

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 20/13/95

Distr: UA/SC

UA 112/95 Fear of torture / Possible prisoner of conscience 18 May 1995

INDIA Shabir Ahmad SHAH, political leader, former prisoner of conscience

Amnesty International fears that Shabir Shah, a prominent political leader in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, is in danger of torture while being reportedly held incommunicado, without charge, at Hari Niwas interrogation centre.

Reports indicate that Shabir Shah was arrested on 12 May 1995 by members of the Indian security forces and taken to Koti Bagh police station before being transferred to Hari Niwas. The Indian Government has not released any information about his arrest, and there has been no indication of any charges having been brought against him. Colleagues and family members of Shabir Shah have reportedly tried to get in contact with him but have been unsuccessful.

Given Shabir Shah's previous arrests and imprisonment, Amnesty International is concerned that he has once again been detained for political reasons. The reports that he is being held at Hari Niwas interrogation centre have heightened concern for his safety, in view of previous accounts of torture and ill-treatment of detainees held there.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Shabir Shah was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International during his detention in 1992. In the past, Sabir Shah, a leader of the People's League, has been detained for expressing his non-violent political views, without trial and without any charge being made under ordinary criminal procedures that he used or advocated violence.

Amnesty International remains concerned at the continuing pattern of widespread human rights violations including illegal detention, torture and custodial death in the Kashmir Valley, despite condemnation by officials of such practices.

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

- expressing concern at the reported detention without charge of Shabir Shah at Hari Niwas interrogation centre in Kashmir;
- seeking assurances that Shabir Shah is being protected from torture or ill-treatment, in accordance with international standards;
- urging the government to ensure that Shabir Shah be provided access to relatives and a lawyer of his own choice, and immediately released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

Mr K. Padmanabhaiah
Home Secretary
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110001, 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

Telegrams; Governor, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Pranab Mukherjee

Minister of External Affairs

Ministry of External Affairs

South Block

New Delhi 10001

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 1 July 1995.