

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Ill-treatment / Fear of torture

8 December 1994

INDIA

Mohammad Shafi, journalist
Mukhtar Ahmed, journalist

Mohammad Shafi, an English language journalist based in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, is being held in Papa II interrogation centre by the Border Security Force (BSF). Amnesty International fears that he may be tortured in custody.

Mohammad Shafi was detained by members of the BSF on 7 December 1994, together with Mukhtar Ahmed, a correspondent for the *Independent* newspaper in London, United Kingdom. Both men were taken to Papa II interrogation centre. Nine hours later Mukhtar Ahmed was released, claiming that he had been punched, kicked and threatened by members of the BSF while in custody. He was apparently accused of receiving messages on his fax machine from Kashmiri militants abroad, which he denied. He was released after explaining that the only fax he had recently received from abroad had been from his sister.

Mukhtar Ahmed's allegations of ill-treatment have heightened Amnesty International's fears for the safety of Mohammad Shafi.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since early 1990 there has been an increasingly violent campaign in Kashmir for independence from India and/or accession to Pakistan. Armed separatists have kidnapped and killed government officials, members of the paramilitary forces and civilians. In addition, Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern to the Indian authorities about reports of deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by members of the security forces, about widespread allegations of torture and rape by members of the security forces and about arbitrary arrests of suspected separatists, an increasing number of whom are reported to have "disappeared" or to have died in custody. Amnesty International is concerned by the continuing pattern of torture and custodial death in the Kashmir valley, despite condemnation by government officials of such practices.

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

- urging the authorities to ensure that Mohammad Shafi is not tortured or ill-treated in custody, and that he is allowed frequent and regular access to a lawyer and relatives;
- calling for an immediate and independent inquiry into the allegations of ill-treatment of Mukhtar Ahmed and to ensure that those found responsible are brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

Mr K Padmanabhaiah
Home Secretary
C/O Office of the Prime Minister
Gate No 6, South Block
New Delhi, India

Faxes: +91 11 301 9817 ATTENTION HOME SECRETARY

Telegrams: Home Secretary, New Delhi, India

Salutation: Dear Home Secretary

General K.V. Rao
Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Governor
Raj Bhavan
Jammu
Jammu and Kashmir, India
Telegrams: Governor, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India
Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Dinesh Singh
Minister of External Affairs
Ministry of External Affairs
South Block
New Delhi 110 001, India

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 20 January 1995.