

PUBLIC

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INDIA (JAMMU AND KASHMIR) MOHAMMAD YOUSUF GABROO  
GUL MOHAMMAD NAIK  
MUSHTAQ AHMAD  
Killed: BILAL AHMAD MIR

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One man has reportedly died as a result of torture while in police custody. Three others are detained incommunicado, and Amnesty International is concerned that they are at risk of being tortured or unlawfully killed.

On 16 January four employees of the State Forest Corporation, Mohammad Yousuf Gabroo, Mushtaq Ahmad, Gul Naik and Bilal Ahmad Mir, were abducted by several men belonging to the armed opposition group *Lashkar-i-Toiba*. The armed group forced the four men to drive them to the airport at Srinagar, the state capital, in three jeeps belonging to the State Forest Corporation. The armed group attacked the airport and later released the four State Forest Corporation employees.

After they were released by the *Lashkar-i-Toiba*, Mohammad Yousuf Gabroo, Mushtaq Ahmad, Gul Naik and Bilal Ahmad Mir went to the police station at Parampora District to report the incident. At the police station, they handed over to the Special Operations Group [SOG], a police division created specifically to combat militant activity in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The police have said that the four men were detained because they were suspected militants, and that Bilal Ahmad Mir was killed during an escape attempt made while directing police to a *Lashkar-i-Toiba* hideout. Reliable contacts in the region and Bilal Ahmad Mir's family have refuted these allegations, and say that he died as a result of torture. His body reportedly bore the marks of severe torture. There has been no further mention of the *Lashkar-i-Toiba* hideout in police statements.

Mohammad Yousuf Gabroo, Mushtaq Ahmad and Gul Naik are still held by the SOG, who are known to practise torture on a systematic basis. They have not been allowed access to their families, lawyers or medical care, and are thought to be particularly vulnerable to torture while in isolation.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SOG is consistently and frequently mentioned in connection with human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir, including in reports of rape, torture, deaths-in-custody, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions. Deaths-in-custody and extrajudicial executions occur on a regular basis in the state: from January to June 2000 Amnesty International documented 150 cases of deaths-in-custody and extrajudicial executions allegedly perpetrated by police, including the SOG, and the army. The authorities often portray these deaths as taking place in encounters with militants or during escape bids.

Members of the police and security forces who perpetrate human rights violations in the state operate with virtual impunity. This only serves to encourage further violations.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in ENGLISH or your own language:**

- asking the authorities to guarantee that Gul Naik, Mushtaq Ahmad and Mohammad Yousuf Gabroo are not tortured or other ill-treated while in custody;
- urging that they are given prompt and regular access to their families, lawyers and any medical treatment they may require;
- urging that they be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought before a magistrate within 24 hours, or be immediately released;
- calling on the government to immediately order a independent and impartial inquiry into the death of Bilal Ahmad Mir, and to ensure that those found to be responsible are made to face judicial consequences;
- urging for independent and impartial inquiries to be carried out into all recent deaths in custody and extrajudicial executions with those responsible are brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Dr Farooq Abdullah  
Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir  
Chief Minister's Office  
Raj Bhavan  
Jammu  
Jammu and Kashmir  
India

**Fax: + 91 191 545649**

**Telegrams: Chief Minister, Srinagar, India**

**Salutation: Dear Chief Minister**

Mr Sardar Gurbachan Jaga  
Director General of Police  
Office of the DGP  
Police Headquarters  
Srinager  
Jammu and Kashmir  
India

**Telegrams: Director General of Police, Srinager, India**

**Salutation: Dear Director General**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr L K Advani  
Minister of Home Affairs  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Room No.104  
North Block  
New Delhi 110 001  
India

**Fax: + 91 11301 5750**

**Salutation: Dear minister**

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 2 March 2001.