

Date: 16:05:2025

To
Shri Antar Singh Arya
Chairman,
National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)
New Delhi

Subject: Rejoinder- with reference to Petition dated 07.09.2024 asking NCST to urgently intervene to safeguard forest rights of millions of forest dwellers and seeking NTCA to withdraw its letter dated 19 June 2024 ordering relocation of 64,801 families from tiger reserves.

Dear Sir/ Ma'am,

This has reference to the NTCA letter F. NO.15-3-2008-NTCA(Part) to NCST in response to its letter No. NCST/DEV-4280/MENV/1/2025-RU-II dated 31.01.2025 regarding the petition dated 07.09.2024 of Ms. Aditi Vajpeyi and others demanding that NTCA withdraw its OM dated June 19, 2024 regarding voluntary village relocation and issues thereof. We are submitting our response to the letter F. NO.15-3-2008-NTCA(Part) for your kind consideration. [enclosed as Annexure 2]. The copy of the communication received from the NCST asking us in March to file the rejoinder was received by us only in April due to some address miscommunication. [enclosed as Annexure 3]. We had informed the NCST via email dated May 1 2025 and requested for a time of extension to submit the rejoinder.

The NTCA in its response has submitted that

- all the contentions/apprehensions raised in the petition by us are devoid of any merit as the relocation of villages /villagers are purely on 'Voluntary basis'
- that NTCA has not acted in violation of recognition of the forest rights of the forest dependent people, the forest rights act or any other relevant law.

We refute these claims that the relocation of villages /villagers are purely on 'Voluntary basis' and restate that the NTCA has acted in violation of following laws: the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 as amended in 2006, The forest Rights Act 2006, the NTCA guidelines on Voluntary Relocation from Core areas, 2010 and the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

1. consistently been issuing directions approving the notification of tiger reserves (TRs), tiger conservation plans and sanctioning the allocation of funds without abiding by the due process and in violation of forest rights. *[Refer to Paragraph 1 of Annexure 1 for details and evidence]*

2. violated the framework of Voluntary relocations from core areas as prescribed in the WLPA, 2006 and the NTCA guidelines by not fulfilling the process of recognition and determination

of forest rights, and not complying with the three levels of informed consent and mutual agreement as mandated in Section 35 V (5) of WLPA. *[Refer to Paragraph 2 of Annexure 1 for details and evidence]*

3. not referred to and complied with the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 while carrying out relocations and preparing resettlement package thus leading to a faulty and incomplete resettlement and rehabilitation. NCST had already taken cognizance of this and directed NTCA in 2018 to ensure the implementation of LARR, 2013. NTCA has however continued to intentionally omit LARR, 2013 from its reference as evident in its response to our petition as well as the letter dated June 19, 2024. *[Refer to Paragraph 3 of Annexure 1 for details and evidence]*

4. not complied with the mandate and framework of Forest Rights Act, 2006 -impeded the recognition and determination of rights inside Tiger Reserves, violated the legal authority and institution of Gram Sabha and disregarded the powers and rights of community in conservation. *[Refer to Paragraph 4 of Annexure 1 for details and evidence]*

5. not provided genuine and verified data and information on villages and forest dwellers inside core areas. The data provided by NTCA in its June letter does not match with its own reporting in other documents and shows lack of accountability and responsibility. *[Refer to Paragraph 5 of Annexure 1 for details and evidence]*

We also want to place on record that since NTCA ordered the state governments to expedite the relocations, many petitions have been submitted by aggrieved community members from the Tiger Reserves to the National Commission of Scheduled Tribes and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs from different parts of the country. These petitions, complaints and representations provide ample evidence of the legal violations pertaining to the recognition of rights in the core areas of the TRs and the voluntary relocation from the TRs. NTCA, in its 26th meeting held on December 21, 2024 has itself taken note and reported that MoTA has received numerous petitions on the matter.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in its review meeting conducted on 15-17th April 2025 has said that, “Grievances have been received from MP (regarding Rani Durgavati Tiger reserve, Panna Tiger reserve), Odisha (Simlipal Tiger Reserve), Maharashtra (Tadoba Tiger reserve etc), Uttarakhand (Van Gujjars FRA process and conversion of forest villages to revenue villages etc) where several Gram Sabhas and other CSOs have alleged that the relocation and rehabilitation from the core of TR is being done without following due procedures detailed under FRA and WLPA. Compliance with the provisions of FRA is a statutory requirement, and its provisions must be implemented in both letter and spirit. Rehabilitation should only take place with the free, prior, and informed consent of each affected family. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that rights under FRA are duly recognized and vested within National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Furthermore, the conversion of forest villages into revenue villages must be expedited in accordance with the FRA and relevant guidelines. This is crucial to ensure that

households residing within these protected areas have access to basic infrastructure and services such as roads, schools, drinking water, and other essential amenities.” The Ministry on January 10, 2025 has also issued a letter to secretaries, tribal departments of all state governments to ensure necessary compliance of the provisions of FRA 2006 and WLPA 2006 in matters pertaining to eviction/relocation of forest dwelling communities and asked for the village wise details of population, rights status and relocation process in Tiger Reserves. (Annexure 4)

This all proves that NTCA's response to the letter No. NCST/DEV-4280/MENV/1/2025-RU-II dated 31.01.2025, is legally untenable, irresponsible, and misleading as the NTCA is involved and party at all stages of the process of tiger reserves viz. approving the notification of Tiger Reserves, the Tiger Conservation Plan and the plan for voluntary relocations. The arguments put forward by NTCA are deliberately obfuscating and an attempt to cover up and divert from the substantive question of laws. All these amounts to a violation of Sec.38(O)(2) as this provides evidence of how NTCA has interfered with the rights of forest dwellers, particularly Scheduled Tribes, particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), pastorals and scheduled castes, in most of the cases. These violation of forest rights or hindrances and interference in the rights of forest dwellers is an offense under the Forest rights Act and an atrocity as defined in section 3(1)(g) of the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989.

We seek NCST to safeguard the rights of adivasis and forest dwellers and protect them from displacement and forest rights violations. We are looking forward to the Commission to take a firm action in this matter, just as it had done in the year 2018 intervening with its full power and leading to the withdrawal of the legally untenable NTCA letter.

We demand the following from NCST:

1. To ensure immediate Withdrawal of the NTCA letter dated June 19, 2024 with no further delay as the letter has already triggered forced displacements, rights violations, policing and harassment and generated fear and insecurities on the ground, amongst the forest dependent communities.
2. To direct the NTCA and the state governments to ensure that the process of rights recognition and determination is implemented in the core areas of the Tiger Reserves as per the due process and be complied with forthwith and in a time bound manner.
3. To direct NTCA and state authorities to provide details on the status of recognition and determination of forest rights in core areas of the tiger reserves and make the data public.
4. Must issue directives to NTCA and state governments on ensuring the compliance and fulfilment of requirements of LARR 2013 while preparing the resettlement and rehabilitation package, in cases of future ‘voluntary’ relocations and free prior informed consent of the rights holders and Gram Sabhas been obtained.
5. Constitute an independent committee to review, and report on the compliance of the Sec 38 (V) of WLPA 2006 in cases of alleged ‘voluntary’ relocations done from the critical tiger

habitat of tigers and the subsequent resettlement and rehabilitation process implemented till date analysing the compliance to FRA 2006, WLPA 2006, NTCA guidelines 2010, and LARR 2013 and recommend restitution and remedial measures as required.

6. Must direct that no new 'voluntary relocations' are conducted or carried out till a detailed report examining and reviewing the status of forest rights and relocations is conducted and put up for public scrutiny. NCST must organize public meetings and call for submission of complaints, violations and grievances from each Tiger Reserves.
7. Investigate the notifications of all Tiger Reserves, particularly the Critical Tiger Habitats to examine the illegalities. NCST must direct the NTCA to withdraw the CTH notifications done without following any of the steps laid down in the Wildlife Act itself, viz., recognition of forest rights, determination that exercise of rights poses an existential threat to wildlife/tigers, and that modification of rights will not be sufficient to ameliorate the threat, and hence co-existence is not possible, and set up a process for carrying out this determination thoroughly in the letter and spirit of the FRA and the amended WLPA.

Regards.

We the signatories

(List of signatories attached at the end of Annexure 1)

(For more details, contact 8217226256, aditivajpeyi910@gmail.com)

Copy to:

1. Bhanumathi. G, Deputy Inspector General of Forests (NTCA)
2. Nirupama Chakma, Member - NCST
3. H.R Meena, Research Officer, NCST

Annexure 1 Details of the forest rights violations and legal non-compliance by NTCA at different stages of tiger reserve notification, voluntary relocations and other interventions

1. Violation of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, 2006 amendment by the NTCA in the notification and management of Tiger Reserves

1.1 Notification of a Tiger Reserve:

The Wildlife Protection Act, and the Guidelines for Voluntary Village Relocation in Notified Core/ critical Tiger Habitat of tiger reserves, provides explicit legal clarity on the following processes and roles - Tiger Reserves are notified by the State Governments after receiving NTCA approval to the proposal for Tiger Reserve. As per Section 38 V(1) recommendation of NTCA is mandatory for state governments to notify Tiger Reserves.

To prepare the proposal for notification of Tiger Reserve, it is required to determine and demarcate the Tiger Reserve consisting of Core or CTH and Buffer Area. The procedure to be

followed for this and the legal provisions are prescribed under Sec, 38 V(4) of WLPA, 2006 and the said guidelines. Therefore, it stands to legal reasoning, that NTCA can approve a tiger reserve proposal only when the proposal satisfactorily fulfils all the provisions under Sec. 38V(4)- which includes notification of core and buffer areas. The said section along with Sec. 4 of the Voluntary relocation guidelines explicitly defines core areas as areas required to be kept inviolate for the purpose of tiger conservation without affecting the rights of Scheduled Tribes or other such forest dwellers. As per the NTCA guidelines the recognition and vesting of rights has to be done as per FRA, while reading it together with WLPA.

Therefore, approval by NTCA to any proposal for Tiger Reserve notification, recommended by any State, is subject to fulfilment of the provisions under Sec.38V(4); approval of TR proposals that violates any of these provisions essentially makes NTCA culpable for violation of WLPA 1972. The said process has not been followed any single Tiger reserve notified till date- making all Tiger Reserve notifications faulty and illegal.

It's already documented how the NTCA on November 16, 2007 dispatched a 'Most Urgent' order to the Chief Wildlife Wardens of all Tiger Reserves asking for proposals for identification and notification of core or Critical Tiger Habitats (CTHs) before 29 November 2007 with a minimum area of 800-1000 sq kms, while the proposals for the buffer area were to be sent by 31 January 2008. The order gave in effect less than 13 days for the proposal for CTH; no 'scientific and objective criteria' was formulated by MoEFCC as required under Section 38V(4)(i) of WLPA, all the provisions were in effect violated. The core areas of 31 Tiger Reserves securing 29,25,202 hectares were notified in a breakneck speed before the end of 2007.

1.2 Tiger Conservation Plan

After the notification of Tiger Reserve, the State government is required to prepare the Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP) as per the provisions under Sec.38V(3). The NTCA is the final authority to approve the TCP as required under Sec.38O(1)(a). As part of approving TCP, NTCA has to provide for the management of core and buffer areas which includes 'relocation of villagers' from crucial habitats in Tiger Reserves within a timeframe (five years) and settlement of rights' which is required to fulfil the provisions under Sec.38V(5). Any process or exercise of relocation which deviates from or violates the provisions and steps of Sec.38V(5) makes NTCA equally culpable for being complicit in the violations of the WLPA by the concerned State authorities.

In 2024, NTCA issued supplementary guidelines stating that the preparation and submission of Tiger Conservation Plan hasn't been satisfactory. Further directed that for new tiger reserves, draft tiger conservation plan should be the part of new tiger reserve proposal otherwise the proposal won't be considered. This means that as per WLPA 2006, tiger conservation plan is a pre-requisite for TR notification but this due process hasn't been followed for existing TRs as repeatedly reported through different Management Effectiveness

Evaluation Report prepared and released by NTCA itself, every 4 years. The Management Effectiveness Evaluation report provides ample evidence- such as the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve lacks an approved TCP even after 15 years of its declaration, and the current draft TCP is awaiting approval from the NTCA. Same is the status of the TCP for Panna TR which has been prepared but its implementation lacks administrative legality without official approval.

1.3 Sanctioning of funds for relocation:

The proposal for financial support for voluntary relocation under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme is a separate process independent of TCP. Approval of the financial support proposal without ensuring the fulfilment of Sec.38V(3), (4) and (5) makes NTCA fully complicit in the violation of WLP and other relevant laws.

2. Violation of WLP 2006 and NTCA Guidelines on Voluntary Relocation by NTCA in conducting the process of relocation

The process of voluntary relocations is explained under the Wildlife Protection Act 2006, specifically the Section 38 (V)(5) of the act and is further clarified by the Protocol/Guidelines on Voluntary Relocations issued by the NTCA in 2010. As per these legal frameworks, the voluntary relocation of people needs to be done only in the identified core / critical tiger habitats of a tiger reserve. Clear steps and requirements have been laid down for voluntary relocation of people on 'mutually agreed terms and conditions', for the purpose of creating inviolate areas for tiger conservation. To re-emphasize here: WLP clarifies core or critical tiger habitat as inviolate areas without affecting the rights of forest dependent communities.

2.1 Recognition and determination of rights is the premise for voluntary relocation

The first requirement for voluntary relocation from core areas is to ensure that "the process of recognition and determination of rights and acquisition of land or forest rights of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwelling persons is complete. The process for recognition and determination of rights is provided in FRA.

The NTCA guidelines also clearly state that their objective is to ensure that all necessary statutory procedures required for the effective implementation of relocation are undertaken, and that in the process of conservation and protection of tigers and their habitats, the rights of forest dwellers are respected, and the process of recognition and determination of rights is complete. NTCA has not been able to furnish details on the status of the process of recognition and determination of rights inside the core areas of the Tiger reserves. All relocations, till date or ongoing and proposed relocations, conducted without fulfilling this first requirement of completing the process of recognition and determination of forest rights of forest dwelling communities are illegal, non-voluntary and a violation of the forest rights act and wildlife protection act.

2.2 Consent in the process of voluntary relocations w.r.t coexistence

The law clarifies that the concerned agencies of the State Government needs to establish with

the consent of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwellers in the area, and in consultation besides with an ecological and social scientist familiar with the area, that the activities of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers or the impact of their presence upon wild animals is sufficient to cause irreversible damage and shall threaten the existence of tigers and their habitat.

The forest dependent communities have been living and co-inhabiting these landscapes with the wild animals for a long time and in most Tiger reserves have not given this first level of consent about their presence causing irreversible damage and threatening existence of tigers. Then the law mandates the second round of consent where by the State Government, after obtaining the consent of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers inhabiting the area, and in consultation with an independent ecological and social scientist familiar with the area has to conclude that any other reasonable options of co-existence are not possible. Many communities have alleged that this level of consent has also not been obtained from the Gram Sabha.

In fact, there are ample examples of how communities are coexisting with Tigers such as the Biligiri Rangaswamy Tiger Reserve where Soligas live, or the Achanakmar and Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve where forest dwellers are co-inhabiting the landscape with tigers after their forest rights got recognized. The Chief Wildlife Warden of Chattisgarh has himself reported to NTCA that “People residing in core/ CTH of tiger reserves in Chhattisgarh are not willing to be relocated on forest land.”

3. Violations in the process of resettlement and rehabilitation w.r.t voluntary relocations.

The WLPA (Section 38 V(5)) and the NTCA guidelines from 2010 require that the resettlement or alternative package has been prepared providing for livelihood of affected individuals and communities and fulfils the requirements given in the National Relief and Rehabilitation Policy. In 2013, the Government of India enacted the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, commonly known as LARR Act 2013. The said act regulates land acquisition and benefits arising out of the land, and lays down the procedure and rules for granting compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement to the affected persons in India. Post 2013, the resettlement package of affected forest dwelling communities in Tiger Reserves must comply with and be based on the requirements given in LARR Act 2013. This has not been complied by the NTCA. In fact, NTCA has not responded to the question of non-compliance to LARR 2013, in its response to our petition.

The NCST also took cognizance of this issue in 2018 and recommended to the NTCA that the “policy for compensation payable to scheduled tribes families for their relocation from tiger reserves “be revised immediately to ensure compliance with LARR 2013.” WLPA also requires that once the resettlement package has been prepared as per the LARR 2013, thereafter the informed consent of Gram Sabhas concerned, and of the persons affected, to the resettlement

programme has to be obtained. Only after receiving this last consent to the resettlement package, can the state governments undertake the voluntary relocations. However, this condition has also not been fulfilled in all relocations carried out so far.

On February 11, 2019, NTCA sent a letter to all the Chief Wildlife Wardens of the Tiger Range States, apprising them of the Supreme Court Order in IA no 3924/2015 in WP (Civil) 202/1995 and asking them to follow it up. The court order and NTCA asked the CWLWs to ensure that in all cases of voluntary village rehabilitation carried out from core areas of TRs on notified forest land, it must be ensured that a proposal for change in the legal status of the land should also be furnished concomitantly so that the rehabilitated people may avail the benefits of welfare schemes and amenities.

The Van Gujjars from Rajaji and Corbett, who were relocated between the late 1990s and early 2000s, and 2013-14, are yet to receive their entitled relocation package. The case is ongoing in the Nainital High Court in PIL No. 140 of 2019, where the High Court, on 15 Dec 2021, had ordered the state government to provide the package to the families as per the law. In many cases, people are only offered oral promises of resettlement and rehabilitation which are never fulfilled and no reference to LARR is made. Only two options based on NTCA guidelines of cash compensation or cash plus amenities, is provided and even that is not fulfilled.

There is enough record of these due process violations in the case of Panna Tiger Reserve (MP), Amrabad TR (Telangana), Achankmaar Tiger Reserve (CG) and Nagarhole Tiger Reserve (Karnataka), Mudumalai TR (TN). In most cases people allege that they were intimidated, coerced and in some cases even violently forced out of their homes such as in Kanha Tiger Reserve, Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Kaziranga Tiger Reserve etc. In Similipal Tiger Reserve in Orissa, forest dwellers have complained that they were arbitrarily evicted from their houses by manipulation and intimidation. In Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, FIRs have been registered under SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 against some forest officials for having misappropriated even the Rs.10 lakh compensation amounts. NTCA has failed to comply with the law, with the directions and recommendations of NCST and acted in complete violation of the 27.09.2018 NCST report and recommendations. The NTCA itself reports the grievances arising out of the faulty relocations in its MEE report of 2018 in case of the Mukundra hills tiger reserve where it says that “villages relocated to forest lands face legal and administrative issues, impacting their eligibility for support and impeding the relocation process.” In the recent NTCA meeting, the CWLW from Rajasthan has also registered that “Land in respect of voluntary village rehabilitation is not available as per requirement for which there is a need to enhance the cash package available in the existing policy.”

4. NTCA has acted in violation of FRA and has obstructed the process of recognition of forest rights in the Tiger reserves.

NTCA since its inception has been in opposition to the forest rights act as evident from its approach to expediting the notification of CTHs of existing TRs in 2006. In addition, NTCA has

through many of its directives and interventions, constantly been violating the forest rights act. In over half the forests in the country, the Gram Sabha under Sec.5 of FRA is now the authority to protect wildlife, biodiversity and forests and ensure that the decisions taken in the Gram Sabha to regulate access to community forest resources and stop any activity which adversely affects the wild animals, forest and the biodiversity are complied with. The NTCA has persistently undermined the authority of Gram Sabha and violated Section 5 of FRA.

In March 2017, NTCA issued a direction barring recognition of rights under FRA in the Critical Tiger Habitats of Tiger Reserves 'in the absence of guidelines for notification of critical wildlife habitat' under FRA. It was the National Commission of Scheduled tribes who intervened in the matter to safeguard the rights of forest dependent communities. On September 6, 2018, Secretary NCST wrote to NTCA and "categorically advised for withdrawal of directions issued by NTCA on the 28th March 2017". NCST observed that the said NTCA letter was in violation of two laws the Wildlife Protection Act 2006 and the Forest rights Act 2006 and called out the order for creating hindrances to statutory provisions in the Forest rights act. NCST recommended for immediate withdrawal of the letters by the NTCA.

Though NTCA claims on paper that all the actions taken by it are in compliance of the forest rights act, there is no report or data from NTCA that provides details on the completion of the determination and recognition of forest rights as required under Section 38 (V)(5)(i) in the villages inside the core areas. This information has been requested through the Right to Information Act, at the level of both NTCA and Tiger Reserves but the reply has been that no such information is available. The Management Effectiveness Evaluation reports on Tiger reserves prepared by NTCA make no single reference to the forest rights, gram sabhas, community forest resource rights management committees and no information on the status of the forest rights act is provided; the only institution referred consistently is of Eco Development Committees and the need to strengthen it.

The representations made by forest rights holders and gram sabhas to MoTA and NCST both highlight that the authorities in the tiger reserve have consistently denied the forest rights act implementation and refused assisting the claim making process or simply put- hindered it. In case of Nagarhole, the Jenu Kuruba forest dwellers have long been struggling for the recognition of their rights, however the status of their IFR, CFR and CFRR continue to be pending due to bureaucratic apathy. Recently, when the 52 families of jenu kurubas returned to their ancestral village, they were subjected to intimidation, harassment and destruction of their houses , sacred spaces and property by the security personnel and Special tiger protection force. Denial of access to community forest resource rights areas and in particular the sacred spaces has also been the case in other Tiger reserves such as the Simlipal Tiger Reserve. The case of long pending claims, arbitrary rejections or non-acceptance of claims citing core area as the reason is not limited to one Tiger reserve but is the case of most Tiger reserves where forest rights are completely and intentionally ignored by the Project Tiger authorities.

The WLPA 2006 not only recognizes the rights of forest dependent people but provide them protection too by ensuring through section 38(o) that forest rights are not interfered by the NTCA. In addition to this, the NTCA guidelines make several references to FRA, specifying that in case of voluntary relocation also, *the rights of people should be recognized and settled before relocation.*

5. Lack of veracity in data

In response to our allegation that the data reported by NTCA in its letter dated June 19, 2024 is disputable and unreliable, NTCA has claimed that there is no under reporting or misrepresentation of the data regarding voluntary village relocation by the authorities as the data mentioned in its letter is only for the core areas and is as per the information provided by the concerned Tiger Reserves. We would like to submit following facts in this regard with reference to the June 2024 letter for relocation:

- that 17 villages are located inside the core zone of Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve of Andhra Pradesh. Ironically, in 2022 the NTCA in its Management Effectiveness Report has stated that 16 villages are located inside the said core zone.
- that 0 villages are located inside the Veerangana Durgawati Tiger reserve and hence none is to be relocated. Whereas the notification of the core area of the Rani Veerangana Durgawati Tiger Reserve lists 52 villages inside the CTH and propose them for relocation.
- that Jharkhand's Palamau Tiger Reserve has 35 villages inside its CTH where in its MEE report from 2023, it mentions 34 villages.
- that 21 villages with 1467 families are living inside the notified CTH of Nagarhole TR whereas the MEE report says that 6145 tribal people residing in 54 hamlets and 14 village settlements within the CTH of the TR.
- that there are 37 villages residing inside the CTH of Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve for relocation whereas the latest MEE report has identified and recommended the relocation of 32 villages inside the CTH.

The data refers to actual rights holders- the adivasis and the forest dwellers, who are at the risk of forced displacements and dispossession and whose rights are being consistently violated inside the core areas. Each disputable number signifies a person, a family or a village. This data discrepancy and misreporting indicates an urgent need to first undertake the exercise of identifying and consolidating information on the actual population of forest dwellers residing inside these Tiger reserves, especially the core areas.

**Regards,
Signatories**



- 1 Campaign for Survival and Dignity- CSD, India
- 2 All India Forum of Forest Movements- AIFFM, India
- 3 Community Network Against Protected Areas (CNAPA), India

- 4 Mahila Kisaan Adhikaar Manch (MAKAAM), India
- 5 National Alliance for Climate and Ecological Justice NACEJ, India
- 6 National Adivasi Alliance, India
- 7 Adhivasi Ooru Muppans Council, Kerala
- 8 Aditi Vajpeyi, Independent Resarcher , Himachal Pradesh
- 9 Adivasi Mahasabha, Gujarat
- 10 Adivasi Sakti Sangathan, Chhattisgarh
- 11 Adv Palla Trinadha Rao, Andhra Pradesh
- 12 Anasuya Kale Chhabrani, Swacch Association, Nagpur Maharashtra
- 13 Ankhreso halai, Affected People's Forum Kamlang TR, Arunanchal Pradesh
- 14 Baiga Sakti Sangathan, Achanakmar, Chhattisgarh
- 15 Bundelkhand Majdoor Kisaan Shakti Sangathan, Tendukheda, MP.
- 16 Campaign for Survival and Dignity Orissa- CSD Orissa
- 17 Centre for Social Knowledge and Action, Gujarat.
- 18 Chetna Andolan, Uttarakhand
- 19 Chigurla. Mallikarjun, Chenchu Vedika - Nagar Kurnool District, Telangana.
- 20 Dalit Adivasi Manch, Chattishgarh
- 21 DHAATRI: A resource Centre for Women and Children, Secunderabad, Telangana.
- 22 Dr. Soma KP, MAKAAM, New Delhi
- 23 Ekta Kisaan Sangathan, District Shivpuri, Madhya pradesh
- 24 Esha Joshi, Researcher and Lawyer, Kalpvriksha Pune
- 25 Fatima Burnad, MAKAAM, Tamil Nadu
- 26 Food Sovereignty Alliance, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh
- 27 Gargie Mangulkar, MAKAAM , Pune , Maharsthara
- 28 Gram Sabha Federation, Sitanadi, Gariabandh, Chhattisgarh
- 29 Gram Sabha Federation, Udanti, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh
- 30 Greater Kaziranga Land and Human Rights Committee, Kaziranga, Assam
- 31 Indigenous Peoples' Land Life Knowledge Collective, Odisha
- 32 Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan, Madhya Pradesh
- 33 Jharkhand Jan Adhikar MahaSabha, Jharkhand
- 34 Joint Land Struggle Action Committee, Assam
- 35 Kashtakari Sanghatana, Maharashtra
- 36 Kendriya Sangharsh Samiti, Palamu, Jharkhand
- 37 Laura Pipolo, Associate Editor, Undisciplined Environments, Italy
- 38 M. Rambabu , Adivasi Yuva Chaitanya Sangham , Eleuru district, Andhra Pradesh.
- 39 Maa Mati Suraksha Samiti, Similipal, Mayurbhanj, Odisha
- 40 Madhusudhan , Theatre Director, Telangana
- 41 Mandli.Peddulu , Oota Chelima, Nagar Kurnool District, Telangana.
- 42 Maneesha, Adivasi Mahila Chaitanya Sangham , Manyam district, Andhra Pradesh.
- 43 Marsakola. Kamala , Jai Jangu Bhai Adivasi Mahila Sangham - Asifabad District, Telangana.
- 44 Meenakshi Kapoor, Lawyer and Independent Researcher, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

- 45 Meera Sangamitra , NAJAR , Telangana .
- 46 Mrinalini, Independent Researcher, WB.
- 47 Naga Baiga Jan Shakti Sangathan, Bilaspur Chattisgarh
- 48 Nagarahole Adivasi Jammapale Hakku Sthapana Samithi, Nagarahole, Karnataka
- 49 Neelam Ahluwalia, Environmentalist , Gurugram Haryana
- 50 Neema Pathak Broome, Conservation and Livelihoods Team, Kalpavriksh, Pune, Maharashtra
- 51 Nitin D Rai, Independent Researcher, Bengaluru , Karnataka
- 52 Paramparik Aadivaasi Gram Sabha Madhya Pradesh- Rajendra Saiyaam
- 53 People for Aravallis, Ms Karthika Nair- co founder.
- 54 PESA Committee & Forest Rights Committee, Padmaram Gram Panchayat, Appapuram, Telangana
- 55 PESA Committee & Forest Rights Committee, Padmaram Gram Panchayat, Pulitheegalabanda, Telangana
- 56 Plantation Working Class Union- Thalapuzha, waynad Kerala.
- 57 Prafulla Samantra -President Lok Shakti Abhiyaan .
- 58 Prakriti Seva Sansthan, Madhya Pradesh, Pitambar Kheravaar
- 59 Puja, PhD student, University of Bristol
- 60 Rahul Shrivastava, Advocate Jabalpur . Madhya Pradesh
- 61 Raj Kumar Sinha Bargi Baandh Visthapit Evam Prabhavit Sangh, MP
- 62 Rajasthan Adivasi Adhikar Manch (Dharam Chand Khair) , Udaipur, Rajasthan
- 63 Rajesh Ramakrishnan, Campaign to Defend Nature and People, India
- 64 Ram Prakash Sharma, vice President Ekta Kisan Sangathan Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh
- 65 Ravi Chellam, Wildlife Biologist & Conservation Scientist, Bengaluru , Karnataka
- 66 Roshni Kutty, Kalpavriksh Environment Action Group
- 67 S Ashalatha , Hyderabad
- 68 S. Mohankumar, District Secretary - Communist Party of India, Erode District, Kerala
- 69 Sarv Aadivaasi Samaaj Sangathan , District Umariya - Gulab Singh Paraste
- 70 Sarv Aadivaasi Samaaj Sangathan , Madhya Pradesh (Hari Singh Maravi)
- 71 Savara. Vyakunta, Adivasi Chaitanya Sangham, Srikakulam District , Andhra Pradesh.
- 72 Sayantan Das , Post Doctoral Researcher, University of Mysore, Karnataka
- 73 Search for Action and Knowledge of Tribal Initiative, Telangana
- 74 Sharachchandra Lele, Distinguished Fellow in Environmental Policy & Governance , ATREE, Karnataka
- 75 Sonakshi Srivastava, Researcher and Policy Advocacy Officer- TISS Mumbai, Maharashtra
- 76 Sopatlum Minin, Affected People's Forum Kamlang TR, Arunachal Pradesh
- 77 Soshang Halai, Affected People's Forum Kamlang TR, Arunachal Pradesh
- 78 Soumya Dutta, Trustee - MAUSAM (Movement for Advancing Understanding of Sustainability And Mutuality).
- 79 Srishti Saxena, Independent Researcher, Mumbai, Maharashtra

- 80 Stella James, Independent researcher, Bengaluru.
- 81 Sundarbans Jana Sramajibi Mancha, Sundarbans, West Bengal
- 82 Swacch Association Nagpur, Maharashtra
- 84 Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Collective Farming , Tamil Nadu
- 85 Tharu Adivasi Mahila Mazdoor Kisan Manch, Dudhwa, Uttar Pradesh
- 86 Tiju C Thomas, Researcher, Tamil Nadu
- 87 Tilu Linggi, Idu Mishmi Cultural and Literary Society (IMCLS)
- 88 Usha Seethalakshmi, MAKAM , Hyderabad
- 89 Uttarbanga Van-Jan Shramajibi Manch, West Bengal
- 90 V.Rambabu ,Adivasi Chaitanya Sangham , Alluri Sitarama Raju district, Andhra Pradesh.
- 91 Van Adhikar Manch Latehar, Jharkhand.
- 92 Van Gujjar Tribal Yuva Sangathan, Uttarakhand
- 93 Van Panchayat Sangharsh Morcha, Uttarakhand
- 94 Van Sanrakshan Sangrami Mancha, Chandubi, Assam
- 95 Vivasayigal Thozhilalargal Munnetra Sangam, Tamil Nadu
- 96 West Bengal Jana Sramajibi Mancha, West Bengal
- 97 Zindagi Bachao Abhiyaan, Harda (Ramprasad Kajle), Madhya Pradesh

Annexure 2- Cover of the response letter issued by NTCA F. NO.15-3-2008-NTCA(Part)

भारत सरकार
Government of India
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
राष्ट्रीय व्याघ्र संरक्षण प्राधिकरण
National Tiger Conservation Authority

Date: 14.02.2025

F. No.15-3-2008-NTCA(Part)

To

Shri H. R. Meena
Research Officer
National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
New Delhi.

Subject: Petition dated 07.09.2024 of Ms. Aditi Vajpeyi to withdraw NTCA's June 19, 2024 Relocation Order Impacting 64,801 Families from 591 Villages, Violating Forest Rights and Conservation Laws.

Madam/Sir,

With reference to your letter No. NCST/DEV-4280/MENV/1/2025-RU-II dated 31.01.2025 as received in this Authority on 07.02.2025 regarding petition of Ms. Aditi Vajpeyi to withdraw NTCA's OM dated June 19, 2024 regarding voluntary village relocation and issues thereof, submitted herewith the response (enclosed) of this Authority for your kind consideration.

2. This issues with the approval of competent authority.

Encl: As above.

Signed by
Banumathi Gnanasekaran
Date: 14-02-2025 09:49:49
(Banumathi. G)
Deputy Inspector General of Forests (NTCA)
Email: dig2-ntca@nic.in
Tel. (EPABX): +91 11 24367837-39

Copy to:-
1. PPS to Secretary, MoEFCC
2. PPS to DGF&SS, MoEFCC
3. PS to MS, NTCA PS to IG, NTCA.
4. Smt. Aditi Vajpeyi, Independent Researcher, Himachal Pradesh
(aditivajpayi910@gmail.com)

Annexure 3- Cover of the response letter issued by NCST F. NO. NCST/DEV-4280/MENV/1/2025-RU-II

राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जनजाति आयोग
National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
(भारत के संविधान के अनुच्छेद 338क के अंतर्गत एक संवैधानिक निकाय)
(A constitutional body under Article 338A of the Constitution of India)

File No. NCST/DEV-4280/MENV/1/2025-RU-II

Date: 26.03.2025

1. Aditi Vajpeyi,
Independent Researcher,
Himachal Pradesh,
E-mail: aditivajpayi910@gmail.com
Mobile No: 8217226256

Sub: Petition dated 07.09.2024 of Ms. Aditi Vajpeyi to Withdraw NTCA's June 19, 2024 Relocation Order Impacting 64,801 Families from 591 Villages, Violating Forest Rights and Conservation Laws.


Sir/Madam,

I am directed to refer to your representation dated nil on the subject mentioned above and to forward the copies of the Report/Reply received from Govt. of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, National Tiger conservation Authority vide their letter No.15-3-2008-NTCA (Part) dated 14.02.2025 in response to Commission's notice dated 31.01.2025 for kind your information and comments.

2. In this Context, it is advised that if you're not satisfied with the facts/reply, kindly submit the rejoinder to the Commission within 15 days for further action, if no information is received from you, it would be presumed that you are satisfied with the information and matter would be closed.

Encl: A/a

Yours Faithfully,


(H.R. Meena)
Research Officer
Tel: 011-24615012

6th Floor, 'B' Wing Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi - 110003, Website: www.ncst.nic.in
Tel.: 011-24601346, 011-24620638 Toll Free: 1800117777

Annexure 4 Letter issued by MoTA to ensure compliance by FRA and WLPA 2006 in the process of relocation-rehabilitation

F. No. 23011/39/2018-FRA (E-12833)

Government of India
Ministry of Tribal Affairs
FRA Division

Gate No. 2, Ground Floor,
Jeevan Tara Building, Sansad Marg,
Patel Chowk, New Delhi-110001
Date: 10.01.2025

To,

1. Secretaries of all State Governments
The Tribal Development Department
(except Punjab, Haryana and Delhi)
2. Administrators of all Union Territories,
(except Lakshadweep)

Subject: Ensuring necessary compliance of provisions of FRA 2006 and WLPA 2006 in matters pertaining to eviction/relocation of Forest Dwelling Communities from Forest Areas.

Sir/Madam,

As you are aware that, The **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA)** was enacted to recognize and confer rights to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers who have been residing on forest land, including in National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries, for generations, but whose rights were not formally recorded. The primary goal of the Act is to rectify the historical injustices faced by these communities by securing their **land tenure, livelihoods, and food security** over forest land, including in **wildlife sanctuaries and national parks**.

2. This Ministry has been receiving several representations from various organisations and Gram sabhas highlighting evictions of Gram sabhas from various Tiger Reserves without Recognition of Rights. The provisions under FRA explicitly empower forest-dwelling communities by legally recognizing their rights, protecting them from unlawful eviction, and ensuring that any resettlement is carried out with their informed consent and participation. The Section 4(5) of the FRA states that no member of a forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribe or traditional forest dweller can be evicted or removed from forest land they occupy until the process of recognition and verification of their rights is complete. Specifically, for Critical

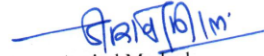
wildlife habitats it has been laid down in the Forest Rights Act and also in Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006. Further, Section 4(2) of the Forest Rights Act provides certain safeguards which inter alia includes necessity of obtaining the free informed consent of the Gram Sabhas in writing, settlement of rights under the stipulated provisions in the areas concerned to the proposed resettlement and affected community's participation in decisions must be met before the State Government can commence relocation in any forest area.

3. Therefore, it is requested that a institutional mechanism is developed to ensure compliance with Section 38 V (5) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, as well as Sections 4(2), 4(5), and 3(1)(h) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and a grievance redressal mechanism should be developed to provide a clear and transparent framework for addressing such complaints.

4. In order to address the concerns, it is requested that the State Tribal Development Department along with the concerned Forest Department to provide this ministry a compiled report stating the following details:

- Details of Tiger reserves, Name and No of Villages and population residing in the Tiger Reserve
- Details of Tribes and Other Forest dwelling communities dwelling in such villages?
- Village wise details from each tiger reserve -- Details of FRA claims received, Nature of rights, FRA Claims which has been vested or rejected (with reasons)
- Whether Free Prior informed Consent (FPIC) of the Gram Sabha being carried out? Mechanism of FPIC for each tiger reserve whether it includes all the adult members of the villages/habitations inside the tiger reserve?
- The process for compensation and the amount of compensation likely to be given to the relocated families?

Yours faithfully,



Arvind Mudgal

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

Tel: 011-23340466

Email: arvind.mudgal70@nic.in