

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 33/06/96

UA 175/96

Fear for safety / Unacknowledged detention

9 July 1996

PAKISTANZamir Hasan Ansari, aged 60

Feroza Khanom (f)

Riffat Anjum (f)

Anjum Kamal

Amnesty international is gravely concerned for the safety of Zamir Hasan Ansari, his wife Feroza Khanom and their two grown-up children, Riffat Anjum and Anjum Kamal, who reportedly went missing from their home in the capital Islamabad on 1 May 1996. There is evidence to suggest that the family may be in the custody of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI, military intelligence), although their detention has not been officially acknowledged. There are fears that the family may be subjected to ill-treatment whilst in detention.

The four family members apparently went missing between the hours of 2:30 and 5:00pm on 1 May; a friend had spoken to them on the telephone at 2:30, but there was no reply to a caller who telephoned at 5:00pm. That evening the family did not arrive at a dinner engagement at which they were expected. Subsequent inquiries have revealed that they had not informed relatives, friends or neighbours about any intention to leave the city at this time.

On 8 May, police and concerned relatives entered the family's house and found it uninhabited with almost everything intact. No locks had been broken and there were no visible signs of a struggle. It appeared as though the family had been disturbed in the middle of a meal as there were remains of food on the table. Although there were some expensive items missing, such as a video recorder, money and jewellery which was openly displayed had not been taken.

Relatives filed a First Information Report with the police on 7 June, charging that the family had been abducted by unknown persons. The police investigation has so far not revealed the family's whereabouts. Relatives have received information to indicate that the family may be detained by the ISI because of an alleged suspected link between Zamir Hasan Ansari and the Indian authorities (see background). Zamir Hasan Ansari was stationed in New Delhi between 1985 and 1990 whilst working for the Pakistan Foreign Service.

A *habeas corpus* petition was filed by Zamir Hasan Ansari's second son, who was living in the United States until the time his family went missing. As far as Amnesty International is aware, all the respondents, including the police, have denied any knowledge about the family's whereabouts. A further hearing is scheduled for 10 July 1996.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Relations between Pakistan and India have been strained since Partition in 1947 when both countries gained independence from Great Britain. The two countries have fought three wars, two of which have been over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. More recently, Pakistan has accused India of trying to destabilise Pakistan and of being behind the recent and ongoing violence in Karachi and a series of bomb explosions in several town and cities in the country during the past year. People in Pakistan with alleged links to India may be looked on with suspicion by the authorities.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the family named above who went missing from their home on 1 May 1996 and who are believed to be held in unacknowledged detention;
- calling on the authorities to reveal the whereabouts of the family as a matter of urgency;
- seeking assurances that whilst in detention they will not be subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence, in which case they be given prompt access to a lawyer and relatives.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto
Office of the Prime Minister
Islamabad, Pakistan
Telexes: 5742 PMH PK
Telegrams: Prime Minister Bhutto, Islamabad, Pakistan
Faxes: 92 51 9201545/821968
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Maj.Gen.(Retd) Nasirullah Khan Babar
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Pak Secretariat, Block R
Islamabad, Pakistan
Telegrams: Minister of the Interior Nasirullah Babar
Faxes: 92 51 814597/811472
Salutation: Dear Minister

Aftab Shaban Mirani
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Pak Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Telegrams: Ministry of Defence Aftab Shaban Mirani
Faxes: 92 51 580494
Salutation: Dear Minister

Secretary
Ministry of Human Rights
Pak Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Faxes: 92 51 9201631
Telegrams: Human Rights Ministry, Islamabad, Pakistan
Salutation: Dear Secretary

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 September 1996.