

Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill 2024: Combating Urban Naxalism with Strict Legislation

November 8, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

- Why in News?
- What is Urban Naxalism?
- Key provisions of Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024

Why in News?

The Maharashtra government introduced the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024, to address the growing threat of Naxalism in urban areas, particularly through Naxal-affiliated organizations.

The bill proposes strict penalties, including imprisonment, for individuals who may not be direct members of unlawful organizations but engage in activities such as contributing to, receiving or soliciting aid for, harboring members of, or promoting or assisting in the meetings of such groups.

What is Urban Naxalism?

- **About**

- The presence of, and activities carried out, by Naxalites or the **CPI** (Maoist), in urban areas are together termed as Urban Maoism/Naxalism.
- As per **Maoist Document ‘Strategy and Tactics of Indian Revolution’**:
 - Urban movement is one of the main sources, which provides cadres and leadership having various types of capabilities essential for the people’s war and for the establishment of liberated areas.
 - Also, the responsibility for the provision of supplies, technology – expertise, information and other such things, to the people’s war, too lies on the shoulders of the urban revolutionary movement itself.
 - **Three objectives of Maoist Urban work**
 - Mobilising and organising masses
 - Build United Front (Network of Mass Organisations)
 - Military Tasks

- **Activities**

- maintaining safe houses for leaders and cadres while in transit,
- place for recuperation and for holding meetings;
- providing logistics support to under-ground squads;
- mobilising and recruiting youth, students and workers from industry and other bodies.

Key provisions of Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024

- **Purpose and Scope**

- The Maharashtra government has introduced the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024, to combat the increasing threat of Naxalism, especially in urban areas through Naxal-affiliated organizations.

- **Declaration of Unlawful Organizations**

- The state can declare an organization as “unlawful”.
- An advisory board of three qualified individuals (current/former/qualified High Court judges) will review such decisions.

- **Definition of Unlawful Activities**

- Activities threatening public order, peace, and tranquility.
- Interference with law administration and public servants.
- Violence, vandalism, use of firearms, explosives, and disruption of transportation.
- Encouraging disobedience to law and institutions.
- Collecting funds or goods for unlawful activities.

- **All offences under the law are cognizable and non-bailable**

- All offences under this law will be cognizable and non-bailable, and will be investigated by a police officer not below the rank of a Sub-Inspector.

- **Punishments**

- **Members of Unlawful Organizations**

- Imprisonment up to 3 years and fines up to Rs 3 lakh.

- **Non-members Contributing or Aiding Unlawful Organizations**
 - Imprisonment up to 2 years and fines up to Rs 2 lakh.
 - **Management or Promotion of Unlawful Organizations**
 - Imprisonment up to 3 years and fines up to Rs 3 lakh.
 - **Committing, Abetting, or Planning Unlawful Activities**
 - Imprisonment up to 7 years and fines up to Rs 5 lakh.
 - **Seizure and Forfeiture**
 - If an organisation has been declared as unlawful, the District Magistrate or Commissioner of Police can notify and take possession of any place used for its activities.
 - Government can forfeit money and assets intended for unlawful organizations.
 - **Legal Review**
 - An advisory board must review the declaration of unlawful organizations within six weeks and submit a report within three months.
 - High court can review government actions through revision petitions.
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Q.1. What is Naxalism?

Naxalism is a violent insurgency movement in India, originating from a 1967 uprising in Naxalbari, West Bengal. It is driven by Maoist ideology, aiming to overthrow the government through armed rebellion, primarily targeting rural and tribal areas with socio-economic grievances.

Q.2. What are cognizable and non-bailable offences?

Cognizable offences are serious crimes for which police can arrest without a warrant and start an investigation. Non-bailable offences are severe charges where bail is not a right and is granted only at the discretion of the court.

Source: Citing 'Naxalism in urban areas', Maharashtra Govt tables Bill

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/maharashtra-special-public-security-bill-2024/>

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