



# Lakhs of forest dwellers face eviction

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## **People across 21 States may be affected by the Supreme Court order that rejected their claim**

- A recent Supreme Court order may lead to the eviction of lakhs of persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) categories across 21 States — their claim as forest dwellers have been rejected under the Forest Rights Act of 2006.
- A three-judge Bench of Justices Arun Mishra, Navin Sinha and Indira Banerjee on February 13 had ordered the Chief Secretaries of many of these States to evict those whose claims as forest dwellers have been finally rejected under the law.
- The court ordered the Forest Survey of India (FSI) to make a satellite survey and place on record the “encroachment positions.” It directed FSI to also place on record the position “after the eviction as far as possible.”
- Section 6 of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006 shows a multi-layered and hierarchical procedure for recognition or rejection of forest-dweller claims starting at the gram sabha level with multiple appellate committees at the State level.
- The Act is intended to provide a framework to “recognise and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded.”

The Hindu