

AI INDEX: EUR 45/11/96
16 AUGUST 1996

News Service 150/96

UNITED KINGDOM: SIX YEARS OF DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OF
ASYLUM SEEKER KARAMJIT SINGH CHAHAL

On the sixth anniversary of Karamjit Singh Chahal's detention on "national security" grounds, Amnesty International urged the Government of the United Kingdom (UK) either to bring charges against Karamjit Singh Chahal or release him.

"So far the Home Secretary has not substantiated his allegations that Karamjit Singh Chahal represents a threat to national security with any evidence whatsoever," Amnesty International said today.

"The sole piece of evidence given in public for threatening to expel him as a threat to national security were criminal convictions arising from a fight in a London Sikh temple in 1987, which have since been quashed by the Court of Appeal."

Since April 1991 Amnesty International has been concerned about the possible forced return of Karamjit Singh Chahal to India, where the organization believes there is a substantial risk that he would face torture or other serious human rights violations. This concern is compounded by Karamjit Singh Chahal's own account of his detention and torture by Indian security forces during an extended visit to India in 1984. His account accords with others received from ex-detainees by Amnesty International.

In June 1995, the European Commission on Human Rights expressed its opinion that the UK had violated the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms by attempting to deport Karamjit Singh Chahal to India.

A decision on the case is expected to be returned by the European Court of Human Rights in September this year. The government has stated that Karamjit Singh Chahal will not be deported to India pending the outcome of Court's decision. In the meantime, however, the government has continued to keep him in detention.

Karamjit Singh Chahal has not been afforded the opportunity to defend himself in a manner that is consistent with the UK's obligations under international human rights standards. Amnesty International is calling on the UK Government to adhere to international standards which require that a detainee be provided with the exact reason for his detention.

BACKGROUND

Karamjit Singh Chahal, a Sikh separatist, had been living in the UK for 20 years before being arrested on 16 August 1990 and detained pending deportation to India on "national security" grounds.

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