

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **India must investigate unnecessary and excessive use of force on Delhi protestors**

Indian authorities must ensure a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into the unnecessary and excessive use of police force that led to injuries to about 70 protestors against corruption in Delhi in the early hours of 5 June.

According to eyewitnesses just after midnight on 4 June, police officers from the Rapid Action Force raided the Ramlila grounds at Delhi, where yoga exponent Baba Ramdev and his followers were on a peaceful fast and attempted to detain him. The authorities ordered the police action after the failure of talks on ending his fast demanding immediate repatriation of wealth which has been stashed in foreign banks by Indian nationals by evading local taxes.

The eyewitnesses said that when a band of Baba Ramdev's followers attempted to stop the arrest by throwing a ring around him, police used baton charge and later teargas to disperse the protestors and did not spare even the sleeping protestors. As the police moved in to detain Baba Ramdev, a section of the protestors turned violent, hurling chairs and furniture at them. During the police action which lasted two hours, about 70 persons sustained injuries, leading to at least 60 of them being hospitalized. Two of the three persons who sustained serious fracture injuries had to be operated upon.

Amnesty International acknowledges the responsibility of the Indian government to maintain public order, but notes that international law and standards restricts the use of force by law enforcement officers. At the heart of these restrictions lies the state's duty to respect the right to life and freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Both these rights are provided in international human rights law and standards, including in treaties binding on India, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by the country in 1979.

Under international law and standards, police may use force only when strictly necessary and only to the extent required for the performance of their duty and must, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force. If force cannot be avoided, police officials must exercise restraint in such use, and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved.

Amnesty International urges the Indian authorities to order an impartial and independent inquiry into all reports of unnecessary and excessive use of Force and ensure that state officials, police personnel, and others who are suspected of being responsible for human rights violations are prosecuted, in proceedings which meet international standards of fairness.