

URGENT ACTION

DALIT RIGHTS ACTIVIST STILL DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGE

Chandrashekhar Azad ‘Ravan’, a prominent Dalit rights activist, has been held in administrative detention since 3 November 2017. His current term of detention expires in May 2018. However, under the National Security Act, he is at risk of being detained for up to 12 months without charge or trial.

Chandrashekhar Azad has been held in administrative detention, without charge or trial, for the past six months. His current term of administrative detention was ordered by a non-judicial Advisory Board that submitted a report to the Uttar Pradesh authorities stating that Chandrashekhar Azad should be detained for six months, with effect from 2 November 2017.

On 3 November 2017, Chandrashekhar Azad, the founder of the Dalit rights organisation “*Bhim Army*”, was arrested and placed under administrative detention under the National Security Act (NSA) on the order of the District Magistrate of Saharanpur. The National Security Act (NSA) permits administrative detention for up to 12 months on loosely defined grounds of national security and maintenance of public order. It is a repressive law that has been used to target human rights defenders in India.

Hearings pertaining to Chandrashekhar Azad’s administrative detention are currently underway before the relevant non-judicial Advisory Board. According to his lawyer, the state government remains adamant that Chandrashekhar Azad must be detained for up to six more months after his current term expires in May 2018.

The day before he was arrested under the NSA, Chandrashekhar Azad had been granted bail by the Allahabad High Court in relation to his arrest on 8 June 2017. The charges against him included; rioting, inciting violence and destroying public property, following clashes between protesting Dalits and dominant caste groups in Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, India. The unrest followed the killing of two Dalit men and the burning of at least 50 Dalit homes in Shabbirpur village, Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, by men from a dominant caste in April and May 2017. According to media reports, the judge who granted Chandrashekhar Azad bail, stated that the charges against him appeared to be politically motivated.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- To immediately and unconditionally release Chandrashekhar Azad from administrative detention, and accord him a fair trial in accordance with international human rights standards;
- Pending his release, to ensure Chandrashekhar Azad is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;
- End the use of administrative detention under the National Security Act or any other law in force.

Contact these two officials by May 21, 2018:

Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh
Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh
Room No.- 306, (Third Floor)
Lal Bahadur Shastri Bhawan,
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
India 226001
Fax: +91-522- 2239234
Email: cmup@nic.in
Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

Ambassador H.E. Navtej Sarna, Embassy of India
2107 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: 1 202 939 7000 | Fax: 1 202 265 4351
Email: amb.washington@mea.gov.in
Twitter: [@NavtejSarna](https://twitter.com/NavtejSarna)
Facebook: <https://goo.gl/FxcMH7>
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 248.17*

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Chandrashekhkar Azad is the founder of the "*Bhim Army*", a prominent Dalit rights organisation in Uttar Pradesh which campaigns against caste-based discrimination and violence. They also run about 300 schools for Dalit children in Uttar Pradesh.

Administrative detention laws allow for people to be detained without charge or trial. Under international law, administrative detention is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and when subjected to stringent safeguards. In India, administrative laws such as the NSA have often been used to detain individuals on vague grounds, ignoring regular criminal justice safeguards. The Supreme Court of India has described the system of administrative detention as "lawless". Amnesty International opposes all systems of administrative detention.

The caste system in India is based on ascribed group identities. Dalits, or so-called 'untouchables' are at the bottom of the caste system and frequently face caste-based discrimination and violence by members of dominant castes. In 2015, more than 45,000 crimes against Dalits were reported across the country. Dalits in several states are often denied entry into public and social spaces, and face discrimination in accessing public services.

Name: Chandrashekhkar Azad
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 248/17 Index: ASA 20/8191/2018 Issue Date: 10 April 2018