

PUBLIC

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UA 190/08 Fear safety

INDIA Pervez Imroz (m), lawyer and human rights defender

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On 30 June, the residence of Pervez Imroz, a leading human rights defender and lawyer in Jammu and Kashmir state, was attacked with gunfire and a hand grenade. The attack was carried out by between eight and 10 persons, believed to be from the Central Reserve Police Force and Kashmir Special Operation Group (SOG). The life of Pervez Imroz may be at risk.

The attack on Pervez Imroz's residence, 8 km from the city of Srinagar, happened at about 10 pm as his family were about to go to bed. Pervez Imroz was alerted when he heard people knocking at his front door and asking for him to come out. Having sensed danger, Pervez Imroz called out for help to his brother, Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad, who lives next door. His brother lit a torch so he could see the attackers, but they shouted at him to "put it out". A shot was then fired, which nearly hit Pervez Imroz's nephew. The attackers then lobbed a grenade into the grounds of the house and fired two more shots in the air, and hit one of Pervez Imroz's neighbours, resulting in minor injuries. The attackers then fled in armoured vehicles and jeeps.

Following the attack, Pervez Imroz found that the lamps down the path to his residence had been deliberately broken. Pervez Imroz's family moved to a friend's house because of fears for their safety. On 1 July he went to a nearby police station and filed a complaint regarding the attack on his residence.

The attack is an attempt to halt an ongoing inquiry into unmarked graves in Jammu and Kashmir, believed to contain victims of unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, torture and other abuses. The inquiry is being conducted by the International Tribunal on Human Rights in Justice in Kashmir, which is being facilitated by the Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), of which Pervez Imroz is the head. Pervez Imroz has said that tribunal members had faced harassment at the hands of the intelligence and police personnel when they visited Kupwara and Baramulla to collect information on the unmarked graves from local villagers on 20 June.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has been concerned with the harassment faced by human rights defenders in Indian-administered Kashmir since 1989, when the armed conflict between the security forces and guerillas began.

On 29 March 2008, the APDP issued a report entitled *Facts Under Ground*, detailing hundreds of unidentified graves, which, because of their proximity to Pakistan controlled-areas, are in areas not accessible without the specific permission of the security forces.

Since 2006, the graves of at least 940 people are reported to have been discovered in 18 villages in Uri district alone. At the time Amnesty International urged the Indian government to launch urgent investigations into these mass graves, which are thought to contain the remains of victims of human rights abuses in the context of the above armed conflict.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Pervez Imroz, following the attack on his residence on 30 June, reportedly by security personnel;
- urging the authorities to conduct a prompt and impartial investigation into the attack, with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice;
- calling on them to ensure protection for Pervez Imroz and other human rights defenders in Jammu & Kashmir,
- expressing concern at the reported harassment of human rights activists who are investigating the unmarked graves in Kashmir;
- calling on the authorities to take steps to ensure it is possible for those promoting human rights and investigating allegations of human rights abuses to carry out their tasks without fear of harassment and violence

**APPEALS TO:**

Dr. Manmohan Singh  
Prime Minister of India  
South Block, Raisina Hill,  
New Delhi, 110 011  
India

**Fax: 91-11-23019545 or 23016857**

**E-mail: [pмосb@pmo.nic.in](mailto:pмосb@pmo.nic.in) [manmohan@sansad.nic.in](mailto:manmohan@sansad.nic.in)**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Ghulam Nabi Azad  
Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir  
Civil Secretariat, Srinagar  
India

**Fax ++91 194 245 2224, 247 2536**

**E-mail: [cmjk@jandk.jk.nic.in](mailto:cmjk@jandk.jk.nic.in) [cmjk@jk.nic.in](mailto:cmjk@jk.nic.in)**

**Salutation: Dear Chief 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 27 August 2008.