

INDIA: Extra-judicial killing of Mr. Longjam Surjit, resident of Samurou, Manipur by 22 Maratha Light Infantry based at Mayang Imphal

URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION

ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - URGENT APPEALS PROGRAM

01 September 2006

INDIA: Extra-judicial killing of Mr. Longjam Surjit, resident of Samurou, Manipur by 22 Maratha Light Infantry based at Mayang Imphal

Dear Friends,

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is concerned with recently repeated extra-judicial killings in Manipur, NE India. The AHRC has received a report that Mr. Longjam Surjit, a resident of Samurou, allegedly has been killed by personnel of 22 Maratha Light Infantry, based at Mayang Imphal on the night of 01 September 2006. Family members of the deceased maintained the deceased was an innocent youth who was killed by the personnel of Maratha Light Infantry when he went out search his missing horse with another friend as against the claim of the army authorities that he was killed in an encounter.

Extrajudicial Executions/Custodial Killings in Manipur by both the Army and the police is a regular feature. The killings are abetted by the enactment of extra legislations/Emergency Legislations that empowers Armed Forces of India to operate in Manipur, in the pretext of aiding civil law enforcing agencies to combat Secessionist groups in Manipur. Statutory impunity is provided to the armed forces of India by virtue of the Armed Forces Special Power Act which permits them to suspend the right to life, to kill a person on mere suspicion with full legal immunity.

Extrajudicial killing of an innocent civilian, often by severe torture, by the Paramilitary and the police and putting arms and ammunitions and charging them as members of underground cadres are not uncommon in Manipur. And there is no mechanism to regulate the weapons seized by the police and the military from arrested cadres of secessionist groups and as such, the repeated use of a weapons and ammunitions seized from arrest cadres of secessionist groups operating in Manipur are often reported. And there is no independent authority to verify the claims of both the Armed Forces and the Police and abetted by the special powers of the Armed Forces Special powers Act, 1958, the killings goes unabated with legal impunity.

Manipur was an independent country for centuries but became a British protectorate until 15 August 1947 after being defeated in the Anglo-Manipuri War 1891. After independence, a constitutional monarchy was established but the Indian government annexed Manipur on 15 October 1949. Since then, Manipur, a small border province in the remote north eastern region of India, with a population of 2.3 million, has been the centre of an armed conflict. In order to control the active armed opposition groups, the Indian armed forces have been deployed under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, commencing the full scale deployment of Indian

Military forces in Manipur.

Often, the killings took place even after arrest from their respective homes and the repeated explanations is the victims was killed when they tried to fled from Army custody. However, the explanation given by the 17th Assam Rifles authorities in the case of rape and murder of Miss Thangjam Manorama on 11 July 2004 after arresting her from residence at Bamon Kampu, Imphal that she was killed while attempting to flee from army's custody led to disbelief and anger among the people of Manipur, leading to massive agitations, finally compelling the Union Government of India to institute a Review Commission of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, though nothing has happened towards the repeal process of the Act.

In the past, many cases of human rights violations such as indiscriminate firing at innocent civilians, arbitrary detention, torture and other forms of cruelty by the security forces and the police have emerged. The police and other forces often randomly fire into crowded areas. Since these forces enjoy impunity, these acts of abuse and violence mostly go unpunished. To see our previous Urgent Appeals regarding violations committed by security personnel in Manipur, please click: [UA-13-2005](#), [FA-19-2004](#), [UA-96-2004](#) and [UA-31-2003](#).

Our urgent action is needed to pressure the Indian and Manipur authorities to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into these cases of Extra Judicial executions to deliver due justice to victims and to take strong action to stop further custodial, extra-judicial killings by 22 Maratha Light Infantry and other Para Military forces, operating under the emergency legislation, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 immediately.

Urgent Appeals Desk
Asian Human Rights Commission

SITUATION:

Alleged Extra Judicial Execution case of Mr. Longjam Surjit of Samurou Makha Leikai under Wangoi Police Station of Imphal West District

Victim: Longjam Surjit, 18 Resident of Samurou Makha Leikai, under Wangoi Police Station, Imphal West District

Perpetrator: 22 Maratha Light Infantry posted at Mayang Imphal

Date of Incident: 1 September 2006

Place of Incident: Meijrao Village along the Bank of Nambul River, under Wangoi Police Station.

Event Description: Mr. Longjam Surjit, 18, resident of Samurou Makha Leikai under Wangoi police station of Imphal west District was shot dead by troops of the 22 Maratha Light Infantry posted at Mayang Imphal on 1 September 2006 in early morning hours.

The residents of Samurou Makha Leikai had already rejected the statement of the Army authorities that Mr. Longjam Surjit, 18, son of L Kulla Singh of Samurou Makha Leikai was killed in an encounter with the personnel around at around 1.30 am at Meijrao village. Cases of Army and police killing an innocent civilian and putting arms and ammunitions after death and claiming them as cadres of secessionist groups are common in Manipur.

While the security forces claimed recovery of one .38 pistol along with one magazine with two live rounds of ammunition, the family of the deceased maintained that the slain youth was innocent and had gone out last night with a friend, identified as Naorem Brajamani of Samurou Naorem Chaprou to search for a missing horse.

Naorem Brajamani had already testified to media persons on 1 September 2006, saying that while they were searching for the missing horse on the banks of the Nambul river, where he stopped on the eastern bank to answer nature's call, while Longjam Surjit proceeded on alone to look for the missing horse.

He claimed that while waiting for Surjit to return, he heard some 10 rounds of gunfire from the direction where Surjit had gone, upon which he ran back home.

Present Situation: A meeting held at Samurou Bazar on 1st September and 3rd September resolved not to claim the dead body of Longjam Surjit, which still remains at RIMS Morgue, Imphal until the personnel of 22 Light Maratha Infantry involved in the killing of Longjam Surjit were prosecuted, until the 22 Maratha Light Infantry is shifted from Mayang Imphal area and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 is removed from Manipur and repealed.

The meeting also took strong exception with the Paramilitary forces and state police against the practice of pronouncing guilt after killing an innocent person by placing arms, only to claim them as cadres of secessionist groups. In accordance with the decisions to launch agitation till their demands are met, the residents of Samurou and other adjoining villages had blocked the Mayai Lambi Road that connects Mayang Imphal and Samurou with other districts of Manipur, further resolving to intensify their movement until their demands were met.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Write to the Prime Minister, Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission, Chief Minister of the Manipur State Government and UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions expressing your concern on alleged torture and killing of Longjam Surjit of Samurou, Manipur.

SUGGESTED LETTER:

Dear

Re: INDIA: Extra-judicial killing of Mr. Longjam Surjit of Samurou Makha Leikai under Wangoi Police Station of Imphal West.

I am concerned with the repeated incidence of Extra Judicial Executions, custodial killings in Manipur. In the early morning of 1 September 2006, Mr. Longjam Surjit, resident of Samurou Makha Leikai under Wangoi police station of Imphal west was shot and killed by troops of the 22 Maratha Light Infantry posted at Mayang Imphal when he went out with Naorem Brajamani of Samurou Naorem Chaprou to search for a missing horse.

Family members had already rejected the statement of the Army authorities that the deceased was killed in an encounter with the Maratha Light Infantry and that arms and ammunitions were recovered from him. The families maintained that he was an innocent person, who went out to find missing horses. Incidence of the Army and the police killing an innocent civilian and putting an

arms and ammunitions and charging them as underground cadres are not uncommon. And there is no mechanism to regulate the weapons seized by the police and the military from arrested cadres of secessionists groups.

Local residents of Samurou and other adjoining villages had convened several meetings and had resolved not to claim the dead body until the personnel of 22 Light Maratha Infantry involved in the killing of Longjam Surjit were prosecuted, till 22 Maratha Light Infantry is shifted from Mayang Imphal area and till the removal and repeal of Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958 from Manipur.

The meeting also decided to launch people's agitation until their demands were met and as such, the locals of Samurou had blocked the Mayai Lambi Road that connects Samurou and Mayang Imphal with the rest of Manipur.

I am writing you to support the demands of the people to

- a) Prosecute the personnel of 22 Light Maratha Light Infantry posted at Mayang Imphal involved in the custodial killing
- b) To Remove 22 Light Maratha Light Infantry from Mayang Imphal
- c) To Repeal Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958
- d) To urge the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India to take necessary action to stop further extra-judicial killings by Para Military Forces in Manipur immediately.

Sincerely yours,

Please send a letter to:

1. H.E. Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Prime Minister
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2. Shri Justice A S Anand
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4. Ms. Asma Jahangir
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Thank you.

Urgent Appeals Programme
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