
PUCL STATEMENT

Dr. Binayak Sen Convicted and Sentenced to Life Imprisonment

It is a sad day for the PUCL and all human rights defenders in the country and a black day in the history of justice administration in the country as Dr. Binayak Sen, the President of the Chhatisgarh PUCL and National Vice-President of the organization, well-known paediatrician and human rights defender, winner of the prestigious R.R. Keithan Gold Medal instituted in the memory of noted Gandhian activist, awarded in recognition of Dr. Sen's services to the community, Jonathan Mann awardee for Global Health and Human Rights (2008) was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment today by the District Court of Raipur in what every human rights activist of the country considers a false and politically motivated case under u/s 120(B), 124(A) of the IPC and 1,2,3,5, Chattisgarh Special Public Security Act and Sec 39 (2) of the UAPA (2004 amended) on charges of sedition and waging war against the Indian State, but actually for exposing the human rights violations by the State police, paramilitary forces and Salva Judum.

(Justice) Rajindar Sachar, former National President of the PUCL and retired Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court has called this judgment as outrageous, completely unacceptable and an attack on civil liberties.

It is noteworthy that since the trial in the case began in April 2008 in the Raipur Sessions Court, the prosecution did not throw up even a shred of evidence against him. By March 2009 of the 83 witnesses listed for deposition in the original charge sheet, 16 were dropped by the prosecutors themselves and 6 declared hostile whereas 61 witnesses deposed without corroborating any of the accusations. Dr. Sen had remained in jail for more than two years without bail from 14 May 2007 to 25 May 2009 when he was granted bail by a division bench of the Supreme Court. In May 2008 22 Nobel laureates had signed a public statement calling him a 'professional colleague' and asked for his release.

The PUCL has consistently maintained that all charges against Dr. Binayak Sen were false and concocted. The PUCL will take all available legal measures to prove Dr. Sen's innocence and get him released.

Mahi Pal Singh, Kavita Srivastava

National Secretaries, PUCL