

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 38/94 Fear of "Disappearance"

4 February 1994

INDIA: Dalbir Singh

Amnesty International fears that Dalbir Singh, an ex-journalist, approximately 70-years-old and reportedly suffering from Parkinson's disease, has been illegally detained by the police.

He was reportedly taken away by police four or five days ago and has not been seen since. The police deny he is in their custody.

Amnesty International fears for his safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International regularly receives reports of allegations 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 wrongly 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 and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern that Dalbir Singh, a sick and elderly man, has not been seen since he was taken away by police four or five days ago and the fear that he may be being held in illegal detention;
- seeking assurances that if he is in police custody he be allowed immediate access to lawyers and relatives and be brought before a magistrate forthwith;
- seeking assurances that if he is in police custody he is being provided with adequate medical care and is not being ill-treated;
- urging that if he is in police custody that he be immediately released or charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

Mr 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

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:

Mr S.B. Chavan
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

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 18th March 1994.