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Title: Need to stop eviction of poor and marginal farmers including tribal communities from forest areas particularly in Udupi Parliamentary constituency, Karnataka.

SHRI VINAY KUMAR SORAKE (UDUPI): There have been reports of concerted action by the Karnataka State Forest Department officials and Revenue Department officials to evict poor and marginal farmers, including tribal communities, from their settlements in forest areas. My constituency, Udupi, a part of Dakshin Kannada, has a fair number of such settlers, numbering more than 1.25 lakh, including Kodagu District. This exercise, it seems, is in pursuance of the Supreme Court directives to evict encroachers from forest land.

Most of these settlers are in occupation of their small landholdings for more than 35 years. There being around 90,000 acres of such land held by settlers numbering more than 1.25 lakh, the per capita landholding works out to around 0.6 or less acres. The settlers had put in great efforts and struggled to develop the terrain and to plant vegetation and plantation crops like Areca, Cashewnut, Rubber, Tapioca to eke out a living without causing damage to the ecology and environment. Being poor and illiterate, most of them do not possess documents to prove their rights of occupation.

I would, therefore, urge the Centre to intervene in the matter on humanitarian grounds and abandon this drive of eviction.