

UA 278/91

Possible Extrajudicial Executions

16 August 1991

INDIA:

Mallala Subba Rao
Bulliabbai
Jalladi Isac
Sunkuru Samson
Devarapalli Jayara
J. Muthiah, and his brother
Emmanual
Tsunduri Ramash
Angala Kunduru Rajmohan

and possibly more than 13 others

Amnesty International is concerned by reports of an attack on Scheduled Caste (also called "Dalits" and formally Untouchables) residents of Chundur village, Guntur district, in Andhra Pradesh by upper caste Hindus on 6 August 1991. Residents allege that the police took part in the killings. If this proves to have been the case, Amnesty International would consider these killings to be extrajudicial executions. At least ten, and possibly more than 23 people, reportedly died in the attack.

The killings reportedly took place between 11am and 5pm on 6 August 1991. The exact reason for the attack is not known, but a report in the *Times of India*, 10 August 1991, stated that the police warned Scheduled Caste members of the impending attack and advised them to flee. Those who fled were caught between upper caste Hindus from Chundur and others from neighbouring villages. Ten bodies have so far been recovered from the Tungabhadra canal and a search continues for 13 others listed as missing. The ten people so far found dead are Mallala Subba Rao, Bulliabbai, Jalladi Isac, Sunkuru Samson, Devarapalli Jayara, J. Muthiah and his brother, Emmanual, Tsunduri Ramash and Angala Kunduru Rajmohan. Reports state that 400 Scheduled Caste members have fled the village and are now sheltering in the town of Tenali.

There have been complaints from local residents that the Sub Inspector at Vemur police station and other police personnel were present when the attack took place and took no action to prevent it, while others, as reported in the *Hindustan Times*, 10 August 1991, have alleged that a large contingent of police present in the village at the time of the incident helped the attackers. The Guntur local magistrate, Mr Nagarjuna, also reportedly questioned why the large police force present in the village did not intervene to stop the killings. Given that the police appear to have had prior knowledge of the attack their inability to prevent the killings is all the more surprising, and indicates that they at least condoned the attacks. Police sources have reportedly admitted police negligence in that they failed to prevent the attack, but denied that police personnel were actually involved in the killings themselves.

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr N. Janardhan Reddy, visited Chundur village on 9 August 1991 with Mr G. Venkataswamy, Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Dr M. V. Mysoora Reddy, the state Home Minister. The names of 35 people have appeared on the First Information Report (FIR) filed by local Scheduled Caste members with the police. The Chief Minister reported that 25 of these 35 people had been arrested. Among those arrested was the village headman of Chundur. The Chief Minister stated that those who

had yet to be arrested, including the village headman of the neighbouring village of Motukur, had been given three days to turn themselves in to the police. The Circle Inspector of Tenali, the Sub Inspector at Vemur police station and five constables have reportedly been suspended from duty, but no criminal charges are known to have been brought against them.

The Chief Minister also announced a judicial inquiry into the incident. Its mandate will include investigations into allegations by Scheduled Caste members that local police failed to protect them and/or helped in the attack and to find out why news of the attack did not reach the local magistrate for 24 hours.

The Chief Minister also announced that compensation would include ex-gratia payments of Rs 100,000 and a job to be given to each of the victim's families.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chundur village is within the Guntur-Prakasan area which has witnessed a large number of caste clashes in recent years. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh stated on 9 August 1991 that he was to convene a meeting of senior officials and others to discuss ways of reducing caste-based tension and violence in coastal areas of the state which had seen several instances of mass killings of scheduled caste members since 1983. Amnesty International has received consistent reports that police collude with landlords and other upper caste Hindus in such disputes and refuse to register the victim's complaints.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that local police may either have not prevented or may have actively participated in an attack by upper caste Hindus on Scheduled Caste members in Chundur village, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, on 6 August 1991 in which at least 10, and possibly more than 23 people, died;
- welcoming the announcement of a judicial inquiry into the incident and urging that it be concluded promptly and its report published in full;
- urging that an inquiry be conducted under the terms of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which provides for the setting up of special courts to try cases of atrocities committed against, and adequate legal aid for, members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes;
- noting the suspension of seven police officials - a Circle Inspector, a Sub Inspector and five constables - but urging that, if any police are found to have failed to halt the attack or to have actually taken part in it, they be brought to justice;
- urging that the full compensation announced by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh be paid to the families of the victims as soon as possible.

APPEALS TO:

1.

Mr N. Janardhan Reddy
Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh
[Salutation: Dear Chief Minister]

Office of the Chief Minister
Hyderabad 500 001, India

**Telegrams: Chief Minister Andhra Pradesh
Hyderabad, India**

2.

Mr G. Venkataswamy
Minister of State for Rural Development
[Salutation: Dear Minister]
Ministry of Rural Development
New Delhi, India

**Telegrams: Minister of State for Rural Development
New Delhi, India**

COPIES TO:

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

Mr Prabhakara Rao
Director General of Police
Police Headquarters
Hyderabad 550 001, 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 27 September 1991.