

## **Protect the rights of the Dongria Kondh now!**

Dear Minister,

I am very concerned that the human rights of the Dongria Kondh adivasi (Indigenous) people in India are again under threat by an ongoing legal challenge brought by the Orissa Mining Corporation to develop the bauxite mine at Niyamgiri Hills without adequate free, prior and informed consent.

I understand that Orissa Mining Corporation filed a petition before the Indian Supreme Court in April 2011 that seeks to undermine the Ministry of Environment and Forests' (MoEF) decision in August 2010 to deny clearances and not allow the development of a bauxite mine project at Niyamgiri to proceed. The MoEF rejected the forest clearance after finding that the project was already extensively violating forest and environmental laws and would perpetrate abuses against the Dongria Kondh community on the hills.

If forest clearance is provided without essential human rights protections being guaranteed, the lives of the Dongria Kondh, their traditional forest lands and the habitats on which they have been completely dependent for centuries, will be threatened.

Human Rights defenders in Orissa are filing a petition supporting the decision made by the MoEF to deny the clearances. The proposed bauxite mine project will result in violations of their rights as an indigenous community to water, food, health, work and other rights to protection of their culture and identity. As of yet, the Orissa government has also failed to obtain the Dongria's Kondh's free, prior and information consent – which international standards oblige them to do so.

It is critical that the Indian authorities establish a process to seek the free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) of Dongria Kondh before clearances can be given and any proposed bauxite mine project in the Niyamgiri Hills is allowed to proceed.

I call on you to:

- Deny the provision of clearances to OMC.
- Defend the rights of Dongria Kondh to free, prior and informed consent.

Yours sincerely,

[your full name]

[your country]