

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 20/35/96

UA 179/96

"Disappearance" / Fear for safety

18 July 1996

INDIAMohammad Akbar Hajam

Mohammad Ramzan Rather

Mohammad Akbar Hajam and Mohammad Ramzan Rather, both members of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, a political opposition group, have not been seen since 17 July when they were arrested by members of the army in Dangerpora, Sopore district, Jammu and Kashmir. Amnesty International fears for their safety.

The two men were travelling on a bus between Sopore and Doru when the bus was stopped in the village of Dangerpora, by members of the 9th Gorkha Regiment stationed in a camp by the side of the road. The two men were separated from the other passengers before being taken away to the army camp. This was witnessed by other passengers.

On the morning of 18 July, relatives of the two men went to the army camp in Dangerpora and asked to meet with them. However, officials from the 9th Gorkha Regiment denied that the two men were in their custody or that they had been arrested.

A complaint concerning the arrest and subsequent "disappearance" of the two men has been admitted at the local police station.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since early 1990 there has been an increasingly violent campaign in Jammu and Kashmir for independence from India and/or accession to Pakistan. Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern to the Indian authorities 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, an increasing number of whom are reported to have "disappeared" or to have died in custody. The organization has also condemned abuses including hostage-taking, deliberate and arbitrary killings and torture including rape which have been carried out by members of armed groups.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Mohammad Akbar Hajam and Mohammad Ramzan Rather, who were reportedly arrested by members of the 9th Gorkha Regiment on 17 July and whose whereabouts are currently unknown;
- urging the authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of the two men;
- seeking assurances that Mohammad Akbar Hajam and Mohammad Ramzan Rather are being humanely treated and will be allowed immediate access to lawyers, relatives and a doctor and brought before a magistrate forthwith;
- urging that the two men be immediately released if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

General K.V. Krishna Rao
Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Governor
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar

Jammu and Kashmir
India

Faxes: +91 194 452 207

Telegrams: Governor, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

Salutation: Dear Governor

Mr Indrajit Gupta
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

Faxes: +91 11 301 5750/301 7761

Telegrams: Home Minister, New Delhi, India

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr K. Padmanabhaiah
Home Secretary
c/o Office of the Prime Minister
Gate No.6, South Block
New Delhi 110 011
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 6 September 1996.