

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 33/28/97

5 August 1997

Further information on EXTRA 94/97 (ASA 33/20/97, 7 July 1997) and follow-ups (ASA 33/21/97, 8 July and ASA 33/24/97, 18 July) - Prisoner of conscience / Fear of torture / Possible prisoner of conscience / Disregard for pre-trial legal safeguards

PAKISTANHumayun Far, journalist

---

The *habeas corpus* petition relating to the "disappearance" of Humayun Far was dismissed by the Lahore High Court on 28 July 1997 when the court was informed that the journalist was being tried by a military court. Several hearings have reportedly already taken place. The Lahore High Court hearing on 28 July was held *in camera* at the request of the Attorney General. It has not been disclosed precisely what the charges are against Humayun Far nor under which law he is being tried in a military court. The *in camera* court martial was to formally begin on 31 July. Army officials reportedly stated that Humayun Far did not wish to engage a legal counsel for his defence.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned that in the initial stages of his detention, Humayun Far was denied important legal safeguards relating to arrest and detention available to all citizens under Pakistan law and that even now it has not been disclosed under which law he is being held and tried. The organization believes that the prisoner should be given all the rights available under Pakistan law and be tried in an open court under regular procedures laid down in the Pakistan Code of Criminal Procedure. The Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed to every citizen equal protection of the law. Trial of civilians by court martial -- though permissible under the law -- may not afford Humayun Far all the legal safeguards observed in a regular trial.

No further action is required from the Urgent Action network. Thank you for your participation. The International Secretariat will take up the case by other longer term techniques.