

1 January 2011

Press Statement

People's Union for Civil Liberties, strongly condemns Gujarat Government's campaign of calumny against and attempt to frame under false charges human rights defender Teesta Setlavad, of Citizens of Justice and Peace, lawyer M.M. Tirmizi, victims survivors of Lunwada massacre and media person Rahul Singh for exposing Gujarat Police's callousness and cruelty in the Lunwada massacre and mass burial case.

Teesta Setlavad, her organisation CJP and lawyer Tirmizi with the help of the kin of the victim were instrumental in getting the High Court 2006 and then Supreme Court orders in 2008, respectively for a dignified burial of the massacre victim's mortal remains. These were the victims of the 2002 genocide in Gujarat. It is well known that the Gujarat police had callously dumped the bodies of the Panam river at Lunawada in Godra district of Gujarat.

The national outcry following media reports sourced to the efforts citizens for justice and peace and the court judgements, forced the Gujarat Government to ultimately hand over the bodies for a decent burial. Following the rejection by the Gujarat high court of the victim's petition for a CBI investigation into the tampering of evidence in the lunawada case the Gujarat Government saw an opportunity to persecute whistle blowers and HR defenders.

As Rais Khan, the local CJP representative, dismissed from the organisation for irregularities, switched sides under the influence of the accused and the police in the Lunawada case, the Gujarat Government has increased its efforts to teach Teesta and other co-activists, lawyers and journalists a lesson. Thus they have issued summons to the headlines today correspondent Rahul Singh, who as Sahara TV correspondent had publicised the Gujarat Government's misdeeds.

PUCL fears that emboldened by Dr. Sen's conviction under trumped up charges in Chhattisgarh, the Gujarat Government make a swift to arrest Teesta and other human rights defenders, lawyers media persons and others, under trumped charges of doctoring with evidence in the Lunawada case. We see this as Gujarat Government ploy to influence the courts before its imminent judgement in the Lunawada massacre case.

The PUCL has decided to lodge a complaint with the NHRC against this persecution.

Sd/-

Mahi Pal Singh

(National Secretary) 09312206414

Sd/-

Kavita Srivastava

(National Secretary) 09351562965