

# Protests planned across 12 States over failure to implement FRA

*The Hindu Bureau*

*Opposition MP Jawahar Sircar (TMC) interacts with tribal leaders to understand their opposition to the 2023 amendments to the Forest Conservation Act. Photo: Special Arrangement*

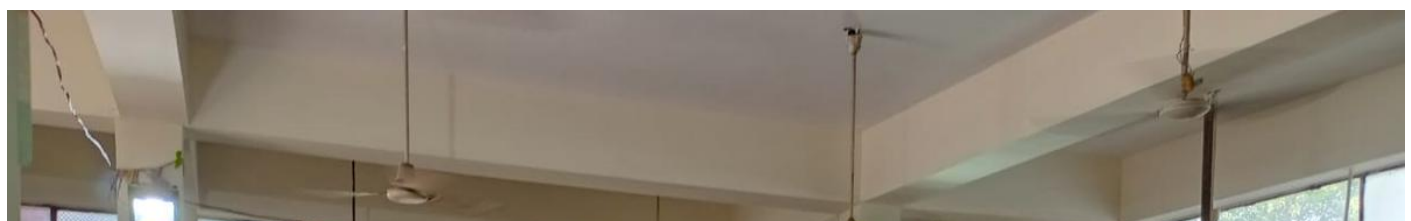
Following a two-day convention on forest rights held in Delhi, more than a hundred indigenous, forest-dwelling, and tribal delegates from 12 States across the country on Monday condemned State governments and the Centre over the failure to implement the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and also spoke of deteriorating forest rights under the current regime.

The convention was attended by activists and local leaders who are fighting for recognition of individual and community forest rights. It was resolved that all participants will organise block-level, district-level, or State-level demonstrations seeking recognition of forest rights under existing laws on June 5 (World Environment Day) and August 9 (International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples).

The coalition of leaders attending the convention on May 14 and May 15 included those from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and others.

In a statement issued through the Campaign for Survival And Dignity, an NGO which had campaigned extensively to get the FRA passed, the leaders said that Central and State governments had failed to implement FRA properly and that the current regime had only made the situation worse through legislation and policies like the Forest Conservation Rules, 2022 and the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which have “further undermined forest rights”.

The coalition has decided that they will present the following key demands through their upcoming demonstrations. These include, “Recognise the individual forest rights of all forest dwellers and the community forest rights of all villages in forest areas; withdraw or amend all recently passed environment and forest laws that violate forest rights; direct action against forest officials who violate forest rights and/or decisions of gram sabhas (village assemblies) under the Forest Rights Act; and ensure that any project using forest land is only approved after the consent of affected villages’ gram sabhas and made subject to their plans for managing the forests, as required by the law.”





*Tribal leaders from 14 States participate at the two-day convention on forest rights held in Delhi.*

The convention also discussed the details of the FCA amendment Bill, which is currently with a Joint Parliamentary Committee. JPC member and Opposition MP Jawahar Sircar (TMC) attended the session on Monday and assured the leaders that their views will be put before the panel. CPIM leader Brinda Karat also joined the session.

The JPC is set to meet on Tuesday to discuss the 2023 amendment to the FCA.

In addition to this, all State representatives in attendance resolved to send a letter to the JPC and the government opposing the 2023 amendment Bill.