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India Muslims in 'torture' rally

Indian Muslims are holding a mass demonstration in the capital, Delhi, to protest against alleged harassment of Muslims by security forces.



The protesters say Muslims are being harassed *(Photo: Gayathri Sreedharan)*

Most of them arrived in Delhi on Thursday morning in a special train. The train travelled from Azamgarh in northern Uttar Pradesh state and picked up more passengers en route to Delhi. The organisers are also seeking a meeting with the interior minister. Indian police have been blamed by the community for torturing Muslims. Security agencies, for example, have arrested 10 men from Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh in the past two years - all as suspects in different attacks. One of the protest organisers, Maulana Amir Rashadi, said Muslim youths were being falsely targeted as terrorists. The protesters arrived in Delhi carrying banners which said: "Let the truth prevail, bring the innocents out of jail" and "Give us security, not tears and blood". The BBC's Joana Jolly in Delhi says more than 2,000 people gathered at the protest at Jantar Mantar, a popular forum for demonstrations.

'**Justice**'

Amik Jamai, an activist and documentary film maker who joined the protest, said Muslims were feeling "uncomfortable". "The Muslims here are proud to be patriotic, they have promoted the concept of peace here, they live together in harmony," he told the BBC. "We are hoping for justice. We are hoping for transparency." In November, Human Rights Watch said police in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh should be prosecuted for torturing Muslims detained after bomb blasts last year. The group warned of the risks of stigmatising and alienating "an entire community". The state government had admitted that 21 men had been tortured and would each receive $600 in compensation. A series of blasts in May and August 2007 killed nearly 60 people in the state capital, Hyderabad.