



Joint Press Release

Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez arbitrarily arrested and denied due process rights

Bangkok-Dhaka-Geneva-Madurai-Paris-Quezon City, September 16, 2016 - *Our organisations strongly condemn today's arbitrary arrest of Kashmiri human rights defender Mr. Khurram Parvez, and call for his immediate and unconditional release.*

On September 16 at 12:30 am, police officers came to **Khurram Parvez's** home in Srinagar in Indian-administered Kashmir, arrested him without presenting a warrant, and took him to the Kothi Bagh police station, where he remains in arbitrary detention. He has not been allowed access to a lawyer, and the police have provided no formal document of arrest or reason for his detention.

The evening prior his arrest, a group of police personnel headed by the Kothi Bagh Station House Officer came to Mr. Parvez's home and asked for him. Mr. Parvez was not at home at the time, but spoke to the Officer by telephone and was informed that the Superintendent of Police, Sheikh Faisal, wished to meet him. Mr. Parvez agreed to meet with the Superintendent the following day. He was nevertheless arrested without explanation several hours later after arriving at his home.

Mr. Parvez's arrest comes two days after he was stopped at the New Delhi airport by immigration authorities and prevented from travelling to Geneva to attend the ongoing session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.¹ The travel ban and arbitrary detention of Mr. Parvez are the latest examples of the Indian government's attempts to silence human rights defenders and prevent the spread of information on the extremely concerning human rights violations taking place in Jammu and Kashmir. Numerous lawyers and human rights defenders have been arbitrarily detained², and the authorities continue to impose a curfew and deny access to United Nations observers.³ Given this ongoing repression and crackdown in Jammu and Kashmir, obtaining information on Mr. Parvez's current situation is proving very difficult, and there is good reason for concern regarding his well-being in police custody.

Mr. Parvez is the Chairperson of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) and Program Coordinator of the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS). Mr. Parvez has consistently highlighted violations of human rights taking place in India, notably in Jammu and Kashmir, and was part of the research group that published a report in December 2009 on the discovery of thousands of unmarked graves in Kashmir.

1 See Joint Press Release, *Indian authorities prevent Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez from travelling to Geneva for U.N. Human Rights Council session*, 15 September 2016 : <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/india/indian-authorities-prevent-kashmiri-human-rights-defender-khurram> / <http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/india/2016/09/d23942/>

2 For more information on the repression of lawyers and activists in Kashmir, see IAPL press release from 2 September 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/IAPLIndia/photos/pcb.1598105833823822/1598105710490501/?type=3&theater>

3 For more information on recent violence in Kashmir and the denial of UN access, see People's Watch and FIDH joint press release from 18 August 2016 : <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/india/kashmir-un-observers-denied-access-to-investigate-ongoing-human>

Our organisations strongly condemn the escalating repression of Mr. Parvez, and call on the Indian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him, and to allow him to continue to conduct his legitimate human rights work without hindrance or reprisal.

We demand an end to the harassment against all human rights defenders in India, and call on the international community, notably the other States sitting alongside India as members of the UN Human Rights Council, to insist that India comply with its human rights obligations, notably the provisions of the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which underscores the right of human rights defenders to freely and peacefully engage in their work and be protected from reprisals for having exercised this right.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (The Observatory) was created in 1997 by FIDH and OMCT. The objective of this programme is to intervene to prevent or remedy situations of repression against human rights defenders. FIDH and OMCT are both members of ProtectDefenders.eu, the European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism implemented by international civil society.

The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) is a federation of human rights organizations working directly on the issue of involuntary disappearances in Asia. Envisioning a world without desaparecidos, AFAD was founded on June 4, 1998 in Manila, Philippines.

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) works towards the radical rethinking and fundamental redesigning of justice institutions in order to protect and promote human rights in Asia. Established in 1984, the Hong Kong based organisation is a Laureate of the Right Livelihood Award 2014.

FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 58 member organisations in 19 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratisation. FORUM-ASIA operates through its offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu.

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India (HRDA) is a national network of human rights defenders for human rights defenders. HRDA intervenes in the cases of threats/harassment/attack on HRDs and curbing of freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED) is a network of 42 member organisations concerned with the issue of human rights and the struggle against enforced disappearances. The principal objective of ICAED is maximising impact of the activities carried out by its members in favour of an early ratification and effective implementation of the Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

Odhikar, a human rights organisation based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, was founded in 1994 with the aim to create a wider monitoring and awareness raising system on the abuse of civil and political rights.

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