

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 20/25/93

Distr: UA/SC

This is a limited appeal. Please organize up to 15 appeals per section.

UA 155/93 "Disappearance"

14 May 1993

INDIA: Gurjit Singh, 21

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Gurjit Singh who was picked up by plainclothed policemen on 8 May 1993 but whom the police officially deny holding.

Gurjit Singh, son of Randhir Singh of Mohi village, Ludhiana district, was picked up by five plainclothed policemen in a Maruti van with no numberplate from a place near Birmi village bus stop. Gurjit Singh was riding a scooter at the time with a friend from Jagraon. The police were seen bundling him into the van. The scooter was also taken and his friend was told to go on foot. His friend reported the incident to Gurjit Singh's family who then inquired at the local police station as to the whereabouts of Gurjit Singh. The police deny any knowledge of his arrest although one police officer, on 11 May, unofficially told the family that Gurjit Singh was in their custody. He gave them no further information about why or where he was held and his family are deeply concerned for his safety while in custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International regularly receives reports that alleged members or sympathizers of armed opposition groups, or their relatives, in Punjab have been killed in police custody, often after torture. Their deaths or "disappearances" are later attributed by officials to an "encounter" between militants and the police, to an "escape" during such an "encounter" or to other improbable causes. 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/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Gurjit Singh, son of Randhir Singh from Mohi village, Ludhiana district, was taken by five plainclothed policemen on 8 May 1993 from a place near Birmi village bus stop and whose whereabouts remain unknown;
- urging that government take immediate steps to establish his whereabouts and inform his family;

- seeking assurances that if Gurjit Singh is indeed in custody of the Punjab police that he be humanely treated and be allowed immediate access to lawyers, relatives and a doctor and be brought before a magistrate;

- urging that he be immediately released if he is not charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO

1) Beant Singh
Chief Minister of Punjab
Office of the Chief Minister
Chandigarh
Punjab
India

Telegrams: Chief Minister of Punjab, Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Faxes: + 91 172 540 647

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

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

Telegrams: Director General Police, Chandigarh. Punjab, India

Salutation: Dear Director General of Police

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Mr Rajesh Pilot
Minister of State for Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

2) Mr Dinesh Singh
Minister of External Affairs
Ministry of External Affairs
South Block
New Delhi 110 001
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 25 June 1993.