

amnesty international news release

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES INDIAN AUTHORITIES TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AFTER KILLING OF HOSTAGES

Amnesty International today urgently appealed to the Indian Government to take all possible steps to protect human rights in the aftermath of yesterday's killing of three hostages by an armed opposition group in Kashmir.

The worldwide human rights organization made its plea amid rising tension in the state, where dozens of people have been killed recently during demonstrations for Kashmir's independence.

The three victims were taken hostage on 6 April. Responsibility for their abduction was claimed by the Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front, which demanded the release of three of their colleagues in exchange for the hostages. One hostage was shot dead in Srinagar yesterday and his body dumped in the street; two other bodies were found later on the outskirts of the city.

Amnesty International said that as a matter of principle it condemned the killing of prisoners by anybody and that it was shocked by the murders.

However, it urged the government to treat all those arrested in connection with the killings humanely and to release those not found to be involved in specific criminal acts.

About 400 people are reported to have been arrested since Friday in house-to-house searches in and around Srinagar as the authorities searched for the kidnappers.

Amnesty International also reiterated its appeal to the authorities to order impartial investigations into allegations of extrajudicial executions by government forces in Kashmir. Since January troops are said to have repeatedly fired at apparently unarmed demonstrators, killing many dozens of them.

Amnesty International said it knew of no steps so far to bring those allegedly responsible to justice.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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