

**BEFORE THE HONOURABLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
IN
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 425 OF 2023**

IN THE MATTER OF:

DEEPIKA KHARI

...APPLICANT

Versus

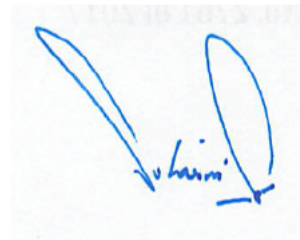
STATE OF U.P. & ORS.

...RESPONDENTS

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THROUGH



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New Delhi

Date: 07.07.2026

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH AT DELHI
Original Application No. 425 of 2023

IN THE MATTER OF:

Deepika Khari

.... Applicant

Versus

State of U.P. & Ors.

...Respondent(s)

**ADDITIONAL AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,
FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE**

I, Jitesh Kumar, aged about 45 years, presently working as Assistant Commissioner (Forestry), in the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC), having its office at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan do solemnly swear and affirm as under:

1. That in the official capacity as stated above, I am duly authorized and competent to swear this affidavit and as such am conversant with the facts of the present case based on the official record.
2. That the present affidavit is filed in respectful compliance of the order of this Hon'ble Tribunal dated 13.05.2026, wherein this Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to direct *inter-alia* as follows:

"8. Respondents are also directed to file responses/additional responses as the case may be with respect to all the aspects highlighted in para 5 of order dated 05.05.2025 with all requisite details at least three days before the next date of hearing."

3. It is further respectfully submitted that vide order dated 5.05.2026, this Hon'ble Tribunal had directed the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF-HoFF) to file its response on certain aspects as set out below:



"5. In these facts and circumstances, PCCF (HoFF), Uttarakhand is directed to file additional response giving all relevant details and also mentioning the instructions issued to the field staff regarding control burning and also manual collection of dead leaves as stated in the response attached with his affidavit and also give other information sought by this Tribunal regarding preventive control measures and remedial measures with respect to the following aspects:-

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- i. Number of forest fire incidents which took place in the year 2024 in Uttarakhand;
- ii. Causes for the forest fires specified separately under the categories of natural, man-made or any other reason (the reason may be specified);
- iii. Measures taken to remedy the damage caused by the forest fires;
- iv. Preventive measures proposed to be taken for preventing forest fires during the year 2025 and the following years;
- v. Budget amount allocated for undertaking remedial measures for remedying the damage caused by forest fires during the year 2024 with details regarding adequacy of the amount and modes of utilization; and
- vi. Budget amount to be allocated for taking of remedial measures for controlling forest fires during the year 2025."

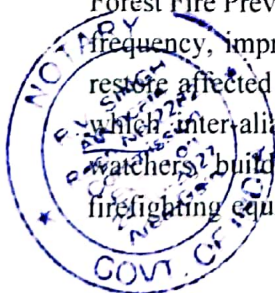
4. That it is respectfully submitted that the total number of forest fires which took place in the State of Uttarakhand as also in the rest of India has been placed on record by the Central Pollution Control Board vide its affidavit dated 2.05.2025 and as per the said affidavit, the same is based on information received directly from the States pursuant to the orders of this Hon'ble Tribunal. In terms of the said information, the details pertaining to the State of Uttarakhand are extracted below:

S N	Name of State/UT	Number of Forest Fire Incidents (2024)	Cause for Forest Fires	Budget Allocated for 2024 (Rs in Lakh)	Budget Proposed for 2025 (Rs in Lakh)
1	Uttarakhand	1276	Human negligence	3430.44	4700

5. Additionally, it is submitted that as per the information available with this answering Ministry, the total number of near real time forest fire detections by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) using SNPP-VIIRS sensors in the forest fire season (November to June) year 2023-24 and year 2024-25 are as under:

S N	Name of State	Nov 2023 to June 2024 (Near Real time Forest fire detections)	Nov 2024 to June 2025 (Near Real time Forest fire detections)
1	Uttarakhand	21,033	3,563

6. The MoEFCC provides financial assistance through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme: Forest Fire Prevention and Management (CSS: FFPM). This support aims to reduce forest fire frequency, improve response mechanisms, protect biodiversity and local communities, and restore affected forest areas. Financial assistance under the scheme is provided for activities which inter-alia includes creating and maintaining forest fire lines, engaging forest fire watchers, building water storage structures, strengthening forest infrastructure, procuring firefighting equipment, conducting soil and moisture conservation in high-risk areas, raising



Signature

awareness, and incentivizing communities for forest fire protection. The total fund released to the State of Uttarakhand under the CSS:FFPM for the financial year 2023-24 and 2024-25 is as under :

S N	Name of State	FY 2023-24 (Amount Released in Lakh)	FY 2024-25 (Amount Released in Lakh)
1	Uttarakhand	Rs 337.98	Rs 144.93

7. In addition, funds for forest fire prevention and management activities are also approved by the National Authority, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), in accordance with the provisions of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Rules, 2018. The release and utilisation of funds are based on the Annual Plan of Operations (APO) submitted by the respective States/Union Territories and approved by the National Authority. The APOs include various forestry and forest protection activities, including measures for forest fire prevention, mitigation, preparedness, infrastructure development, capacity building, and community participation, as per the priorities and requirements identified by the concerned State/UT administration. CAMPA Funds Approved for Forest Fire Prevention and Control (FFPC) Operations to the State of Uttarakhand during FY 2023-24 to FY 2024-25 is as under:

S. No.	State/UT	FY 2023-24 (Amount in Lakh)	FY 2024-25 (Amount in Lakh)
1	Uttarakhand	896.00	1000.00

8. It is further most respectfully submitted that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, (MoEFCC), New Delhi supports the efforts of the States / UTs in the prevention and control of forest fire by providing financial assistance for various forest fire prevention and management measures under the CSS:FFPM. The Scheme has been running from financial year 2017-18 to till date. Under the scheme, the total funds released to the State of Uttarakhand from the inception of the scheme i.e. from 2017-18 to 2025-26 is Rs. 2405.64 Lakhs.



Further, it is respectfully submitted that the Ministry of Home Affairs through by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), jointly with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC) support forest fire preparedness, response, and mitigation in 144 most forest fire prone districts develop a Mitigation Project for Forest Fire Management. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India, has approved the Mitigation Scheme for Forest Fire Risk Management (MSFFRM) for implementation in 144 high-priority districts across 19 States, with a total approved outlay of ₹818.92 crore. The States covered under the Scheme are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh,

Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttarakhand (Which include Himalayan Region States). The Assistance Released from NDMF under MSFFRM during FY 2025-26 to the State of Uttarakhand is as under:

Sl. No.	State	Assistance Released (₹ in Lakh)
1	Uttarakhand	1490.00

10. It is submitted that Annual Plan of Operation (APO) for the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention & Management Scheme are received from the various states at the beginning of the financial year. The APO are then scrutinized by the Central Government and revised, and amounts are sanctioned for the individual States. It is further submitted that the procedure for the release of funds under all Centrally Sponsored Schemes is set out in O. M. no. 1(13)PFMS/FCD/2020 dated 23.03.2021 of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance which states *inter-alia* as follows:

"12...In the beginning of a financial year, the Ministries / Departments will release not more than 25% of the amount earmarked for a State for a CSS for the financial year. Additional central share (not more than 25% at a time) will be released upon transfer of the stipulated State Share to the Single Nodal Account and utilization of at least 75% of the funds released earlier (both Central and State share) and compliance of the conditions of previous sanction. However, this provision will not be applicable in case of schemes where a different quantum of release has been approved by the cabinet"

A true copy of the O.M. dated 23.03.2021 is annexed hereto as **ANNEXURE –R1/1**.

11. It is further respectfully submitted that vide affidavit dated 1.04.2026, this Ministry placed on record the Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for combatting forest fires as prepared by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education which sets out a detailed plan of action to be followed by all the States and Union Territories to prevent, mitigate and remediate any damage caused by forest fires in the (i) Pre-Fire Season, (ii) Fire Season and (iii) Post-fire season. It is further most respectfully submitted that vide letter dated 13.10.2025, the answering Ministry has circulated this SoP to all States/ UTs for compliance. It is further most respectfully submitted that States would operationalise the SoP based on the specifically earmarked funds available with the States/UTs.

12. It is respectfully submitted that the present affidavit is filed to place on record in compliance with the directions of this Hon'ble Tribunal. It is prayed that the answering Respondent may be permitted to file a further affidavit on any aspects as the Hon'ble Court may direct.

J Kumar

DEPONENT
(जितेश कुमार/JITESH KUMAR)
सहायक आयुक्त (वनिकी)
Assistant Commissioner(Forestry)
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Min Environment, Forest and Climate Change
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली
Govt. of India, New Delhi

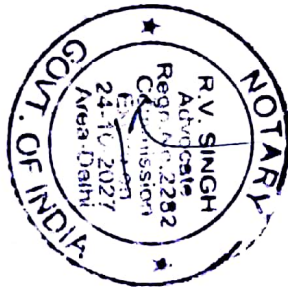
VERIFICATION
- 7 JUL 2026

Verified at New Delhi on the ___ day of July 2026, that the content of the above affidavit is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing material has been concealed thereof.

Kayane
I identified the deponent/execution
who has signed in my presence

J Kumar

DEPONENT
(जितेश कुमार/JITESH KUMAR)
सहायक आयुक्त (वनिकी)
Assistant Commissioner(Forestry)
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Min Environment, Forest and Climate Change
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली
Govt. of India, New Delhi



Solemnly affirmed before me, the
over & explained to the deponent

[Signature]
Notary Public, D.K.V.

7 JUL 2026