaration
of Human Rights*

**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**

**AMNESTY
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Unleash your pens and keyboards!

Please write to the Director General of Police.

- ◆ Start with Dear Director General of Police.
- ◆ Describe who you are and what concerns you about the constant harassment of Pavitri Manjhi.
- ◆ Ask him for effective and prompt steps to protect her from further threats, harassment and intimidation, so that she can continue to fight for the rights of Adivasis.

Send your letter to

Director General of Police
Police Headquarters, Naya Raipur
Chhattisgarh
India 492001
Email: ps.dgp-cg@gov.in
Facebook: www.facebook.com/chhattisgarh.police
Twitter: @CG_Police
Postage: \$2.50

Please send a copy to

His Excellency Vikas Swarup
High Commissioner for the Republic of India
10 Springfield Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1M 1C9
Fax: 613 744 3033 or 613 744 0913
Phone: 613 744 3751 or 613 744 3752
E-mail: dhc.ottawa@mea.gov.in
Postage: \$.85

Human rights defenders like Pavitri Manjhi are at risk around the world. Join Amnesty's efforts to protect the rights of those who defend our rights.

#WriteforRights #womensrights #WHRD
#W4R2018



Pavitri is a quiet and thoughtful leader who understands the needs of the community. © AI

Support Pavitri!

Send Pavitri a message of solidarity and strength. You may mention Amnesty International and add your return address but **please use no religious cards.**

Pavitri Manjhi Ji
c/o Sri. Degree Prasad Chouhan, Convenor
Adivasi Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh
Near Lata Sadan, Puri Bagicha
Madhuban Para,
Raigarh, District Raigarh
Chhattisgarh, India 496001

Email: chouhandprasad@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/chouhan.dprasad
Twitter: @ChouhanDPrasad

Women human rights defenders around the world often face a heightened risk of discrimination and violence because of their gender and because of the social change for which they advocate. These risks are compounded for women experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (i.e. Indigenous women; women defending the environment, land, and territory).

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