

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INDIA

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **India must take prompt steps to enhance security for Pakistani prisoners in its jails following jail attacks in both countries**

Indian authorities must take immediate steps to enhance security for Pakistani prisoners in its jails to protect them against violence, Amnesty International said, in the wake of an attack on a Pakistani prisoner in a jail in Jammu.

The prisoner, Sanallah Haq, was reportedly attacked with a sharp weapon by a fellow inmate at Kot Bhalwal jail in Jammu and sustained severe head injuries. He is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Chandigarh, 300 km from Jammu. As on Sunday afternoon, doctors say that his condition continued to remain critical.

“Indian authorities should take immediate steps to protect Pakistani prisoners in various jails of India and ensure that such attacks do not recur,” Shashikumar Velath, Programmes Director of Amnesty International India said.

A resident of Sialkot in Pakistan, Sanallah was convicted by a special court dealing with offences under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act and Prevention of Terrorism Act in 2008. The court sentenced him to two terms of life imprisonment for involvement in bombings in a bus and van in Jammu and Kashmir in 1994 that killed 17 people.

A team of Pakistani officials have been given consular access to meet Sanallah at the Chandigarh hospital.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has suspended two jail officials including the Jail Superintendent and ordered an official inquiry into the attack. The inmate allegedly responsible for the attack has been charged with attempted murder.

“Authorities need to ensure that those found responsible for the attack, including anyone who may have facilitated it, are promptly prosecuted,” Shashikumar Velath said.

The attack came a day after the death of Sarabjit Singh, an Indian death row inmate in Pakistan. Sarabjit Singh was reportedly beaten with bricks and iron bars by other inmates while walking in the grounds of Kot Lakhpat prison in Lahore on 26 April.

Activists have demanded enhanced security for Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails citing that they could be at risk of attacks. India's Ministry of Home Affairs has instructed jail authorities in various states to enhance existing security arrangements for Pakistani prisoners.

"Both Indian and Pakistani authorities must take prompt and concrete steps to ensure that prisoners do not face any further attacks," said Shashikumar Velath.

Authorities estimate that there are around 535 Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails and 270 Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails. Relatives and lawyers often complain that Indian and Pakistani authorities do not provide them with adequate access to these prisoners.

"Indian and Pakistani authorities must ensure that relatives and lawyers have adequate access to prisoners," said Shashikumar Velath.

Amnesty International calls on the Indian and Pakistan governments to immediately commute all death sentences and establish an official moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

**ENDS**