

26 November 2015

To
Shri Arun Jaitley,
Minister for Information & Broadcasting,
Govt. of India

Shri Rajyavardhan Rathore,
Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting,
Govt. of India

Shri Sunil Arora,
Secretary,
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting,
Govt. of India

Shri C. Senthil Rajan,
Director,
Directorate of Film Festivals & IFFI

STATEMENT BY FILM COMMUNITY EXPRESSING
SOLIDARITY WITH STUDENTS OF THE FILM AND TELEVISION
INSTITUTE OF INDIA, AND EXPRESSING SERIOUS CONCERN
AT THE RECENT EVENTS AT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
OF INDIA, 2015, GOA

Respected Sirs,

As members of the filmmaking fraternity and well-wishers of cinema in India, we would like to place on record our solidarity with the students of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), and our anguish at the way they continue to be treated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and its various departments. How the Directorate of Film Festivals of India has behaved with these students at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2015, currently underway in Goa is an example of this. From ex-students being arrested for exercising their democratic right to protest and

false charges being framed against them, to being denied entry into the festival despite valid accreditation simply because they happen to be from FTII, to a student being put in preventive detention – these are measures that have nothing to do with the objectives that IFFI was set up for.

This year, the student package of films at IFFI has also been scrapped, the official reason being given for this is to have more slots available for repeat screenings of films. However, recent events lead us to believe that the decision clearly has to do with the 139 days protest that was led by the FTII students against the current government. The scrapping of the student package affects film students across the country and not just FTII, and is an act that is against the interests of the entire student community.

Students from the premier film institute of the country have a right to attend the International Film Festival of India – to get an opportunity to watch, interact and have conversations about their practice with the larger filmmaking community. By making it difficult to attend the festival, the authorities are in effect preventing the students from exercising their right to access education. This, to our mind, is the complete antithesis of what the International Film Festival of India stands for.

It is also condemnable that Section 144 has been imposed around the festival venue, and delegates at the festival are being unduly harassed for expressing their solidarity with the students.

We, the undersigned, strongly condemn the harsh measures that are being taken to stifle the participation of the student community at IFFI and demand that the students from the Film and Television Institute of India be allowed to participate in the festival, as it is their democratic right to do so. We also demand the dropping of charges against the two ex-students. We also demand that all cases filed against FTII students be withdrawn by the government. We, as a community of filmmakers stand behind the students of the FTII in their larger struggle.

In solidarity –

- (1) Aditya Seth
- (2) Amar Kanwar
- (3) Amit Mahanti
- (4) Amrita Dasgupta
- (5) Amudhan R.P.
- (6) Anand Patwardhan
- (7) Ani Thomas
- (8) Anjali Bhushan
- (9) Anjali Panjabi
- (10) Anjali Monteiro
- (11) Anupama Srinivasan
- (12) Aparna Sanyal
- (13) Arghya Basu
- (14) Asheesh Pandya
- (15) Ashim Ahluwalia
- (16) Avijit Mukul Kishore
- (17) Batul Mukhtiar
- (18) Christopher Rego
- (19) Daljit Ami
- (20) Debalina Majumder
- (21) Deepa Dhanraj
- (22) Dylan Mohan Gray
- (23) Fathima Nizaruddin
- (24) Gautam Sonti
- (25) Geetha J
- (26) Iffat Fatima
- (27) Iram Ghufuran
- (28) Karan Bali
- (29) Kavita Joshi
- (30) K.P.Jayasankar
- (31) Lalit Vachani
- (32) Leena Manimekalai
- (33) Madhusree Dutta
- (34) Merajur Rahman Baruah
- (35) Moinak Biswas
- (36) Navroze Contractor
- (37) Nirmal Chander
- (38) Nishtha Jain
- (39) Nitin K. Pamnani
- (40) Pankaj Butalia
- (41) Paromita Vohra

- (42) Pinky Brahma Choudhury
- (43) Prateek Vats
- (44) Priti Chandriani
- (45) Priyanka Chhabra
- (46) Rahul Roy
- (47) Rajula Shah
- (48) Rakesh Sharma
- (49) Rani
- (50) Ranjan De
- (51) Ranjani Mazumdar
- (52) Rashmi Sawhney
- (53) Reena Mohan
- (54) Rita Banerji
- (55) Ruchika Negi
- (56) R.V. Ramani
- (57) Saagar Gupta
- (58) Saba Dewan
- (59) Sabeena Gadihoke
- (60) Sabina Kidwai
- (61) Sameera Jain
- (62) Samina Mishra
- (63) Sandhya Kumar
- (64) Sanjay Barnela
- (65) Sanjay Joshi
- (66) Sanjay Kak
- (67) Sanju Surendran
- (68) Shabani Hassanwalia
- (69) Shirley Abraham
- (70) Shobhit Jain
- (71) Shohini Ghosh
- (72) Shoma A. Chatterji
- (73) Smriti Nevatia
- (74) Sourav Sarangi
- (75) Sreemith Sekhar
- (76) Sridhar Rangayan
- (77) Subasri Krishnan
- (78) Sunanda Bhat
- (79) Supriyo Sen
- (80) Surabhi Sharma
- (81) Sushma Veerappa
- (82) Tangella Madhavi
- (83) Tarun Bhartiya
- (84) Usha Rao

- (85) Vani Subramanian
- (86) Yashodara Udupa
- (87) Yousuf Saeed