

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 20/15/96

27 March 1996

Further information on EXTRA 38/96 (ASA 20/10/96, 12 March 1996) - Prisoner of conscience / Fear for safety and new concern: Possible extrajudicial execution

INDIAJalil Andrabi, lawyer, human rights activist

On the morning of 27 March 1996, the tied body of Jalil Andrabi, lawyer and prominent human rights activist, was found in the Jhelum river in a residential area of Srinagar by local people. He had reportedly been abducted by security forces, in the presence of members of armed groups, on 9 March. His family and local advocates identified his body. Reports suggest that he had been dead for approximately one week.

A crowd led by Yasin Malik, a leader of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) went to Raj Bagh police station and marched to a nearby court with the body. Police, wielding batons and firing into the air, charged at the crowd, reportedly beating up Yasin Malik and seizing the body. Several photographers were reportedly badly beaten by the police. Journalists and photographers were refused entry to the police station and several cameras were reportedly smashed to prevent photographs of the body being taken.

The Jammu and Kashmir Bar Association filed a petition in the High Court demanding that an autopsy be carried out on the body. The court ordered that the body will remain in police custody until the autopsy has been carried out.

The Indian authorities have denied any involvement in the abduction, despite the fact that Jalil Andrabi was arrested by members of the Rashtriya Rifles, a paramilitary force, accompanied by members of armed groups whose activities appear to be supported by the Indian security forces. His abduction was witnessed by his family.

The situation in Srinagar remains very tense with all shops and local businesses closed and hundreds of people taking to the streets to protest against the death.

Jalil Andrabi is the fourth prominent human rights activist to be killed in suspicious circumstances in Jammu and Kashmir in the past four years. The Indian government has so far failed to institute independent investigations into the deaths of the other three, Mr H.N Wanchoo, Dr F.A. Ashai and Dr Guru.

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

- expressing gravest concern at the killing of Jalil Andrabi following his reported abduction by members of the security forces, in the presence of members of armed groups, on 9 March 1996;
- urging the Indian Government to order an independent and impartial inquiry into the abduction and killing of Jalil Andrabi, the results of which should be promptly made public in full;
- urging the government to ensure that Jalil Andrabi's family and colleagues in the human rights field are given adequate protection;
- seeking the government's assurances that all state forces deployed in Kashmir will observe human rights in the tense situation which now exists in Srinagar and surrounding areas;

if possible, also:

- express concern at the government's failure to institute independent investigations into the deaths, in suspicious circumstances, of other human rights activists in Jammu and Kashmir; urging that such inquiries be ordered into the deaths of Mr H.N Wanchoo, Dr F.A. Ashai and Dr Guru.

APPEALS TO:

Mr K Padmanabhaiah
Home Secretary
c/o Office of the Prime Minister
Gate No 6, South Block
New Delhi 110 001, India

Faxes: + 91 11 301 9817 ATTENTION HOME SECRETARY

Telegrams: Home Secretary, New Delhi, India

Saluation: Dear Home Secretary

General K.V. Krishna Rao
Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of Governor
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir
India

Faxes: +91 194 452207

Telegrams: Governor Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, India

Saluation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Mr Pranab Mukherjee
Minister of External Affairs
Ministry of External Affairs
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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 10 May 1996.