

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INDIA**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

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#### **Mumbai: Men alleging threats after torture must be protected and claims investigated**

Authorities in Maharashtra must provide protection to two men and a boy who say they were tortured by the police and are now receiving threats to pressure them to withdraw their complaint.

On the night of 15 April, Agnelo Valdaris (25), Sufiyan Khan (23), another man aged 19 and a boy aged 15 were detained at the Wadala Railway Police station on suspicion of involvement in a robbery.

Sufiyan Khan and the two others, whose identities are being withheld, in an official complaint to senior police officials allege that all four were subjected to various forms of torture and other ill-treatment, including being stripped, assaulted with belts and batons on their legs and buttocks, and hung upside down.

They say a police officer attempted to rape one man with a baton, and made him urinate on himself. One of the men said he was forced to perform oral sex on two others. The complaint states that Agnelo Valdaris was beaten by two policemen with belts and batons for almost two hours, and his requests for medical attention were ignored.

On the night of 16 April, Sufiyan Khan and the other two, excluding Agnelo Valdaris, were taken by the police to a hospital for a medical examination. They say they were threatened to claim that their injuries were the result of a road accident. The next day, Sufiyan Khan and one man were taken to a local court, where they say the police threatened them not to divulge information about the torture.

On 18 April, Agnelo Valdaris's father was told by the police that his son had been hit by a train while trying to escape from the police and had died. Sufiyan Khan and the two others were released on bail on 22 April.

On 19 May, a week after he had submitted a complaint, Sufiyan Khan was called to the Wadala Railway police station to collect a legal document. He says he was threatened by a policeman and asked to withdraw his complaint or face harassment by the police. The police have initiated a departmental inquiry into the complaint, but not yet launched a formal criminal investigation.

“Authorities must provide adequate protection to the two men, the boy, and their families to ensure their safety and protect them from intimidation. The Maharashtra police must immediately register an FIR and conduct a swift, full and impartial investigation into these horrific allegations. The police officers identified in the complaint must be suspended until the

criminal investigation is concluded,” said Shashikumar Velath, Programmes Director, Amnesty International India.

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