

PUBLIC

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Death threats/fear for safety

15 October

INDIA Peer Noor ul Haq

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Peer Noor ul Haq, who has reportedly been threatened with death for agreeing to testify against police officers allegedly responsible for deaths in custody in Srinagar, summer capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Peer Noor ul Haq was arrested by police on 19 June 1999, after he lodged a complaint of bribery against police officers including Deputy Superintendent (DSP) Abdul Rashid Khan. He was detained for 10 days, during which time he was reportedly tortured with electric shocks, severe beatings, having a heavy weight rolled up and down his thighs and being hung upside down for long periods.

On the night of 23 June two men arrested by DSP Khan, Ghulam Matto and Javid Shah, were put into the same cell as Peer Noor ul Haq, and he heard screaming from another cell which he took to be the sound of a third man arrested by DSP Khan, Nazir Gilkar, being tortured. Shortly after the screaming stopped DSP Khan came and took away Ghulam Matto and Javid Shah. Neither man was seen alive again, and their bodies were recovered in a village in Baramula District, 70 miles away. Nazir Gilkar's body was recovered from Dal Lake. A case has been brought against police officers for the killing of Ghulam Matto, Javid Shah and Nzir Gilkar but not against DSP Khan.

After he was released, Peer Noor ul Haq went to the Srinagar Medical Centre to get treatment for the injuries he had received in custody. While he was there DSP Khan threatened to kill him if he testified in the case of the custodial deaths. Later Peer Noor ul Haq made a submission to the State Human Rights Commission concerning his alleged illegal detention and recorded the threat by DSP Abdul Rashid Khan. Justice G A Kuchhai, Chairperson of the State Human Rights Commission, issued an order dated 21 August 1999 that Peer Noor ul Haq should not come to harm or be subject to harrassment and that security cover should be provided to him, but to date this protection has not been provided. Khan apparently later made the same threat to Peer Noor ul Haq's brother-in-law.

Amnesty International's concerns for the safety of Peer Noor ul Haq are heightened by reports that DSP Khan has been implicated in other cases of torture, death in custody and "disappearance" and is currently suspended from duty pending the outcome of an inquiry into a rape case.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately guarantee the safety of Peer Noor ul Haq, who has allegedly been threatened with death by a Deputy Superintendent of the Police in Srinagar;
- urging the authorities to immediately order an independent inquiry into these allegations;
- urging the authorities to give a commitment that people will be free to raise complaints against the police and act as witnesses in cases which involve complaints against the police without fear of harrassment, and that action will be taken against anyone interfering with those activities.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Sardar Gurbachan Jagat
Director General of Police

Office of the DGP
Police Headquarters
Srinagar
India

Salutation: Dear Director General

Mr Justice Bhavani Singh
Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir
High Court of Jammu & Kashmir
Srinagar
India

Faxes:+ 91 194 452 280

Salutation:Dear Chief Justice

Lal Krishna Advani
Minister of Home Affairs
North Block,
New Delhi 110 001, India

Telegrams:Home Minister, New Delhi, India

Faxes:+ 91 11 301 5750

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr Farooq Abdullah
Office of the Chief Minister
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar/Jammu
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 26 November 1999.