



Women Human Rights Defenders
International Coalition
Defending Women Defending Rights

WHRDIC CONDEMNS THE JUDICIAL HARRASMENT OF TEESTA SETALVAD

The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition calls on the Indian authorities to end the judicial harassment of Indian woman human rights defender, Teesta Setalvad.

Teesta Setalvad is a journalist and founder of Sabrang Trust and Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP). Sabrang Trust works to promote conflict resolution and support peace building. CJP provides legal aid to the survivors of the Gujarat riots, and has been instrumental in obtaining convictions against perpetrators of the violence, among which are politicians and government officials. As a committed woman human rights defender, Teesta Setalvad has tirelessly contributed to maintaining a peaceful and more stable India and has inspired our community with her exemplary human rights advocacy.

Teesta Setalvad has been facing a series of actions of harassment, including judicial proceedings since 2013 which are believed to be politically motivated. Judicial proceedings have been ongoing against Teesta Setalvad and her spouse, based on spurious charges of alleged embezzlement of funds intended for the construction of a memorial to the victims of the 2002 Gujarat riots. An investigation which began in January 2014 has resulted in continuous harassment and systematic probes into the accounts of Setalvad's NGO and groundless accusations of non-cooperation. Most recently, on 14 July 2015, her house and office were raided by officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation and on 29 June 2015, a travel ban was imposed on her.

While the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition welcomes the news that on 24 July 2015, the Bombay High Court granted human rights defender Teesta Setalvad anticipatory bail for two weeks, it calls on the Indian authorities to end the judicial harassment of Teesta Setalvad, as it believes these actions to be an attempt to repress and destabilize her legitimate work in the defense of human rights.

The Indian government must ensure that women human rights defenders can carry out their legitimate human rights work, free from threats, attacks and intimidation. The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition recognizes the valuable contributions Teesta Setalvad has made to advocating for a just and peaceful society, and stands in solidarity and sisterhood with her.



Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition

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Notes

The Women Human Rights Defender International Coalition is a resource and advocacy network supporting women human rights defenders worldwide. We have 32 members:

Amnesty International (AI)

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)

The Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP)

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)

Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR)

Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)

Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL)

Frida the Young Feminist Fund

Front Line Defenders

Human Rights First

Information Monitor (INFORM)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP)

Isis International

ISIS Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (ISIS-WICCE)

Just Associates (JASS)

The Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM)

MADRE

Nazra for Feminist Studies

Nobel Women's Initiative (NWI)

Peace Brigades International

Rainbow Rights Project (R-Rights), Inc.

Society for Appraisal & Women Empowerment in Rural Areas (SAWERA)

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF)

Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (WIGJ)

Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC)

World Organisation against Torture (OMCT)