

PUBLIC

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**INDIA (Jammu and Kashmir) Mohammad Salim Bhat, salesman, aged 28
Shabir Ahmed Khan (24)**

Amnesty International believes that Mohammad Salim Bhat and Shabir Ahmed Khan may be tortured or killed in custody.

Mohammad Salim Bhat was arrested by Special Operations Group (SOG) police on 23 May. His younger brother Irshad Ahmad reportedly died in SOG custody on 5 May, the day after he was arrested. His family fear that Mohammad Salim Bhat too will be tortured and possibly killed in custody.

The SOG arrested Mohammad Salim Bhat at his shop in Batmaloo and took him to their post at the Cargo Complex, Srinagar. His family have not been allowed to see him, and when they attempted to file a First Information Report (FIR) about what they regard as his unlawful arrest police at Batmaloo sub-station refused to accept it. Mohammad Salim Bhat is reported to have no political affiliation.

Shabir Ahmed Khan, a worker for the opposition political party the Muslim League, was reportedly arrested on 30 May 2000 by soldiers and possibly SOG officers, at his residence at Shaheed Gunj, Srinagar and taken to Badami Bagh Cantonment in Srinagar. His family say that "renegades" (former members of armed groups who now side with the government) have threatened to kill him unless the family pay them a large sum of money. It is not known whether he has been charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the past few months many people arrested in Jammu and Kashmir have died in custody. Leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), an umbrella organisation of 23 political parties based in Jammu and Kashmir, went on a 36-hour hunger strike on 24 May in protest at 77 reported deaths in custody and extrajudicial executions since January. Amnesty International has a list of 30 people allegedly killed in custody between 1 and 20 May alone.

Amnesty International wrote to the Jammu and Kashmir government on 24 May urging it to set up an inquiry into the unlawful killings of over 50 people who died in three incidents in late March and early April 2000. The government has not replied.

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

- urging the government of Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that Mohammad Salim Bhat and Shabir Ahmed Khan are not tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- urging the government to inform the detainees and their families of any criminal charges they face or else release them;
- if there are lawful grounds for detaining the two men, urging the authorities to give them prompt and regular access to their families, lawyers and any medical treatment they may require;
- urging independent and impartial inquiries into all of the recently reported deaths in custody and extrajudicial executions, and that those responsible are brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Dr Farooq Abdullah
The Chief Minister
Office of the Chief Minister
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir
India

Faxes: + 91 194 452356 / 191 545649 (fax lines to India are frequently engaged and callers may received messages that the lines are out of order or not known - please keep trying)

Telegrams: Chief Minister, Srinagar, India

Salutation:Dear Chief Minister

Mr P L Handoo
Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs
Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir
India

Telegrams: Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Srinagar, India

Salutation:Dear Minister

COPIES 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 14 July 2000.