

URGENT ACTION

KASHMIRI POET AND JOURNALIST RELEASED

On 31 August, Ahmad Farhad, an outspoken government critic, poet and journalist known for his support of social movements, was released after 72 days in unlawful administrative detention under the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance. His detention was arbitrary and is seen to be an attempt by the authorities to silence his right to freedom of expression and impede his reporting on the ongoing human rights violations in the region.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Ahmad Farhad, a Kashmiri poet and journalist who is known for his support for social movements, was released on 31 August after 72 days of unlawful administrative detention. He was arrested and detained on 20 June at a police station in Bagh, Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir, on orders of the District Commissioner of Bagh under section 16 of the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance which allows for detention of individuals accused of speech undermining public safety. No specific allegations nor charges were made or brought against him.

In detention, the authorities put pressure on Ahmad Farhad to record a video denouncing protests in the region and to condemn the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), a grassroots civil rights movement, as a terrorist organization, as a condition for his release. In protest, on 27 July, Ahmad Farhad went on hunger strike until 10 August, when he was persuaded by the authorities to end his hunger strike with the promise of release. However, he was not released, and he resumed his hunger strike on 11 August. On 22 August he was transferred to a hospital and put on intravenous fluids after his health deteriorated significantly.

This is not the first time he has been targeted. On 15 May 2024, he was forcibly disappeared from his home in Islamabad and resurfaced two weeks later in the custody of police in Jammu and Kashmir. He was immediately taken into custody, and a First Information Report was filed against him at Dhirkot Police Station under section 186 of the Azad Kashmir Penal Code for “obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions”. He was charged in another case filed dated 13 May 2024 under the Anti-Terrorism Act in connection with social media posts regarding the Kashmir Long March organized by the JAAC in May 2024. He was eventually granted bail in both cases on 14 June 2024.

Ahmad Farhad is still struggling with health issues that developed during his time under unlawful administrative detention. He said: “I would [like] to express my gratitude for the efforts made by Amnesty, not only for me but also for many other oppressed voices.” While his case is significant, he wants to highlight that there are many people currently being held under arbitrary detention across Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir as part of the Pakistani authorities’ clampdown on dissent and the right to peaceful assembly in the region.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ahmad Farhad (he/him)

THIS IS THE FOURTH AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 46/24

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa33/1375/2026/en/>

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