



## **Human Rights Defenders Alert- India**

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### **HRDA-India : Statement Condemning CBI Raid on Teesta Setalvad's Residence and Office**

Madurai, Tamil Nadu, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 : Human Rights Defenders Alerts– India (HRDA) is shocked to hear about the raids by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at the premises of social activist Teesta Setalvad, her husband Javed Anand, Gulam Mohammed Peshimam and office of Sabrang Communications and Publishing in Mumbai. HRDA strongly condemns this action by the CBI which comes in despite complete cooperation as submitted in writing by Teesta Setalvad to the CBI for all matters of investigation which is still ongoing. This is not the first time the activists working for justice and truth with regard to 'Gujarat Riots' have been targeted. Teesta Setalvad herself has been targeted in several other false criminal cases for which she had to seek anticipatory bail from the Supreme Court. It is clearly a part of repeated attempts to discredit human rights defenders and attacks on them.

Last week on July 8, 2015, the CBI registered a case against Ms Setalvad and her organisation under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section related to criminal conspiracy (120-B) read with sections 35, 37 of IPC and sections 3, 11 and 19 of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) for receiving funds from abroad without seeking the home ministry's permission. In the First Information Report (FIR), the CBI also named Ms Setalvad's husband Javed Anand and Gulam Mohammed Peshimam, both directors in Sabrang Communications and Publishing based in Santacruz, Mumbai.

There were a series of inspections of the accounts of the organisations Teesta Setalvad has been associated with i.e. Sabrang Trust and Citizens for Justice and Peace. These organisations have sent in over 25,000 pages of documentation answering every query about funding. Despite this, the CBI has reportedly filed an FIR against Teesta Setalvad. HRDA believes, Teesta Setalvad has been hounded by the Government of India for her work to seek justice for past 13 years against the architects and perpetrators of the Gujarat Riots. These ongoing harassments of Teesta Setalvad and her colleagues at Sabrang Trust, Sabrang Communications and Publishing and Citizens for Justice and Peace is a gross tactic and blatant abuse of the State machinery by the Government of India to threaten human rights defenders (HRDs) working on the issues of justice and to

ensure that a large part of HRDs time which otherwise would have focused on work related to justice is now spent running from one court to another.

HRDA strongly condemns the ongoing attacks on human rights defenders working to establish truth and justice in the Gujarat Riots and in this particular case of attack on Teesta Setalvad and the organisations she has been associated with. These repeated attempts by the Government of India to push the activists on defensive line have constantly failed over the past 13 years. The response of the State is contrary to the assurances of states in the UN Declaration of HRDs which in fact emphasizes all the work that Teesta Setalvad, Javed Anand and their colleagues have been carrying on patiently and silently.

HRDA also requests the National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) through its Chairperson, Members and Focal Point for HRDs to immediately move and direct adequate protection of Teesta Setalvad to ensure her non arrest and guarantee freedom of peaceful association and assembly and to carry out their mandates which in this case are the organisations Teesta Setalvad has been associated with.

About HRDA:

Human Rights Defenders Alert – India is a national network for the protection and promotion of human rights defenders in the country floated by participants of two Participatory Learning Workshops on Rights and Responsibilities of Human Rights Defenders regional trainings that the trainers from the said workshops conducted.

Human Rights Defenders Alert – India is a platform to extend solidarity and assistance to Human Rights Defenders in trouble / at risk. Becoming a member of the Human Rights Defenders Alert – India will make you part of a larger family of human rights defenders and ensure strengthening of the forum and greater support from the human rights community in India.

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With regards,



(Henri Tiphagne)

Honorary National Working Secretary