

PUBLIC

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UA 223/07 **Fear for safety**

NEPAL **Jitman Basnet (m), human rights lawyer, journalist**

Human rights lawyer Jitman Basnet has received death threats, which he believes are connected to a book he has recently published about the time he spent in army custody. At least one of the threats came from a man who claimed to be one of the people he had named in his book as responsible for raping, torturing or unlawfully killing people during the conflict in Nepal. Amnesty International believes his life may be in danger.

He had been arrested by the army in 2004, and was held for almost nine months in Kathmandu's Bhairab Nath army barracks, where he was tortured. His book, *258 Dark Days*, is an account of his own experiences and also of the accounts he heard from other detainees. In the book, he names soldiers he claims raped, unlawfully killed or tortured people during the conflict. Since it was published, strangers have been asking his neighbours where he lives, and he has been threatened.

He received threatening phone calls on 21 May and 7, 11 and 18 August. During one of these the caller told him, "You are going to be killed, we will also kill your wife." Another of the calls came from a man who said he was one of the people named in his book. Jitman Basnet has registered a complaint at a local police station on 13 August, and asked them to provide him with protection, but this has apparently not yet been done.

In August 2006, Jitman Basnet filed a request at the Supreme Court for a high-level commission to be set up to investigate all enforced disappearances in Nepal, and for all members of the security forces responsible for enforced disappearances to be brought to justice. This request is due to receive a ruling in October 2007.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of people were arrested, abducted, tortured and killed during the 10-year conflict between the state and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Following the end of the conflict in 2006 a number of people working for human rights organisations or speaking out about human rights violations have been threatened by people believed to have been involved in these human rights violations. Some human rights defenders are therefore facing gross violations of their own human rights.

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

- expressing concern that Jitman Basnet has recently received telephone death threats, at least one from a man claiming to have been named in Jitman's book;
- calling on the authorities to order prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into these threats and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of Jitman Basnet, in accordance with his own wishes;
- reminding the authorities that human rights defenders have the right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- calling on the authorities to develop a national plan of action to implement this UN Declaration, so as to ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

General Rookmangud Katawal
Chief of Army Staff
Army Headquarters
Kathmandu, Nepal

Fax: +977 1 4 269624 (please keep trying)

Email: **dprhq@hotmail.com**

dprhq@gmail.com

Salutation: **Dear General**

Om Bikram Rana
Inspector General of Police
Police Headquarters
GPO Box 407

Naxal, Kathmandu, Nepal

Fax: +977 1 4 415 593 / 594

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

COPIES TO:

Ministry of Home Affairs

Minister: Mr. Krishna Prasad Sitaula

Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Fax: +977 1 4211264

and 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 9 October 2007.*****