

Sunday 29th April 2012  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contacts:  
Kamayani Mahabal: +91 9820749204 (India)  
Vinay Bhat: +1 412-527-7985 (US)

## **Appeal to PM, CM: Save Soni Sori from death in jail**

In an open letter addressed to the Prime Minister of India and other officials, more than 250 concerned activists, academics, intellectuals, students, professionals and democratic organisations have demanded immediate medical attention for the Adivasi school teacher, Soni Sori, 35, currently in custody in Raipur Central Jail, Chhattisgarh. Sori's condition is believed to be rapidly deteriorating as a result of torture and sexual abuse at the hands of the Chhattisgarh police. She is the mother of three young children. Signatories to the letter include members of the National Advisory Council Harsh Mander and Aruna Roy, writers Arundhati Roy and Meena Kandasamy, respected economist Jean Dreze, Supreme Court advocate Prashant Bhushan and renowned intellectual Noam Chomsky.

Soni Sori was arrested in Delhi on 4th October, 2011, where she had gone to seek legal assistance, fearing for her life after repeated harassment by the Chhattisgarh state police. Despite her pleas in the courts that she be held in Delhi, she was sent back to Chhattisgarh. After seeing preliminary indications that she had been tortured in police custody, the Supreme Court ordered an independent medical examination at NRS Medical College, Kolkata, where doctors found stones lodged in her vagina and rectum. In a series of letters written to the Supreme Court Advocate from jail, Sori recounted how she was stripped, electrocuted, and physically and sexually tortured by the police.

More than six months after she was tortured, Sori continues to be imprisoned in Chhattisgarh and has received virtually no follow up medical treatment for the injuries she sustained in police custody and the infections that have developed as a consequence. According to two people (one of whom is her lawyer) who were allowed to meet Sori in prison last week, her face was visibly swollen and her hands and feet appeared abnormally thin, indicating severe weight loss. Sori complained of a severe burning sensation while passing urine and of blisters on her thighs and her private parts. The magistrate in the Dantewada court, where Sori was produced earlier in the week, is reported to have remarked that she appeared unwell. According to the jail doctor in Raipur, Sori suffers from fluctuating and high blood pressure and from anaemia. Yet, on those occasions when she has been taken to the Raipur Medical College, she met with ridicule, indifference and inadequate care from the doctors and other hospital personnel. Police interference with the doctors is also suspected.

No investigation or action has been initiated against the police officers responsible for her torture. On the contrary, Superintendent of Police Ankit Garg, named in Sori's letters, was awarded a Gallantry Medal on Republic Day, 2012. Sori's petition before the Supreme Court asking to be transferred out of Chhattisgarh has been subjected to repeated delays and is still pending. Her health continues to deteriorate in the meantime.

Sori is just one of many women subject to torture and sexual violence in custody. In a recent report, the Asian Centre for Human Rights documented that four custodial deaths had occurred

daily in India over the past decade. Those demanding medical attention for Sori fear the worst by the time she is granted a final hearing.

### **Open Letter**

To,

Shri Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India  
Shri Raman Singh, Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned by the rapidly worsening health of Soni Sori in Raipur Central Jail. She has been passing blood with her urine, is having difficulty to sit or get up, and has lost considerable weight. Despite doctors from NRS Medical Hospital having confirmed that stones had been inserted into her vagina and rectum, Soni Sori has received no proper medical attention. We fear for Soni's life and are outraged and ashamed at this inhuman treatment of a woman in India.

Soni Sori, 35, is an adivasi school teacher from Dantewada who was arrested in New Delhi on Oct 4 2011. Six months have passed since Soni was tortured physically and sexually but neither the state nor the central government has investigated the abuse. Her case has been repeatedly listed up in the Supreme Court but has been postponed every time. Throughout the duration of Soni Sori's imprisonment, the state has also tried to stifle her communications with the civil society. In January this year, a team from various women's groups across the country went to Raipur Jail to meet Soni, but they were prevented from doing so by the administration.

The brutal treatment meted out to Soni Sori, and the prevailing situation of conflict and repression in Chhattisgarh, cause us grave concern about Soni in particular, and the situation of women prisoners, in general. We demand immediate access for fact-finding groups to meet with Soni Sori and others to assess their condition in jail, particularly their medical situation. We fear that Soni Sori's condition is rapidly deteriorating, and demand that she receive immediate medical attention.

**Signed,**  
(Complete list at [iadhri.wordpress.com](http://iadhri.wordpress.com))

Harsh Mander  
Meena Kandaswamy, Poet, Writer, Activist  
Prof. Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor Emeritus, MIT  
Prashant Bhushan, Advocate, Supreme Court of India  
Anand Patwardhan, Filmmaker  
Aruna Roy, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)  
Nikhil Dey, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)  
Shankar Singh, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)  
Dr. Deepankar Basu, Prof of Economics, UMass Amherst  
Dr. Prithvi R Sharma, MD  
Jean Dreze, Allahabad University  
Uma Chakravarti, Retd Professor, Delhi University  
Anand Chakravarti, Retd Professor, Delhi University  
Arundhati Roy, Writer & Social Activist  
Mohan Rao, Professor, JNU, Delhi

Dr. Abha Sur, Women Studies, MIT  
Hiren Gandhi, Darshan, Amhedabad  
Dr. Saroop Dhruv, Darshan, Amhedabad  
Dr. Suvrat Raju, Harish-Chandra Research Institute, Allahabad  
Manasi Pingle, Film Maker  
Admiral L Ramdas, Former Chief of Naval Staff, Alibag  
Lalita Ramdas, Alibag  
Prof. K.N. Panikkar  
Dr. KS Sripada Raju  
Dr. Jonathan E Fine, M.D, Founder Physicians for Human Rights  
Santosh Rohit, Graduate Student, Univ. of Buffalo  
Shrikumar Poddar  
Mayurika Poddar  
Soundarya Iyer, PhD student, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore  
Prof. Ved Vatak  
Nurul Kabir  
Karthik Sekhar, PhD student, MIT  
Priyanka Srivastava  
Ananyo Maitra  
Srihari Murali, Indian Institute of Science  
Dr. Joyoni Dey, Professor, UMass Medical School  
Dr. Amit Basole, Asst. Prof., Bucknell Univ  
Dr. Veena Poonacha, Director, Research Center for Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University, Maharastra  
Dr. Jinee Lokaneeta, Prof. Drew Univ, NJ: Author of Transnational Torture, Law, Violence, and State Power in the United States and India, NYU Press  
Arati Chokshi, Secretary, PUCL- Karnataka  
Himadri Sekhar, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi  
Jyoti Punwani, Journalist, Mumbai  
Rajasekhar Jammalamadaka  
Aashish Sangoi  
Parvathy Prem, Graduate student, University of Texas at Austin  
Vishal Kudchadkar, Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley  
Snehal Shingavi, Assistant Professor, English, University of Texas at Austin  
Sucharit Katyal, Graduate student, University of Texas at Austin  
Neetu Jain, Association for India's Development, Austin  
Shikha Gupta, Association for India's Development, Austin  
Anand Surada, Association for India's Development, Austin  
Sivasankari Krishnanji, Association for India's Development, Dallas  
Yatin Phatak, Association for India's Development, Dallas  
Kirankumar Vissa, Hyderabad, India  
Sukla Sen  
Priti Turakhia Mumbai, India  
Indira Chakravarthi  
Reva Yunus  
Sridhar Seshan  
Kashif-ul-Huda, Editor, TwoCircles.net  
Shalini Gera, Delhi, India  
Asha Kilaru, Independent Public Health Researcher, Jan Aroghya Andolaan – Karnataka  
Pranesh Prakash  
Dr. Garga Chatterjee, Researcher, MIT

Daniel Mazgaonkar, Mumbai  
Rohini Hensman, Mumbai  
Reena Mary George, University of Vienna, Austria  
Renu Pariyadath, University of Iowa, Iowa  
Chirag Bhangale  
Himanshu Kumar  
Dr. Margaret McFadden, Prof Emerita, Women's Studies, Living/Learning Academic Center,  
Appalachian State Univ, NC  
K.J.Mukherjee, Professor, JNU, Delhi  
Yasmin Saikia Hardt-Nickachos, Chair in Peace Studies, Professor of History, Arizona State  
University  
Dr. Vandana Prasad  
Piya Chatterjee Associate Professor, Department of Women's Studies, University of California  
at Riverside  
Uma Chandru, Member, PUCL-Bangalore & WSS  
Aishah Shahidah Simmons, Documentary Filmmaker/Lecturer, AfroLez® Productions  
Jane Ward, Associate Professor, Department of Women's Studies, University of California,  
Riverside  
Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Delhi  
Satyen K. Bordoloi, Journalist, Film Critic, Mumbai  
Madhuri Krishnaswamy, Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan, M.P.  
Gowru Chinnapa  
Navaneetha Mokkil, Assistant Professor, Central University of Gujarat  
Shripad Dharmadhikary, Manthan Adhyayan Kendra, Badwani, MP  
Kavita Srivastava, PUCL National Secretary  
Pushkar Raj, General Secretary, PUCL  
Mahipal Singh, National Secretary PUCL  
Radha Kant Saxena, Vice President, PUCL, Rajasthan  
Prem Krishna Sharma, President, PUCL, Rajasthan  
Nishat Hussein, V.P President, PUCL Rajasthan  
Mamta Jaitly, Vividha Mahila Alekhan evam Sandharbh kendra,  
Renuka Pamecha, WRG, Jaipur  
Indu Krishnan, Independent Documentary Film Maker  
Debo Prosad Roy Choudhury, Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR)  
Leni Chaudhuri, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Mumbai.  
Reena Mary George, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria  
Katyayani Poet, activist, Chairperson of Janchetna  
Shivarth Pandey, Disha Students Organisation  
Abhinav, Disha Student Organisation  
Sukhwinder Editor, Mazdoor Bigul & Pratibadh (Punjabi journal)  
Sandeep Samwad, Journalist & Activist  
Tapish Maindola, Textile Workers Union, Gorakhpur  
Rajwinder, Karkhana Mazdoor Union, Ludhiana  
Ajay Swami, Delhi Metro Kamgar Union  
Lakhwinder, Editor, Lalkar, Punjab  
Meenakshy, Arvind Memorial Trust  
Kalpana Karunakaran, Assistant Prof., IIT Madras  
Madhusree Mukherjee, Writer  
Abha Bhaiya, Jaipur, Rajasthan  
Dr Debabrata Roy, Laifungbam President, Elders' Council, Centre for Organisation Research &  
Education, Manipu

Shankar Gopalakrishnan, Campaign for Survival and Dignity  
Janet Chawla  
Pushpa Achanta Member, WSS-Karnataka  
Gracy Andrew, Country Manager, CorStone, [www.corstone.org](http://www.corstone.org)  
Ramneek Singh, Playwright, Bangalore  
Amar Jesani, Editor, Indian Journal of Medical Ethics  
Dr. Anand Philip, Medico Friend Circle  
Pushpa Achanta, WSS, Bangalore  
Nisha Biswas, Kolkata  
Ritika Shrimali, York University, Canada  
Dunu Roy, Hazards Centre  
Janaki Nair, Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU  
Mohan Rao, Professor, JNU  
Vinod Raina  
Nalini Visvanathan  
Tithi Nandy, HEALTHWATCH Forum, UP  
Jasodhara Dasgupta, National Alliance on Maternal Health and Human Rights  
Siddhartha Sharma, ISI, Kolkata  
Kirity Roy, MAUSUM & Programme Against Custodial Torture & Impunity  
Mohit Jaiswal  
Devra Weber, Associate Professor, UC Riverside  
Kiran Uppalapati, Charlotte, NC  
Chandni Sheth  
Dr. Anish Mokashi, Independent Researcher, Coimbatore  
Junuka Deshpande, Artist and filmmaker, Coimbatore  
Dr. Smita Mukherjee, University of Pittsburgh Medical School, Pittsburgh  
Shalini Bhutani, Legal Researcher, New Delhi  
Joanna Levitt, Director, International Accountability Project, California  
Dr. Reety Arora, Association for India's Development, Pittsburgh  
Rounak Narvekar, Association for India's Development, Pittsburgh  
Prerna Grover, Graduate student, University of Pittsburgh  
Madhav Sankunny, Graduate student, University of Pittsburgh  
Chris Mason, Amnesty International Group 39, Pittsburgh  
Dr. Ashwin Kumar, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh  
Lavanya Subramanian, Graduate student, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh  
Kaushik Vaidyanathan, Graduate student, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh  
Jordana Rosenfeld, Amnesty International Group 39, Pittsburgh  
Mamata Dash, Activist and Independent Researcher  
Madhuresh Kumar, NAPM  
Sylvanna Falcon, Assistant Professor Latin American & Latino Studies Department, University of California, Santa Cruz  
Dr Fawzia Afzal-Khan, Prof of English and Director of Gender Studies, Montclair State University, NJ  
Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Syracuse University  
Erin Runions, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Pomona College, California  
Devra Weber, Associate Professor, History, UC-Riverside  
Dipti Misri, University of Colorado  
Dr. Swati Dhawan  
Swapna Kollu, Researcher, Boston  
Rupal Oza

Komal Choksi, Psychologist, New York City  
Shibani Potnis  
Rucha Chitnis  
Madhav Srimohan  
Dr. Sanjeev Mahajan, Mountainview, CA  
Tsering Dhundup, Dharamshala, India  
Deeksha Bajpai Tewari, Delhi University  
Sudharshana Bordoloi, York University, Canada  
Ajay Panicker  
SR Hiremath, Samaj Parivartan Samuday, Karnataka  
Amrita Basu, Departments of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies, Amherst College  
Mahtab Alam, Civil Rights' Activist and Journalist, Delhi  
Shabnam Hashmi, Social Activist, Delhi  
Patricia Morton, Chair and Associate Professor of Architectural History, Univ of California, Riverside  
Jaskiran K. Mathur PhD, Chairperson Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice, St. Francis College, NY  
Vivek Sundara, HRA, Mumbai  
Naazneen Diwan, Los Angeles  
Archana A. Pathak PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University  
Bettina Aptheker, Distinguished Professor, Feminist Studies Department, University of California, Santa Cruz  
Dr. Anjali Arondekar, Associate Professor Department of Feminist Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz  
Basuli Deb, Assistant Professor, English/Women's and Gender Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Dr. Padma Balasubramanian  
Prof. Bishnupriya Ghosh, Department of English, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Deepa Rajkumar  
Punita Chaudhary, Filmmaker, Mumbai  
Asutosh Acharya, York University  
Nishant Upadhyay, York University  
Rahul Varman, IIT, Kanpur  
Pradeep Esteves, Bangalore  
Dr. Abhay Shukla, Pune  
Priya Thangarajah  
Aditi Malhotra  
Pratiksha Baxi, CSLG, JNU  
Sheba George, Ahmedabad  
Minnie Vaid, Filmmaker and author  
Rona Wilson, Secretary, Public Relations, Committee for Release of Political Prisoners  
Shoma Sen, Committee Against Violence on Women  
Jayasree Subramanian, TISS, Hyderabad  
Vani Subramanian, Saheli Women's Resource Centre. Delhi  
Kavita Krishnan, AIPWA  
Aarti Sethi, Columbia University  
Patricia Morton, Chair and Associate Professor of Architectural History, UC Riverside  
Soumitra Ghosh, North Bengal Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, Silliguri  
Sanjay Basu Mullick, Jharkhand Jangal Bachao Andolan, Ranchi

Pushpa Toppo, Jharkhand Jangal Bachao Andolan  
Madhu Mehra, New Delhi  
Sushil Khanna Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta  
Rajashri Dasgupta Journalist, Kolkata  
Nandini Rao  
Kavita Shourie Vissanji, Samskara Wellness, Mumbai  
Vijayshree Danthurthi, Charlotte, NC  
Nitin Sonawane  
Purba Rudra, Kolkata  
Balmurli Natrajan Mining Zone People's Solidarity Group, USA  
Vidya Kalaramadam, Assistant Professor, Women's and Gender Studies, William Paterson  
University of New Jersey  
Elizabeth Gillaspay  
Nandita Ghosh  
Amrita Shodhan, Teacher, London, UK  
Runu Chakraborty  
Christine Guzaitis Department Chair, Gender and Women's Studies, Scripps College  
Richa Nagar, University of Minnesota  
Joe Athialy, New Delhi  
Chakraverti Mahajan  
Manasi Mayerkar, University of Pittsburgh  
Anindya Dutta  
Maj Gen S.G.Vombatkere (Retd), Mysore  
Richa Nagar, University of Minnesota  
Pramila  
Anand Sivaraman, Entrepreneur, Bangalore  
Manohar Elavarthi, Praja Rajakiya Vedike, Bangalore  
Neeraj Malik  
Christine Guzaitis, Assistant Professor, Department Chair, Gender and Women's Studies,  
Scripps College, Claremont, CA  
Hardip Grewal  
Christine Ward Gailey  
Abha Bhaiya, Jaipur, Rajasthan  
Esha Niyogi De, Lecturer, Department of English, University of California, Los Angeles  
Sejal Sutaria, Assistant Professor of English, Earlham College, Indiana  
Parama Roy, Professor of English, University of California, Davis  
Jhuma Sen, Advocate, Supreme Court  
Svati Joshi, Delhi University  
Kabi Cubby Sherman, FAOW, Mumbai  
Madhu Bhaduri  
Asit Das  
Shiraz Balsara Prabhu, Kashtakari Sanghatana  
Dr. Gail Omvedt, Krantivir Babuji Patankar Sanstha  
Dr. Bharat Patankar, President, Shramik Mukti Da  
Archana Purushotham, Neurologist, Bangalore  
Malika Virdi, Uttarakhand  
Oeendriila Lahiri, JNU  
Geeta Menon, Stree Jagruti Samiti, Domestic Workers Rights Union  
Kumar Swamy, National Secretary, All India Christian Council  
Gautam Chaudhury Kolkata  
Jaya Vindhyaala, Advocate, President, PUCL-AP

Paola Bacchetta, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, Univ. of California, Berkeley  
Rajiv Mariwala, Bombay  
Stan Swamy  
Sangeeta Kamat  
Richard Harkinson, London Mining Network, UK  
Samantha Agarwal, Activist, New Delhi  
Peter N. Jones, Bauu Institute and Press  
Ranjana Padhi  
Allwyn D'Silva  
Harsh Kapoor, SACW  
Jayaprakash Rao Polsani  
Amjad Ali E.M., Editor, Justicia.in  
Sujata Mody  
Anuradha Kapoor, Kolkata  
Amitadyuti Kumar, APDR  
Anurag Modi, Shramik Adivasi Sangathan  
Shamim Meghani Modi, Asst. Professor, TISS, Mumbai  
Aruna Burte  
Bimla Chandrasekhar  
Anand Pawar  
Poonam Kathuria, Society for Women's Action and Training Initiatives  
Harsh Kapoor  
Madhu Bhaduri, IFS and former ambassador of India  
Prof Sumit Sarkar  
Prof Tanika Sarkar  
Pragnya Joshi  
Sadhna Arya  
Y Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, Forest Rights activist and researcher, Hyderabad  
Inderpal Grewal  
JoAnn Martin, Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Earlham College, Richmond Indiana  
Niharika Banerjea, Assistant Professor, Sociology, University of Southern Indiana  
Ananya Chatterjea, Professor, Dept of Theater Arts and Dance, University Minnesota  
Yi-Chun T. Lin, Director & Professor, Women's Studies Program, Southern Connecticut State University  
Jean Comaroff, Bernard E. and Ellen C. Sunny Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago  
Manoj B.  
Nandini Nayak, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, London  
Alka kurian, Lecturer, School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, University of Washington, Bothell  
Vandana Mahajan  
Kiran Shaheen, Right to water Campaign, Delhi  
Agrotosh Mookherjee  
Shahnaz Khan, Professor Women & Gender Studies and Global Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario  
Juana María Rodríguez, Associate Professor, Gender and Women's Studies, UC Berkeley  
Jessica Lehr  
Diana Mavroleon, UK  
Sheena Malhotra, Professor and Chair, Gender and Women's Studies Department, California State University, Northridge  
JoAnn Martin Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Earlham College, Indiana



Deepak Srinivasan  
Nagaragere Ramesh  
Darlena David Graduate Student, London school of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

**Organizations**

Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia, MIT  
Association for India's Development  
Bigul Mazdoor Dasta, Delhi  
Committee Against Violence on Women (CAVOW)  
India Foundation Inc. of Michigan  
International Alliance for Defense of Human Rights in India  
Moving Republic, Bangalore  
Matrika Charitable Trust  
Peoples Solidarity Concerns, Bangalore  
People's Union for Civil Liberties, India  
Sanhati  
South Asian Alliance, UK ([www.southasianalliance.org](http://www.southasianalliance.org))  
South Asia Solidarity Initiative  
The South Asian Political Action Committee at Tufts University, MA  
Vaishnava Center for Enlightenment Inc.  
Vedanta Society of East Lansing, Michigan  
ViBGYOR Film Collective, Thrissur  
Women Against Sexual Violence & State Repression