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Forest officials pay no respect to govt's order

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Ashish Tripathi, TNN 28 December 2009, 01:06am IST

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LUCKNOW: Even as the state government has made it clear that it will give ownership titles to tribals and forest workers of the land tilled by them since long as per the Forest Rights Act 2006, forest officers reportedly gave an ultimatum to Dalits families of Kewal village to vacate the land by December 31.

The incident has occurred a week after over 3,000 tribals and forest workers in Sonbhadra were given ownership titles of the land under their possession on the orders of chief minister Mayawati. The Dalits of Kewal village have been residing for long and ploughing 300-odd acres of agriculture land for long.

The National Forum of Forests People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) has shot off complaints to officers in the district and the state as soon as it came to know that two Dalits Dasrath and Prabhu Ram in Kewal village were allegedly threatened and others were asked to vacate land by officers of Vidhamganj range.

The Kewal village is situated close to Jharkhand and is a naxal-infested area. "Such attitude of the officers would certainly help naxals to gain ground in the area," Roma, state convener, NFFPFW, told TOI on phone. She also said that the incident had enraged entire Dalit community in the area.

The tribals and Dalits have decided to launch an agitation against the orders to vacate land. The NFFPFW also drew attention towards the fact that chief minister Mayawati had issued directions in the past that no Dalit would be displaced from the land he/she is residing on but officers seemed to be least bothered.

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