

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information (2) on UA 304/94 (ASA 20/30/94, 17 August 1994) - and follow-up(s): ASA 20/33/94, 31 August 1994 - Fear of further killings in custody in Rajasthan

INDIA:Shankar Lal Soni
Chhitarlal
Ramuda
Rajendra Singh
Mahiman Kaushik
Mahesh Jain

The Government of India has provided information to Amnesty International regarding reports of the deaths in custody of six people in Rajasthan in July 1994.

Shankar Lal Soni - The circumstances of his death are said to be under investigation by a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

Chhitarlal - An investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (Crime Branch) and a magisterial inquiry are said to be in progress. An unspecified number of police personnel have been transferred and departmental action has been initiated against them.

Ramuda - An investigation into his death is said to be in progress. Two constables have been suspended and unspecified departmental action is being taken against them.

Mahesh Jain - It appears that Mahesh Jain was taken into custody when the police could not find his brother who was wanted by them. An investigation by the Director General of Police found that his detention was "unwarranted" and in this connection a case was registered against six police personnel. Two post mortems are said to have been carried out, one finding that there were no external injuries on his body and that he died of heat stroke and the other finding external injuries on his body. An Additional District Magistrate is said to have completed his inquiry, finding that he did not die of police torture but of heat stroke. Further investigations are being carried out by the Criminal Investigation Department (Crime Branch).

Rajendra Singh - Investigations into his death are said to be still in progress.

Mahiman Kaushik - A post mortem report found that he had 31 wounds on his body although no cause of death has yet been recorded. The government has stated that: "The investigation conducted thus far reveal that the ASI [Additional Superintendent] and two constables were prima-facie guilty of having illegally detained Mahiman Kaushik in police custody and torturing him". Three police personnel are said to have been suspended and arrested but later released on bail by the District and Sessions Court. The case is under investigation by a Deputy Superintendent of Police (Crime Branch), Bharatpur and a departmental inquiry is said to have been ordered into the lack of supervision at the police station.

No further action by the Urgent Action Network is requested. Thank you to all who sent appeals on these cases. Amnesty International welcomes the response from the Government of India in principle but is disappointed that none of the inquiries being carried out into these allegations are known to be independent or impartial. The government's responses are being followed up with further membership action.