

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 20/10/93

Distr: UA/SC

This is a limited action. Please organise up to 15 appeals per section.

UA 51/93 Fear of Torture

1 March 1993

INDIA: Sukhdev Singh

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Sukhdev Singh, son of Nazar Singh, resident of village Buttar Kala, Babba Kalal, Amritsar who was taken into police custody on 2 January 1993 by police from Butala police station, Beas. His father sent cables to the sessions judge of Amritsar on 25 January 1993 and an application to the Governor of Punjab on 10 February 1993, seeking the release of his son, but as of 1 March 1993 his son remains in detention. Nazar Singh has seen his son in police custody at Butala police station but has expressed fears that he may be tortured or killed while in police custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International regularly receives reports of "disappearances" and unacknowledged detention of people arrested in Punjab on suspicion of being members or sympathizers of one of the Sikh opposition groups advocating a separate Sikh state, "Khalistan". In some cases the detainees are eventually found to have died in custody, while others are believed to have been deliberately killed in custody although official reports say they died in "encounters" with the police, or that they "escaped". Even though legal safeguards against unacknowledged detention exist in India's ordinary 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/express and airmail letters in English or your own language:

- noting concern at reports that Sukhdev Singh was reportedly arrested on 2 January 1993 by police from Butala police station;
- seeking assurances that Sukhdev Singh is being humanely treated and is granted full legal safeguards while in custody;
- urging that he be allowed immediate access to lawyers and relatives and be brought before a magistrate forthwith.
- urging that he be released if he is not charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

- 1) Beant Singh
Chief Minister of Punjab

Office of Chief Minister
Chandigarh
Punjab
India

Telegrams: Punjab Chief Minister, Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

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2) Mr K.P.S. Gill
Director General of Police
Police Headquarters
Chandigarh
Punjab
India

Telegrams: Director General of Police, Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Salutation: Dear Director General

COPIES TO:

Surendra Nath
Governor of Punjab
Raj Bhavan
Chandigarh
Punjab
India

and to diplomatic representatives accredited to India in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 April 1993.