

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 20/009/2003

6 March 2003

UA 64/03 Fear for safety/Threats

INDIA Shazada (f), surname not known, aged 18
Shameema (f), aged 16, her sister
Abdul Rehman Dar (m), their father
Other members of their family

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of sisters Shazada and Shameema, their father Abdul Rehman Dar, and other members of their family. They have been threatened by paramilitaries in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In October 2002, Shazada and Shameema were returning from a family marriage party to their home in Dangarpura village, Budgam district, when they were abducted by a group of men. The men were reportedly recognized as "renegades" (ex-members armed opposition groups who now work with the security forces). Shameema was returned to her family after three days but "renegades" visited the family home and threatened Abdul Rehman Dar that he would be shot if he sought assistance from the police to secure Shazada's release.

Shazada was held captive by the "renegades" for three months. During that time she was forced to live as the wife of one them, a 40-year-old man who was already married. Shazada was held in his house and continually watched. In mid-February 2003, she escaped and returned to her family home.

On the night of 23 February the "renegade" who had held Shazada captive came to the family home with two other men. All three were armed. They threatened that unless Shazada willingly returned to them they would burn down the family's house, abduct Shazada and Shameema again and harm Abdul Rehman Dar. Abdul Rehman Dar persuaded the men to let him have time to consider their demand and they left.

Since this threat, Abdul Rehman Dar, Shazada and Shameema have left the family home and have been hiding in the homes of friends. His wife and three younger children remain in the family home, looking after the family land and cattle. The family's lawyer filed a petition in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court on 28 February seeking protection for the family but no hearing date has yet been set.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has consistently received allegations of human rights violations being perpetrated by "renegades", often in collaboration with members of the security forces. These violations have included extrajudicial executions, torture, including rape, and the use of excessive force.

Of the thousands of allegations of human rights violations made against the security forces and paramilitaries, including "renegades", only a handful have ever been investigated and hardly any perpetrators have been charged with appropriate offences and tried. In November 2002 the newly elected coalition government of Jammu and Kashmir published a Common Minimum Program in which they committed themselves, amongst other things, to restore the rule of law, uphold the human rights of the civilian population, investigate human rights violations and punish those responsible.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Shazada, Shameema, Abdul Rehman Dar and their family, and pressing the authorities to ensure that adequate protection be immediately provided for them;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the threats made against Abdul Rehman Dar and his family and the abduction of Shazada and Shameema, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the commitments made by the new government of Jammu and Kashmir during in their published Common Minimum Program to guarantee everyone the enjoyment of the full range of human rights and that all violations of human rights will be investigated.

APPEALS TO: *(Please note fax numbers may be difficult to obtain; please keep trying)*

Mr Ashok Suri
Director General of Police
Office of the DGP
Police Headquarters
Jammu, India

Telegram: Director General Police, Jammu, India
Fax: + 91 191 254 0524
Salutation: Dear Director General

COPIES TO:

Muzaffar Hussain Beig
Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs
Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Jammu, India

Fax: + 91 191 254 6159
Salutation: Dear 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 17 April 2003.