

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture / Fear for safety

1 March 1995

INDIA

Nazir Ahmed Sheikh

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports that Nazir Ahmed Sheikh has been tortured by the security forces and is awaiting amputation of both his feet as a result of his injuries.

Nazir Ahmed Sheikh, resident of Chak Yama, near Handwara in the border district of Kupwara was reportedly arrested by the army during a "crackdown" on his village on 31 December 1994. His parents tried to visit him in custody but were allegedly told by the army that he was not in their custody. However, he was reportedly taken to several interrogation centres and on 7 February he was released from army custody and admitted to the Bone and Joint Hospital.

He had received burn injuries to his right hand and his legs had apparently been broken as a result of torture. Other parts of his body also reportedly bore marks of torture. Reports of his torture have appeared in the local press. His feet will be amputating shortly as they have developed gangrene.

Amnesty International is not aware of any inquiry into the torture allegations and is concerned for Nazir Ahmed Sheikh's health and safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since early 1990 there has been an increasingly violent campaign in Kashmir for independence from India. Armed separatists have kidnapped and killed officials, members of the paramilitary forces and civilians. Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern to the Indian government about reports of deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by members of the security forces, about widespread allegations of torture and rape by members of the security forces and about arbitrary arrests of suspected separatists, an increasing number of whom are reported to have "disappeared" or to have died in custody. Amnesty International is concerned at the continuing pattern of widespread human rights violations including torture and custodial death in the Kashmir valley, despite condemnation by officials of such practices. The organization has recently published a document *India: Torture and deaths in custody in Jammu and Kashmir* (ASA 20/01/95, 31 January 1995) in which 706 people are listed who have died in custody in Jammu and Kashmir since 1990. This publication coincided with the opening of the 51 session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at Geneva, at which Amnesty International has highlighted the grave human rights violations occurring in Jammu and Kashmir, India. The government has responded by dismissing most of the allegations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams, faxes and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that Nazir Ahmed Sheikh has been tortured by members of the army and as a result has sustained severe injuries which are likely to result in the amputation of both his feet;
- urging the government to order an independent and impartial inquiry into the torture allegations and to fully protect Nazir Ahmed Sheikh and witnesses during the investigation;
- urging the government to ensure that he is being given all necessary medical care and that he is given interim compensation;
- expressing concern about the persistent and widespread reports of torture of detainees in Jammu and Kashmir and urging the government to implement the

specific recommendations which Amnesty International made in its January 1995 report.

APPEALS TO

Mr S.B Chavan
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

Faxes: +91 11 301 5750 ATTENTION HOME MINISTER

Telegrams: Home Minister, New Delhi, India

Salutation: Dear Home Minister

General K.V. Rao
Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Governor
Raj Bhavan
Jammu
Jammu and Kashmir
India

Telegrams: Governor, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Dinesh Singh
Minister of External Affairs
Ministry of External Affairs
South Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

and to diplomatic representatives of India accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 April 1995.