

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

03 January 2003

NEPAL

Tarnum Maniyar (f), aged 16  
Tabasum Maniyar (f), aged 18  
Masgit Maniyar (m), aged 30

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of cousins Tarnum and Tabasum Maniyar, and Tabasum Maniyar's father Masgit Maniyar. Over the last fortnight they have been put under severe pressure by the military authorities to retract information published in an Amnesty International report regarding the alleged rape of the two girls in custody at Chisapani army camp near Nepalgunj, Banke district, and the torture of their father. The rape reportedly took place in April 2002 and the torture in February 2002.

On 24 December 2002, army personnel reportedly visited the home of the girls and forced them to retract the allegations of rape in front of TV cameras. The footage has since reportedly been broadcasted three times on national television. This suggests that senior army officers are involved in attempts at discrediting the girl's testimonies and the Amnesty International report for providing information about their treatment at the hands of the army. The report *Nepal: A deepening human rights crisis* ASA 31/072/2002, 19 December 2002, named army officers based at the Chisapani army camp who were implicated in the rape and who have been repeatedly accused of human rights violations.

On 31 December, Tabasum Maniyar together with her mother and uncle were made to attend a public meeting of local civic leaders and journalists in the office of the Chief District Officer in Nepalgunj, Banke district. At this meeting it was reported that the family members were asked to deny the statements regarding the allegations of rape and torture, which they did. According to local newspaper reports, the contents of the meeting were published the following day.

In a message sent to the Chief of Army Staff on 24 December, Amnesty International urged that immediate action be taken to stop the intimidation of the Maniyar family and prevent further human rights violations in the area. In response, army headquarters has informed Amnesty International that a team of officers attached to the army's "Human Rights Cell" has been sent to investigate the allegations and that their report will be compiled and sent to the Ministry of Defence by 10 January.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has been concerned about a deterioration in the human rights situation in Nepal since the CPN (Maoist) declared a "people's war" in early 1996. This concern has intensified since the army was mobilized and a state of emergency imposed in November 2001 (although the state of emergency expired in late August 2002 and has not been re-imposed). Since then, the number of reports of alleged unlawful killings, disappearances, torture and arbitrary arrests and detention by the security forces has increased dramatically. The authorities have so far failed to provide or enforce strict instructions to the security forces to uphold human rights, or to take appropriate actions against those responsible for reported abuses. Amnesty International has also documented many grave human rights abuses by members of the CPN (Maoist).

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Tabasum, Tarnum and Masgit Maniyar, who have reportedly been put under extreme pressure to retract information provided to Amnesty International regarding their rape and torture at Chisapani army camp;
- urging that those officers involved in the intimidation and threats are immediately suspended from duty, pending the findings of an investigation by the army's "Human Rights Cell".

**APPEALS TO:**

Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand  
Prime Minister's Office  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

**Telegram:** Prime Minister, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Fax:** + 977 1 227 286

**Salutation:** Dear Prime Minister

General Pyar Jung Thapa  
Chief of Army Staff (COAS)  
Army Headquarters  
Kathmandu, Nepal

**Telegram:** Commander-in-Chief, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Fax:** + 977 1 242 168

**Salutation:** Dear Commander-in-Chief

General R Katwal  
Secretary, National Security Council  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu, Nepal

**Telegram:** Secretary, National Security Council, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Fax:** + 977 1 225 869 (it may be difficult to get through; please keep trying)

**Salutation:** Dear General

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Nepal accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 February 2003.