


[HOME](#) [ABOUT US](#) [AREAS OF STUDY](#) [EVENTS](#) [PUBLICATIONS](#) [TEAM](#) [MEDIA](#) [CAREER](#) [CONTACT US](#)
Language

Disbanding Special Police Officers will Facilitate Naxal Resurgence

20 Jul, 2011

[Anoop A. J. \(Researcher, VIF\)](#)[View739](#)[Comments 0](#)

The recent Supreme Court order to disband the Special Police Officers (SPOs), which was widely criticised to be influenced by the Naxal sympathising interest groups, will create a major road block to the anti-Maoist security operations in various states. Meanwhile, the order could be said to be another achievement of the propaganda machinery, comprising of lawyers, activists, writers and so on that have produced a multitude of literature and organised hundreds of programmes, from Delhi to New York, vilifying the government's anti-Naxal efforts and the people's movement called Salwa Judum.

The Special Police Officers (SPOs) are local youth recruited for fighting the Maoists in remote areas where the writ of the administration is overshadowed by Maoists. They were recruited in the initial days from the Salwa Judum camps for protecting the camps. Later, with the endorsement of the Central government, they began recruiting them from local tribal youth to assist Security Forces (SF) in anti-Naxal operations. They are called Koya commandos in Chhattisgarh and other states like Orissa. The recruitment of SPOs in Chhattisgarh, a state which is highly affected by Left Wing Extremism, is done under the Section 9 of the Police Act 2000. But the Supreme Court has quashed the appointments of SPOs by Chhattisgarh government stating that the manner in which they are recruited, training and their role do not conform to the definitions of SPOs narrated in the Police Act 1861.

The SPO is one of the effective solutions for dealing with Maoists that helped the security forces successfully neutralise or arrest many Maoists through their operations in Chhattisgarh. As it is pointed out in the 2008 report of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) committee appointed by the Supreme Court, the SPOs are a part of the Salwa Judum. The term Salwa Judum, which is loosely used by the propagandists against any civilian who takes a position against the Maoist in Chhattisgarh, is attributed to a movement initiated by people of Bastar, mostly tribals, as a reaction to the situation of havoc and fear created by Maoists and the atrocities perpetrated by them.

The movement which began more than a decade ago was also the result of the marginal support offered by the government of erstwhile Madhya Pradesh to Maoists who were victims of not only Maoists but also absence of governance, isolation from mainstream and poor living conditions. At later stages, when the marginal support and encouragement and support of political class, the people were forced by the Maoists to flee from their original habitats to villages close to centres of administration. They had to take shelter in camps and were taken care of by the government. The youth, who fought the Maoists back in their villages, were given responsibility of protecting thousands of people in camps as the force level of state police as well as Central Paramilitary Forces were very low in Bastar. In the course of time more youth joined the SPOs as part of this protection force which prompted the state government to recruit these young men as SPOs under the provisions given in the Police Act 1861. The Central government as well as the strategic community endorsed this move as a futuristic and result oriented one and therefore it was decided to involve more SPOs in the offensives against Naxals.

The Ministry of Home Affairs approved appointment of SPOs for every Naxal affected state and many states already have a good number of them. Therefore, the existence of SPOs in Chhattisgarh only is also part of the false propaganda. Moreover, SPOs were recruited for assisting the Special Forces in their operations. According to the MHA report 2010-11, "Central Government has sanctioned additional 12,000 Special Police Officers (SPOs) to the States of Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra for strengthening the intelligence network and as greater support to the security forces to launch anti Naxal operations. The plans of the MHA for additional recruitment of SPOs have been put on hold by this order of the Supreme Court.

The apex court had appointed an NHRC investigation team which submitted its report in 2008 justifying the people's movement and recommending more involvement of the security operations. It had pointed out three years back that the SPOs are being confused with Salwa Judum activists, the Salwa Judum is almost non-existent and the allegations of human right excesses by SPOs are baseless. The NHRC report states, "A lot of confusion has been created by loosely referring to the Special Police Officers as Salwa Judum activists. They are instead a part of the security apparatus and have played a significant role in the strategy of the state to deal with Naxalism. There are across certain instances where excesses had been committed and the State had proceeded against the public servants who failed to operate within the framework of the law. Nevertheless and unfortunately, the Supreme Court went ahead without taking into account the observations and recommendations of the NHRC team and decided to disband the SPOs.

It need to be noted that the SPOs are an inevitable part of the legitimate anti-Naxal strategy available with the state at present. The NHRC report approves the role of SPOs through the following comments - "They are physically very fit and are familiar with the local terrain and the language. More importantly, they are familiar with the local 'sangham' members and Naxalites. Many of the SPOs are themselves former 'sangham' members and are well aware of the modus operandi of the Naxalites."

After many years of confronting the Naxals, the situation is moving towards a stalemate, which the Home Minister P Chidambaram puts it in his own words in 2010, "my assessment is that there is a kind of a stalemate. The State governments concerned cannot claim any major advance, nor should we conclude that the state has gained the upper hand. There have been casualties on both sides." But, if the state has made some significant advance in the Naxal affected hostile terrain, credit goes to the SPOs who are familiar with the forest and hilly terrain, physically fit enough to fight a long battle after walking for hours, know the language and the relations which provide them local intelligence and moreover are outraged by the injustice perpetrated over them by the Naxalites. Therefore, opting them to be disbanded is more difficult for the CPMFs to conduct operations in an unfamiliar and hostile territory and push back the state to where it had started many years back.

Instead of disbanding the SPOs completely, options for integrating these tribal youth into the system should be worked out. The restrictions on educational qualifications could be waived off at least in the cases of SPOs to fill in the 12000 vacancies of the state police force. It is irrational to think that a person with low literacy level, will be able to fill up these vacancies in a very short time. Moreover, it needs to be recognised that this needless task of disbanding SPOs peacefully, collecting back the weapons and giving protection to them from the Maoists is not only arduous but also a waste of time.

Therefore the possibilities of retaining the SPOs, absorbing them in state police and training them to the finest level possible should be explored. This will help the Maoist propaganda department to continue misusing the media and judiciary against the people of Bastar, but also help in containing the menace in Dandakaranya.

Published Date: 20th July, 2011**Post new comment****Your name: ***

Anonymous

E-mail: *

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Comment: *

Message*

Input format

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms

Save

Preview

Related Articles**The Maoist Rebellion, in Limp**

" ... for then only you will be strong, when you cherish th

**The Nexus of Terror and Ideology : Scourge of Naxalism in In**

Independence may have firmed up the geographic expanse of India b

**Left Wing Extre Security Review**

Left Wing Extr widely recogn the most

**Small Wars are National Wars: Need Potent Force to Secure In**

Sun Tzu said, "Great results can be achieved with small forces

**नक्सलवाद पर सख्त नीति**

गत 24 अप्रैल को छत्तीसगढ़ क

**Maoist Insurgen Quiescent?**

Relative SI monsoon traditionally

**The Tongpal Maoist Attack: Time to Act Tough**

A Perpetual Cycle On 11 March, in a repeat of many such

**Need to Treat Naxalites with Iron Fists, not Kid Gloves**

On 11th March 2014, Naxalites ambushed a Road Opening

**Maoist Rebellion Realities**

Ground Situ of-year repo from

About Us

The Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) is a New Delhi-based think tank set up with the collaborative efforts of India's leading security experts, diplomats, industrialists and philanthropists under the aegis of the Vivekananda Kendra. The VIF's objective is to become a centre of excellence to kick start innovative ideas and thoughts that can lead ...

Contact Us

Name*

Email Id*

Phone Number*

Message*

Tweet With Us

[Read More](#)

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA
[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

Submit

**VIF India**

@vifindia

'The organs are the horses, the rein, the intellect is the charioteer, the rider, and the body is the chariot master of the household, the King of man, is sitting in this chariot.'

[#SwamiVivekananda](#)

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Area of Study](#) [Events](#) [Team](#) [Media](#) [Career](#) [Contact Us](#)VISITORS:  [StatCounter - Free Web Tracker and Counter](#)

© 2017 Vivekananda International Fou