

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 33/009/2006

04 April 2006

Further Information on UA 308/05 (ASA 33/030/2005, 08 December 2005) - "Disappearance"/Fear of torture

PAKISTAN **Hayatullah Khan (m), aged 32, journalist**

The Pakistani authorities are believed to have handed Hayatullah Khan over to US custody. They have never officially acknowledged detaining him. His brother told the Los Angeles Times, in an interview published on 24 March, that senior officials of a Pakistani intelligence agency had told him "a few days earlier" that Hayatullah Khan was now outside their jurisdiction, and indicated that he might be in US custody, "being grilled by the US to confirm the death of [alleged al-Qa'ida operative] Abu Hamza Rabia in the missile attack" of 1 December 2005. There was no indication as to whether this was taking place in Pakistan, the United States or elsewhere.

Pakistani officials earlier claimed that Hayatullah Khan had been abducted by personal enemies, the Taliban or criminals. However, Hayatullah Khan's relatives have reportedly received assurances from local Taliban groups that they had nothing to do with the abduction, and have said that Hayatullah Khan does not have personal enemies who would have abducted him. Journalists have also told Amnesty International that abduction by criminals was unlikely, as his family had received no ransom demand and such groups would not have been able to move undetected in the difficult terrain with a hostage. Criminals would have killed a hostage if no money was forthcoming, in order to avoid detection. Having eliminated other possibilities, local journalists have repeatedly expressed their conviction that intelligence agencies were holding Hayatullah Khan. This was further confirmed when the North West Frontier Province Governor's secretary told a delegation of the Khyber Union of Journalists in mid-December that Hayatullah Khan would be "held longer" if they continued their protests. Hayatullah Khan had repeatedly expressed his apprehension that government agencies would take punitive action against him for his journalistic work.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing grave concern at reports that Hayatullah Khan remains in unacknowledged detention in either Pakistani or US custody;
- calling on the authorities to reveal the whereabouts of Hayatullah Khan and release him immediately, as he appears to be held solely for carrying out his professional duties as a journalist;
- urging them to ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated in custody.

APPEALS TO:

President

President Pervez Musharraf
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad

Fax: +92 51 9221422
Email: ce@pak.gov.pk
Salutation: Dear President Musharraf

US ambassador to Pakistan

Ryan C Crocker
Ambassador
US Embassy
Ramna 5, Diplomatic Enclave
Islamabad
Pakistan

Fax: +92 51 2276427
Email: webmasterisb@state.gov
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 May 2006.