

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 20/06/94  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 61/94 Fear of torture/illegal detention

18 February 1994

INDIA: Sukhwinder SINGH  
Surjit SINGH  
Bhinda SINGH

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Amnesty International is concerned that three men, Sukhwinder Singh, Surjit Singh and Bhinda Singh, arrested on 13 February continue to be held in illegal detention where they are reportedly being subjected to torture.

Amnesty International has received reports that Sukhwinder Singh, aged 20, son of Dalal Singh, resident of Heller, Jalandhar district, his uncle, Surjit Singh, aged 60, and Bhinda Singh were arrested with five others by police on 13 February 1994. The police were reportedly led by the Deputy Superintendent of Police from Nakodar.

Five people have since been released but Sukhwinder Singh, Surjit Singh and Bhinda Singh remain in custody. Bhinda Singh had been released earlier in the week and reported that the other two men were being tortured. He has since been arrested again. It is reported that Sukhwinder Singh's home has been raided by the police on several occasions in the last few weeks. It has also been reported that other members of his family have been harassed by police in the past. Members of his family have reportedly gone into hiding for fear of police harassment and consequently no legal action has been taken on their behalf.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International regularly receives reports alleging that men believed by the authorities to be members or sympathizers of armed opposition groups, or their relatives, in Punjab have been killed in police custody, often after torture. Their deaths or "disappearances" are wrongly attributed by officials to an "encounter" between militants and the police, to an "escape" during such an "encounter" or to other improbable causes.

Even though legal safeguards against unacknowledged detention exist in India's criminal law and procedural code, they are often simply not adhered to and prisoners are held in unacknowledged detention for weeks and sometimes months.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern that Sukhwinder Singh, Surjit Singh and Bhinda Singh are being held in illegal detention and are reportedly being tortured;
- seeking assurances that they will not be ill-treated while in police custody;
- seeking assurances that they are allowed immediate access to lawyers and relatives and are brought before a magistrate forthwith;
- urging that they are immediately released if they are not charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

#### APPEALS TO:

Beant Singh  
Chief Minister of Punjab  
Office of the Chief Minister  
Chandigarh  
Punjab

India

**Telegrams: Chief Minister of Punjab, Chandigarh, Punjab, India**

**Faxes: +91 172 540 647 ATT CHIEF MINISTER**

**Salutation: Dear Chief Minister**

Mr K.P.S Gill

Director General of Police

Police Headquarters

Chandigarh

Punjab

India

**Telegrams: Director General Police, Chandigarh. Punjab, India**

**Salutation: Dear Director General of Police**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Mr Avtar Singh

Deputy Superintendent of Police

Nakodar

Punjab

India

and to diplomatic representatives of India accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 1994.