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Update: India - Continuous judicial harassment against human rights defenders Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

On 31 December 2016, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a charge sheet to the Mumbai special court against human rights defenders Ms **Teesta Setalvad**, Mr **Javed Anand** and their publishing company Sabrang Communications and Publishing Private Limited (SCPPL) for alleged violation of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

Teesta Setalvad is a journalist and founder of **Sabrang Trust, Sabrang Communications and Publishing Private Limited (SCPPL)** and **Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP)**. Sabrang Trust and Sabrang Communications and Publishing Private Limited (SCPPL) were established after the 1992-1993 communal violence in Mumbai, and work to promote conflict resolution and support peace building. CJP was established in April 2002, in the immediate aftermath of the communal violence during the Gujarat riots, to provide legal aid to the survivors of the riots, and has been instrumental in obtaining the 117 convictions against perpetrators of the violence.

On 31 December 2016, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a charge sheet to the Mumbai special court against human rights defenders Teesta Setalvad, Javed Anand and SCPPL for criminal conspiracy under Section 120B of the Indian Penal Code, along with Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). There were three key allegations, the first allegation was that Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand, as columnists, were not eligible to accept foreign contributions in accordance with FCRA. The second allegation is that they did not seek prior permission from the Home Ministry for receiving the foreign contribution. The third allegation was that the company did not maintain an exclusive bank account for receipt of foreign contribution, as obligated under the FCRA. The Mumbai special court has issued summons to the human rights defenders to appear before court on 3 February 2017.

This is not the first case of judicial harassment on Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand. On [16 June 2016](#), the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a notice to cancel the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) registration of Sabrang Trust. According to Gujarat's Minister of State, Mr Rajnikant Patel, the state government contacted the Home Minister requesting the inquiry into the Setalvad's Sabrang Trust on the basis of their belief that foreign funds sent to her NGO, in particular by the US-based Ford Foundation, were misused in order "to create communal disharmony" within the state of Gujarat, and carrying out "anti-national propaganda" abroad.

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern at the continuous judicial harassment against Teesta Setalvad, Javed Anand as it believes this to be an attempt to intensify the harassment of the human rights defenders, and to repress their legitimate work in the defence of human rights.