

PUBLIC

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Fear For Safety

21 July 2000

INDIA

Sheikh Ali Mohammad (60)

Members of the police Special Operations Group (SOG) today took Sheikh Ali Mohammad from outside his home in India's northern state of Jammu and Kashmir. The SOG have been implicated in a number of recent "disappearances" and deaths in custody. Amnesty International is concerned for his safety.

Sheikh Ali Mohammad (full name: Sheikh Ali Mohammad son of Sheikh Mohammad Subhan), who is 60-years-old, is a lawyer and an active supporter of *Jama'at-e-Islami* and the *All Parties Hurriyat Conference* (APHC), two groups who oppose Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir. At 11:15am on 21 July he was reportedly forced by members of the SOG into an auto-rickshaw outside the house where he was staying in the Chanpora district of Srinagar. No reason was given for his being taken. He is reported to have been taken to an SOG detention camp at Hamahama.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the past six to nine months there has been a steep increase in the number of extrajudicial-executions and deaths in custody reported in Jammu and Kashmir. Amnesty International knows of 30 deaths in custody reported during June 2000 alone, perpetrated by the army, police and paramilitary forces. Those targeted appear to be mainly former members of armed groups and those who are active in politically opposing the present government. In September 1999, 25 leading members of the APHC were detained for up to eight months without charge or trial following their calling for a boycott of elections.

Members of the security forces who perpetrate human rights violations in the state operate with virtual impunity and are hardly ever brought to justice. This only serves to encourage further violations.

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

- urging that Sheikh Ali Mohammad s/o Sheikh Mohammad Subhan be charged with a recognisable criminal offence and brought before a magistrate within 24 hours or be immediately released;
- urging the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to give assurances that Sheikh Ali Mohammad will not be tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- if there are lawful grounds for detaining Sheikh Ali Mohammad urging the authorities to give him prompt and regular access to his family, lawyer and any medical treatment he 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: (Note: fax lines to India are frequently engaged and callers may receive messages that the lines are out of order or not known - please keep trying)

Dr Farooq Abdullah
The Chief Minister

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Office of the Chief Minister
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir
India

Faxes: + 91 194 452356 / 191 545649
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 1 September 2000