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Mumbai gunman brought to justice but Amnesty International says no to death sentence

Amnesty International is pleased that the conviction of Ajmal Kasab, the lone captured Pakistani gunman involved in the multiple terror attacks in Mumbai on 26 November 2008, helps to bring a measure of justice to the victims of the attacks. The Mumbai high court upheld his conviction on 21 February 2011.

The Mumbai attacks, carried out by at least ten gunmen, targeted ten different places, lasted 60 hours, claimed 166 lives (including 28 foreign nationals belonging to ten different countries) and resulted in injuries to hundreds of people, drawing widespread condemnation throughout India and across the world.

Amnesty International strongly condemned the attacks as a blatant violation of the most fundamental principles of international law. The organization called on the Indian authorities to ensure a prompt, effective, and transparent investigation and trial in line with international standards.

Ajmal Kasab was first found guilty on 6 May 2011 by a Mumbai special court on 80 counts including murder, conspiracy and waging war against the Indian state and sentenced him to death. The Mumbai high court's review of the verdict has also upheld the death sentence.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner.

The organization points out that death penalty, being a premeditated and cold-blooded act of killing of a human being by the State in the name of justice, amounts to the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is no convincing evidence that imposition of the death penalty is an effective deterrent to crime, including acts of terrorism.

According to lawyers representing Kasab, he will appeal soon against the death sentence at India's Supreme Court.

India: New threshold of violence in India, attacks an outrage, AI Index: ASA 20/030/2008, 27 November 2008 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/030/2008/en>

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