

UA 301/99

Fear for

INDIA Dalbir Singh
Munna Lal
Bhoo Devi (f) and several others

Witnesses to police killings

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of witnesses to two alleged extra-judicial executions by police in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, on the night of 21/22 October 1999. They are reportedly being threatened and intimidated by police against testifying before a magistrate appointed to investigate the case.

The organization also has health concerns for the three people named above and others who were injured when police charged a crowd of people gathered at the *Sanskrit Vidyalaya* (educational institute), where one of the killings took place on 24 October, to protest the police killings. Local government doctors have reportedly refused to treat them for suspected fractures after police threatened them if they did. Several people in the crowd were injured during the protest and 14 arrested.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The killings reportedly took place after an argument broke out in a restaurant in Hathras in the evening of 21 October between an Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) and the two dead men, Arun Kumar Gupta and Noor Mohammed. A third man who was with them is believed to have run away.

Police reinforcements called in reportedly severely beat Arun Kumar Gupta and Noor Mohammed before taking them to *Sanskrit Vidyalaya* in the early hours of 22 October. Arun Kumar Gupta was reportedly shot dead there (police later reported that a criminal had been shot dead) while Noor Mohammed was taken to a nearby police post. Police later reported shooting dead another criminal in the cremation ground of Nabipur. Witnesses have said they saw Noor Mohammed at the police post and later being taken to the cremation ground, both times his hands were tied behind his back.

The bodies of both men have not been handed over to relatives but cremated by police.

There have been repeated allegations in recent years of police killings or "fake encounters" in the state of Uttar Pradesh. In April 1998 Kalyan Singh, Chief Minister of the state before he resigned on 11 November 1999 was apparently heard telling police: "If noted criminals can be liquidated in encounters, do it. If you take the life of one person who has taken the lives of 10 others, then people will praise you. And I am here to protect you".

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

- expressing concern that witnesses to two alleged extra-judicial executions by police in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, on the night of 21/22 October 1999 are reportedly being threatened and intimidated by police against testifying to the magistrate appointed to investigate the case;
- urging the authorities to protect witnesses and to take immediate action against any police officers found responsible for intimidating them;

- urging the authorities to cooperate fully with the magisterial inquiry into the deaths of Arun Kumar Gupta and Noor Mohammed;
- asking them to organize immediate medical treatment for Dalbir Singh, Munna Lal, Bhoo Devi and others injured by police in a protest against the killings on 24 October 1999;
- urging the authorities to promptly bring any police officers identified in the course of the inquiry to have been involved in the killings to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Ram Prakash Gupta
Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh
Office of the Chief Minister
Lucknow
Uttar Pradesh
India

Telegrams: Chief Minister, Lucknow, India

Faxes: + 91 522 230 002

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

Mr L.K. Advani
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

Telegrams: Minister Home Affairs, New Delhi, India

Faxes: + 91 11 301 5750

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 29 December 1999.