

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial Executions

12 June 1991

INDIA: 17 civilians, including one elderly woman and a boy aged 10.

On 11 June 1991, 17 civilians were reportedly deliberately killed by the Indian security forces in the Chota Bazaar district of Srinagar, Kashmir, and their bodies were taken to the police headquarters in the city. Although state officials said they were civilians caught in crossfire, Amnesty International is concerned that a number, or all of them, may be victims of extrajudicial executions, indiscriminately killed in retaliation for the killing of a member of the security forces. Some sources put the number of victims higher.

According to press reports, the incident occurred after armed Sikh separatists shot dead a member of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in the Zainakadal district of Srinagar on 11 June 1991. The incident was followed by an exchange of fire between militants and the security forces, starting around 6 p.m., in which 24 people were alleged to have been killed. Press reporters identified the bodies of 17 civilians among them. Official sources claimed that several militants were killed and that a number of civilians were caught in the crossfire after militants ambushed a paramilitary patrol. They declined to say whether any members of the security forces were among the dead. Witnesses, however, said that the security forces fired indiscriminately on people in the streets and shops in central Srinagar. Among those reportedly killed were an elderly woman and a boy aged 10. Four people were shot in a motor mechanics' workshop and four others were shot outside a medical college. Some rickshaw drivers and bystanders were also reportedly shot by the security forces.

According to the Delhi-based *United News of India* agency, 40 people were killed in several incidents on 11 June 1991 throughout the Kashmir Valley and more than 25 were injured after the killing of the CRPF member.

Amnesty International is concerned that at least some of the 11 June killings by the security forces in Srinagar seem to have been the result of a deliberately retaliatory attack on unarmed civilians. As yet it is not known if an inquiry has been ordered into the incident or whether members of the security forces potentially implicated in the incident have been removed from positions of authority.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since early 1990 there has been an increasingly violent campaign for independence in Kashmir. Armed separatists have kidnapped and killed officials, members of the paramilitary forces and civilians in their campaign. Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern to the Indian government about reports of deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by members of the security forces, about widespread allegations of torture and rape by members of the security forces and about arbitrary arrests of suspected separatists or their relatives. The rape of Moslem women in Kashmir has often been carried out by the predominantly Hindu security forces.

In September 1990, the government announced that a screening committee would be set up to examine complaints of excesses by the security forces. Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Girish Saxena, has ordered several investigations of

such abuses, in one case leading to charges of murder being brought against the Director of the Border Security Force (BSF). But such investigations have usually been conducted by police or other officials rather than by an independent and impartial body. Amnesty International does not know of any cases in which officials allegedly responsible for such human rights violations have been brought to justice and convicted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/faxes and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that members of the security forces deliberately killed 17 people in the Chota Bazaar district of Srinagar, Kashmir, on 11 June 1991;
- urging that there be a prompt and impartial judicial inquiry into the incident; that those selected to carry out the inquiry be selected for their impartiality; that the methods and results of the inquiry be quickly made public; and that, if members of the security forces are found responsible for the killing of innocent civilians, they be brought to justice;
- asking to be sent a copy of the inquiry report as soon as it is published;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to ensure that those potentially implicated in these killings are removed from positions of control or power over complainants, witnesses and their relatives as well as over those conducting the investigation;
- urging that the families of victims of extrajudicial killings be granted adequate compensation.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
Mr Girish Saxena
Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir, India

Telegrams: Governor Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, India

His Excellency
Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar
Office of the Prime Minister
South Block, Gate No 6
New Delhi 110 011, India

Telegrams: Prime Minister Shekhar, New Delhi, India

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(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

COPIES TO:

Mr Subodh Kant Sahay
Minister of State for Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110 001, India

and to diplomatic representatives of India in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 July 1991.