

Threat of arrests of prominent journalists and secular activists in India: In Defence of Teesta Setalvad & Javed Anand Under Threat of Arrest

Statements and a Citizens Online Petition

Monday 16 February 2015, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 16 February 2015).

Public statements by diverse groups and an online petition in solidarity appeared since 12 February 2015 to protest the threat of arrests of prominent journalists and secular activists in India

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Statement from National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)

NAPM is deeply disturbed with news from the Gujarat High Court refusing the anticipatory bail applications of rights activists Teesta Setalvad, Javed Anand and 3 others from Gulberg Society. We strongly feel that the High Court could have meticulously examined the extensive submissions put forth by Teesta, before rejecting the bail application, seeking dropping of charges. We also express our discontent with the sweeping observations made in the Order against social justice groups.

Although there is temporary respite with the intervention of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Supreme Court today, it is a matter of extreme anxiety that 'armed' with the High Court's order, the Gujarat police is keen to immediately arrest Teesta and others for "custodial interrogation". We hope the Supreme Court will appreciate the overall circumstances of the case, merits of the High Court's order and observe as to whether at all there is any need for "custodial interrogation" of the bail applicants, at this stage of the legal process.

It has been widely acknowledged that the Teesta, Javed and activists with the Citizens for Justice

and Peace (CJP) and the Sabrang Trust withstood the might of the Gujarat State for more than 12 years and fearlessly stood with the victims and survivors of the gruesome riots, since 2002. The constant political vendetta by the ruling party, at the behest of communal outfits in the state is no hidden secret.

NAPM is also worried at the increasing scenario of the present Govt. targeting rights activists, by making unsubstantiated allegations of financial irregularities and demand a halt to this approach. We call upon all peace-loving citizens, people's organizations and political parties to voice their protest and seek fairness and justice to the activists fighting relentlessly for the cause of Gujarat riot victims. We also demand full justice and rehabilitation to the riot-survivors who are having to wait endlessly for years from a very 'concerned State', which does not see the need of vigilante groups.

Medha Patkar - Narmada Bachao Andolan and the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM); Prafulla Samantara - Lok Shakti Abhiyan & Lingraj Azad - Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti, NAPM, Odisha; Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava - Kisan Sangharsh Samiti & Meera - Narmada Bachao Andolan, NAPM, MP; Suniti SR, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe - NAPM, Maharashtra; Gabriel Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan - Unorganised Sector Workers Federation, NAPM, TN; C R Neelkandan - NAPM Kerala; P Chennaiah & Ramakrishnan Raju - NAPM Andhra Pradesh, Arundhati Dhuru, Richa Singh - NAPM, UP; Sister Celia - Domestic Workers Union & Rukmini V P, Garment Labour Union, NAPM, Karnataka; Vimal Bhai - Matu Jan sangathan & Jabar Singh, NAPM, Uttarakhand; Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant - Paryavaran Suraksh Samiti, NAPM Gujarat; Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan - Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan & Mahendra Yadav - Kosi Navnirman Manch, NAPM Bihar; Faisal Khan, Khudai Khidmatgar, NAPM Haryana; Kailash Meena, NAPM Rajasthan; Amitava Mitra & Sujato Bhadra, NAPM West Bengal; B S Rawat - Jan Sangharsh Vahini & Rajendra Ravi, Madhuresh Kumar and Kanika Sharma - NAPM, Delhi

People's Alliance for Secularism and Democracy (PADS)

People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism (PADS) expresses alarm at the Gujarat Police move to arrest Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

Public Statement

Date: 12 February 2014

People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism (PADS) expresses alarm at the Gujarat Police move to arrest the two activists, Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand in Mumbai. The arrest of Teesta Setalvad, who was denied bail by the Gujarat High court, has been stayed for 24 hours at the intervention of the Supreme Court.

Teesta Setalvad has been relentlessly championing the rights of the victims of the Gujarat pogroms of 2002. Her efforts resulted in the transfer of some of the riot related cases out of Gujarat and conviction of some bigwigs from the Gujarat government. The Government of Gujarat led by Anandiben Patel, the successor of the incumbent Prime Minister, is vindictive and has been after Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand for their bold stand in defence of the riot victims. Its aim seems to be to discourage anyone from taking legal recourse against misdeeds of the Gujarat government during and after the 2002 pogrom. A case of embezzlement of funds collected by their NGOs has

been filed against Teesta, Javed and three others. Defendants have submitted documentary evidence in court against prosecution allegations. It must be noted that while the Gujarat government appears hell bent on targeting Teesta and her associates for standing up for riot victims, it has been reinstating the police officials who are facing serious criminal charges in fake encounter cases.

The PADS demands that the Gujarat government stop harassing Ms. Teesta Setalvad and Mr Javed Anand - whose anticipatory bail applications have been rejected by the Gujarat High Court today.

Text of statement on Gujarat High Court rejecting anticipatory bail of Teesta Setalvad & others by Prashant Centre for Human rights

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STATEMENT ON THE GUJARAT HIGH COURT REJECTING THE ANTICIPATORY BAIL APPLICATION OF MS TEESTA SETALVAD & OTHERS

It is extremely unfortunate that the anticipatory bail application filed by Ms. Teesta Setalvad, her husband Javed Anand and three others of Gulberg Society - Mr. Tanvir Jafri (son of slain MP Ehsan Jafri), Mr. Feroz Gulzar, Secretary and Mr. Salim Sandhi, Chairman of the Gulberg Society - has today been rejected by the Gujarat High Court.

All are aware that the charges are extremely flimsy and fabricated and are surely politically motivated.

In their response, Ms. Setalvad and the others provided the High Court with extensive, comprehensive and irrefutable evidence as to why they should be given anticipatory bail and the charges be dropped.

Statement by All India Secular Forum on the move to arrest Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

All India Secular Forum stands with Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand as they have struggled for justice for the victims of riots in Gujarat. Gujarat Police made several attempts and slapped several false cases on Teesta Setalvad to deter her from fighting for justice for the victims of Gujarat riots and have acted vindictively. The cases against them would not stand and justice will ultimately prevail. We demand that all false cases against Teesta Setalvad be immediately withdrawn and Gujarat police desist from taking coercive and vindictive action against them.

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Press Statement by CPI(M) - condemns the Gujarat Police move to arrest Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

via marxistindia
news from the cpi(m)

February 12, 2015

Press Statement

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement:

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) condemns the Gujarat Police move to arrest Teesta Setalvad and her husband, Javed Anand in Mumbai. The arrest of Teesta Setalvad has been stayed for 24 hours at the intervention of the Supreme Court.

The Gujarat Police have targeted Teesta Setalvad because of her relentless championing of the rights of the victims of the Gujarat pogroms of 2002. While the Gujarat government is pursuing the harassment of Teesta Setalvad, it has been reinstating police officials who are facing serious criminal charges.

The CPI(M) demands that the Gujarat government withdraw the concocted case against Teesta Setalvad and stop harassing her.

[Petition] Citizens in Solidarity with Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

We are shocked to learn of the rejection of the Anticipatory bail applications of Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand by the Gujarat High Court. Media stories suggest that the bail applications have been turned down because Setalvad and Anand were “not cooperating with the investigations” and that prima facie “funds were used for private purpose”. It is a matter of record that they have submitted their original bank statements, balance sheets and audited accounts that completely disprove the allegations. Does this amount to non-cooperation or prima facie evidence of wrong-doing?

We stand with Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand, and their quest for justice for the victims of 2002

violence, which has turned them into a target of Gujarat government's ire. We condemn this witchhunt and the false and malicious propaganda being circulated against them.

SEE FULL LIST OF SIGNATORIES AT at:

<http://www.indiaresists.com/sign-petition-citizens-in-solidarity-with-teesta-setalvad-and-javed-anand/>

Statement by WGHR

Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN

WGHR condemns the action of the Gujarat High Court and its utterances on human rights defender Teesta Setalvad

13 February 2015

The Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR), a coalition of Indian civil society organisations and independent experts, takes strong exception to the turning down of the Anticipatory bail applications of Teesta Setalvad, secretary of Citizen's for Justice and Peace, Javed Anand and two others by the Gujarat High Court on 12 February 2015 in a case of alleged misappropriation of funds for a memorial at Gulberg housing society, one of the areas devastated in the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat. The Gujarat High Court had on January 30 reserved the order on the bail petitions filed by Setalvad, Anand, Tanvir Jafri (whose father and former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri was killed during the 2002 Gujarat riots) and Firoz Gulzar, a resident of the Gulberg Society in Ahmedabad.

WGHR is shocked to learn that just after the rejection of the anticipatory bail plea the Gujarat Police moved to arrest Teesta Setalvad and her husband, Javed Anand in Mumbai. The arrest of Teesta Setalvad has been stayed for 24 hours at the intervention of the Supreme Court on 12th February 2015 until 19th February when the petition for anticipatory bail is to be heard. The latest action is part of a long series of vindictive actions undertaken by the vengeful Gujarat government and police to somehow implicate Teesta Setalvad, Javed Anand along with three victim survivors of the state sponsored carnage in Gujarat in 2002 on patently trumped up charges. The Gujarat Police have targeted Teesta Setalvad for her relentless championing of the rights of the victims of the Gujarat pogroms of 2002. It is evident that the malicious intent of the case and the threat of arrest are diversionary tactics to consume their time and energies in defending their own liberty, instead of pursuing the legal battle relating to the riots. WGHR also wishes to appreciate the Supreme Court of India for its immediate intervention in ensuring that the arrest was immediately stayed.

It is a matter of record that Teesta Setalvad and others have rebutted the charges in affidavits filed in courts. They have submitted their original bank statements, balance sheets and audited accounts that completely disprove the allegations. WGHR expresses in unequivocal terms its disappointment on the general comments of the honourable High Court on the works of civil society groups and NGOs which are in forefront of the struggle for justice for victims of human rights violations and establishing rule of law. WGHR also wishes to record that Teesta and her colleagues had placed all the documents that they had submitted to the court in the process of the hearing of this anticipatory bail in the public domain running to several thousands of pages. WGHR also recognises Teesta and her colleagues for their simplicity in living as opposed to the utterances of the High Court of Gujarat

in its order. WGHR extends its solidarity with human rights defender Teesta Setalvad who is a member of the WGHR coalition in her quest for justice for the victims of 2002 Gujrat violence. Teesta Setalvad, a journalist and a committed human rights defender is among the founding members of Citizens for Justice and Peace, Mumbai (CJP) which was formed to fight for justice for the victims of communal violence in the state of Gujarat in 2002. Because of her work as a defender Teesta has become a target of Gujarat government's arbitrary use of state power.

The United Nations "Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" (March, 1999) acknowledges that human rights defenders play a very important role in the promotion and protection of human rights and it is the duty of every State and its administrators to avoid criminalisation, stigmatisation, impediments, obstructions or restrictions on the work of human rights defenders. WGHR therefore, demands an independent review of the false cases by an independent agency to put an end to the continuing persecution and malicious propaganda being circulated against the human rights defenders, Teesta Setalvad of Citizens for Peace and Justice and others. WGHR also hopes that the Supreme Court of India while hearing the anticipatory bail petition of Teesta Setalvad and her colleagues will also use the opportunity to recognise the rights of human rights defenders and ensure that the Courts of law in the country are much more responsible in their utterances against such human rights defenders.

Henri Tiphagne
Convenor
WGHR

The Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN - a national coalition of fourteen human rights organisations and independent experts - works towards the realisation of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social human rights in India and towards holding the Indian government accountable to its national and international human rights obligations.
For information on WGHR, please visit: www.wghr.org.

Statement issued by SAHMAT

<http://sacw.net/article10627.html>

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16.2.2015

Politics of Vendetta Shall not Defeat the Cause of Justice - Statement in Solidarity with Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand, who have fought a long and heroic battle to advance the cause of

justice for Gujarat's 2002 pogrom, face possible prosecution on charges of financial misappropriation. We see this as a clear case of the politics of vendetta launched with explicit intent to whitewash and efface from public memory the misdeeds of those who today wield political power in the state and centre.

As the government headed by Narendra Modi launches a fresh investigation into the 1984 carnage on the streets of Delhi – a measure that we would welcome except for the obvious partisan motivation behind it – we are shocked to see this persisting spirit of vendetta against an effort to enforce legal and moral accountability for an equally horrific massacre in Gujarat.

The Gujarat police's alacrity in turning up at the doorstep of Teesta and Javed's Mumbai residence within minutes after the High Court in Gandhinagar pronounced that it would not entertain their plea for anticipatory bail, suggests an intent to bully and intimidate. The ostensible reason, that Teesta and Javed are required for "custodial interrogation" is an unwitting, but nonetheless chilling confession of the Gujarat police's real intent.

We have serious doubts about the bonafide of the complainants in this matter, but have taken the trouble of familiarising ourselves with the nature of the charges they make. An utterly trivial complaint has been inflated by the prosecution into charges involving crores, when the actual magnitude of funds received for the impugned purpose – building a museum of remembrance in Ahmedabad for victims of communal violence – was a mere Rs 4.6 lakh. These funds were received in the accounts of Sabrang, one among two trusts that have been engaged in the cause of justice for the 2002 riots. The other trust of which Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand are executive functionaries – Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) – has received far larger donations for the cause of pursuing avenues of legal redress for the 2002 victims and survivors. Curiously, every withdrawal for petty cash expenses for the activities of the Trust has been portrayed by the prosecution as an instance of defalcation for personal ends. Honrarium or salaries paid to Teesta and Javed have been similarly presented, though these are fully in conformity with memoranda of understanding and agreements arrived at between their trusts and donor agencies.

There are several such patent distortions of fact in the prosecution case. For their part, Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand, we understand, have submitted all relevant invoices clarifying the purposes of every one of the impugned cash withdrawals. These number some 11,000 documents and have been available with the investigating agencies for several weeks.

By way of background, we would like to recall that the Supreme Court has at least twice in past years, made adverse observations about the Gujarat state government's campaign of vilification against Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand. The first such instance was in 2004, after elements within the ruling party in Gujarat pressured and in other ways induced a key witness in the Best Bakery case, Zaheera Sheikh, to change her testimony so that charges of obstructing the course of justice and perjury could be brought against Teesta. A second instance was in 2010-11, when malicious charges of exhuming the bodies of riot victims from their graves were brought and summarily dismissed as absurd by the highest court.

We are shocked at the tone of some of the media coverage, especially in some television news channels. These have made a bonfire of the basic principle of fairness and due process, which is the presumption of innocence. They have also shown more than the usual aversion to understanding issues of complexity, though these are not matters that would challenge more than the average intelligence.

We extend our solidarity to Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand in this hour of trial and reaffirm our unstinting support to the cause they are engaged in.

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Noam Chomsky
Ashok Mitra
Romila Thapar
Amiya Kumar Bagchi
Vivan Sundaram
Prabhat Patnaik
Mushirul Hasan
Kumar Shahani
Aijaz Ahmad
Sheldon Pollock
Akeel Bilgrami
Nilima Sheikh
Mihir Bhattacharya
Saeed Mirza
Sashi Kumar
Ram Rahman
Sukumar Muralidharan
Aashish Yadav
Aban Raza
Abdullah A Rahman
Abha Dev Habib
Abhilasha Kumari
Adil Qureshi
Aditya Mukherjee
Aditi Chowdhury
Aditi Raina
Ahmar Raza
Akila Jayaraman
Ali Ahmad
Ali Akbar Mehta
Amar Farooqui
Ameet Parmeswaran
Amol Saghar
Anant Raina
Anil Bhatti
Anil Chandra
Anil Nauria
Anil Sadgopal
Anisha Imhasly
Anita Cherian
Anjali Raina
Annie Chatterji
Annie Mathew
Anuradha Chenoy
Anuradha Kapur
Archana Hande
Archana Prasad
Arjun Dev
Arpana Caur
Asad Zaidi

Asoknath Basu
Attaullah
Atul Bhardwaj
Ayesha Kidwai
B P Sahu
Badri Raina
Bhanu Mehta
Bharati Kapadia
Bina Sarkar
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Caecillia Tripp
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Chandana Mathur
Chitra Joshi
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K Satchidanandan
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Kabir Chandra
Kamal Mitra Chenoy

Kanad Sinha
Kanishka Prasad
Kannan Sundaram
Kaushik Mukhopadhyay
Keval Arora
Kirtana Kumar
Krishna Shekhawat
Kumi Chandra
Kumkum Sangari
Kunal Chakrabarti
L Jagannath
Lata Singh
Lawrence Surendra
Lima Kanungo
M K Raina
Madan Gopal Singh
Madhu Prasad
Malini Bhattacharya
Manu Chandra
Maya K Rao
Meera Devidayal
Meera Menezes
Mira Chandra
Mithu Sen
Mitul Baruah
Mohan Rao
Mohd. Arif
Moloyashree Hashmi
Mridula Mukherjee
Mukul Mangalik
N K Sharma
Nalini Malani
Neeraj Malick
Nilima Sheikh
Nina Rao
Pabitra Sarkar
Padmaja Shah
Partha Chatterjee
Parthiv Shah
Partho Datta
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Prabir Purkayastha
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R K Poddar
R C Thakran
R G Mukhopadhyay
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Radhika Menon

Rahul Verma
Rajendra Prasad
Rajinder Arora
Rajni Bhagat Arora
Rakhshanda Jalil
Rani Ray
Rashmi Kaleka
Ratnabali Chattopadhyay
Ritambhara Shastri
Rubin D'Cruz
Ruchira Gupta
Rustom Bharucha
S Kalidas
Saeed Mirza
Saif Mahmood
Smita Gupta
Savita Singh
Seema Mustafa
Shahana Bhattacharya
Shaina Anand
Shakti Kak
Shankar Chandra
Shankhayan Chowdhury
Sharmila Samant
Sheba Chhachhi
Sherna Dastur
Shikha Jhingan
Shireen Jungalwala
Shireen Moosvi
Shivaji Panikkar
Shubhra Chakrabarti
Siddharth Varadarajan
Sujata Madhok
S K Das
Sohail Hashmi
Sonia Jabbar
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Sumesh Sharma
Sumit Chowdhury
Sunil Kothari
Suvira Jaiswal
Syed Hasan Kazim
Syeda Hameed
Tarun Majumdar
Tirthankar Chattopadhyay
Tushar Joag
Upendra Trivedi
Utsa Patnaik
Varunika Saraf
Vasudha Thozhur
Veer Munshi

Vikas Rawal
Vino Mathew
Virendra Saini
Vishwamohan Jha
Xavier Dias
Zasha Colah
Zoya Hasan

P.S.

* "India: Diverse Statements and a Citizens Online Petition in Defence of Prominent Activists Teesta Setalvad & Javed Anand Under Threat of Arrest". SACW. Updated on 16 Feb. 2015:
<http://www.sacw.net/article10592.html>