

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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India (Jammu/Kashmir): Impunity for Special Operations Group unacceptable

Amnesty International is disturbed by recent press reports that the government of Jammu and Kashmir is to break the promise made in its recently published Common Minimum Program to investigate all reported cases of custodial killings and violations of human rights and to identify and punish appropriately those found responsible.

In an address to new trainee police recruits on 5th January, Chief Minister Mohammad Sayeed reportedly stated that members of the Special Operations Group, a division of the police dealing with armed insurgency which has been accused of human rights violations, would simply be 'reoriented', implying that wide scale allegations of human rights violations made against them in the past would not necessarily be investigated. He reportedly went on to say that an amnesty would be available to those who have perpetrated abuses.

Amnesty International wrote to Chief Minister Sayeed in December 2002 welcoming the Common Minimum Program as an opportunity for the new government to strengthen the people's trust in the rule of law and their commitment to uphold the human rights of the population in Jammu and Kashmir. The organization is disappointed that the government may be retreating from its commitment to uphold human rights.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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