

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 20/002/2004

UA 35/04

Fear of torture/Fear for safety

03 February 2004

INDIA

At least 100 individuals including social activists, human rights defenders and lawyers in Punjab

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of at least 100 individuals including social activists, human rights defenders and lawyers in Punjab. Some are being illegally detained in connection with the escape of four detainees from Burail Jail (also known as Model Jail), Chandigarh. They and those who have been formally arrested are being held in various parts of Punjab including Chandigarh where they are allegedly being tortured.

In the early hours of 22 January, Jagtar Singh Hawara, Jagtar Singh Tara, Paramjeet Singh and a fourth individual escaped from Burail Jail. The three named individuals were imprisoned for their alleged involvement in the assassination of the former Chief Minister of Punjab, Beant Singh. Some of the defence lawyers representing the three accused are actively involved in human rights organizations. They have been questioned about their human rights activities and have been accused of being involved in the jail break. Several jail officials have also been arrested for their alleged involvement in the escape.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to ensure that at least 100 individuals including social activists, human rights defenders and lawyers in the Punjab who are being questioned in connection with the escape of four detainees from Burail Jail (also known as Model Jail), Chandigarh on 22 January 2004 are not subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- calling for those who are being illegally detained to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or immediately released;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that human rights activists are free to carry out their peaceful activities without fear of harassment or physical violence.

APPEALS TO:

Shri Amarinder Singh
Chief Minister of Punjab
Office of the Chief Minister
Chandigarh
Punjab
India

Telegram: Chief Minister of Punjab, Punjab, India

Fax: + 91 172 274 1821

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

COPIES TO:

Shri L.K. Advani
Deputy Prime Minister
Room No.104
North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

Fax: +91 11 2 309 4221

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

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 16 March 2004.