

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: ASA 20/006/2002 (Public)
News Service No: 86
14 May 2002

India: More civilians targeted in Jammu and Kashmir

Amnesty International condemned Tuesday's attacks on a passenger bus and a military family housing complex by unidentified gunmen near Jammu, winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir. "The killings were probably intended to call attention to the volatile situation during the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State, Christine Rocca," Amnesty International said stressing concern for the loss of civilian lives. Mass killings occurred when former US President Bill Clinton visited the country in 2000.

It is reported that unidentified gunmen, dressed in military uniform, boarded a bus travelling from Kangra to Jammu. After ordering the passengers to get off the bus, the gunmen opened fire killing seven. The militants then launched an attack on a nearby military family housing complex killing at least 22 people including many women and children. At least one more bus passenger has since died of her injuries.

Amnesty International is again calling on all sides to safeguard the lives of civilians. International humanitarian law prohibits deliberate attacks on civilians and those not taking direct part in hostilities. "It is as yet unclear who is responsible, but we wholeheartedly condemn these attacks," the organization said as more than one armed opposition group is claiming responsibility for the killings.

Indiscriminate violence is widespread in Jammu and Kashmir and civilians are killed on a daily basis. During 2001, around 1200 civilians, including many children, were killed as a direct result of the conflict.

Public Document

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