

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 84/93 Continuing Reports of Extrajudicial Executions
in Kashmir

25 March 1993

INDIA: Hamida Mattoo

Amnesty International is concerned at continuing reports of extrajudicial executions in Kashmir by the security forces. The most recent case reported to Amnesty International is that of Hamida Mattoo, a 35 year-old woman from Baramulla who was allegedly killed by members of the security forces on 3 March 1993. Hamida Mattoo was shot behind her house in Mohalla Jadeed when members of the security forces opened fire in the village, apparently in retaliation for an attack earlier that day by armed militants on the security forces in Baramulla.

Extrajudicial killings of civilians by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir are part of a pattern and appear to have been increasing in recent months (see UA 05/93, ASA 20/06/93, 20 January 1993).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since early 1990 there has been an increasingly violent campaign for independence in Kashmir. Armed separatists have kidnapped and killed officials, members of paramilitary forces and civilians. Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern to the Indian Government about reports of deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by members of the security forces, about widespread allegations of torture and rape by members of the security forces and about arbitrary arrests of suspected separatists, an increasing number of whom are reported to have "disappeared". Amnesty International is concerned at the continuing pattern of extrajudicial executions which are occurring in the Kashmir valley, despite the government's condemnation of such practices. A recent example of large-scale extrajudicial killings was on 6 January 1993, when members of paramilitary forces are said to have indiscriminately shot or burned to death scores of civilians, including women and children, setting fire to houses and shops, in retaliation for an attack by Kashmiri separatists earlier that day (see UA 05/93, ASA 20/06/93, 20 January 1993). To date, 53 people have reportedly been killed in that incident which happened in the town of Sopore, Kashmir. The government have ordered a judicial inquiry into this incident.

Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Girish Saxena, has ordered several investigations of such abuses, in one case leading to charges of murder being brought against the Director of the Border Security Forces (BSF). Such investigations have usually been carried out by police or army officials rather than by an independent and impartial body. The inquiry ordered into the Sopore incident is to Amnesty International's knowledge the first of its kind ordered into such grave allegations of human rights violations.

However, prosecutions are very rare. The government says that action was taken against 230 members of the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, but has failed to give details of the perpetrators, their actions and the punishments.

Page 2 of UA 84/93

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

- expressing concern at continuing reports of extrajudicial killings in Kashmir by members of paramilitary forces, the most recent example being allegations that Hamida Mattoo was deliberately and arbitrarily shot dead by the security forces on 3 March 1993;
- urging the government to order an investigation to be conducted by an authoritative, fully independent and impartial body and that the findings of such an investigation be published in full and without delay;
- urging that those found guilty of any extrajudicial killings be promptly brought to justice before the ordinary courts of law;
- urging that the victims and their relatives receive prompt and full compensation.

APPEALS TO

1) Mr Girish Saxena
Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Governor
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir
India

Telegrams: Governor Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, India

Salutation: Dear Governor

2) Mr S.B Chavan
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 119 991

Telegrams: Minister Home Affairs, New Delhi, India

Telexes: 3166427 REND IN

Faxes: + 91 11 301 6781 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

V.K. Kapoor
Chief Secretary

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir
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 5 May 1993.