

UA 347/00

Fear of t**NEPAL**Geeta Shahi (f), aged 23

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A woman political activist is believed to have been arrested by plainclothes police. The police have denied having her in custody, and Amnesty International is concerned for her safety.

Geeta Shahi was seen being taken away by two men in civilian clothes on 31 October, at around 4pm. The arrest took place at Bar Vanjyang, Ward No. 4, Bari Phant, Bhany Marg, Tanahu district.

Geeta Shahi is the chairwoman of the All Nepal Women's Organisation (Revolutionary) in Tanahun district. This organization is known to be affiliated to the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist).

When her relatives made inquiries at the nearby Nareswor police station the next day the police denied having her in custody. The family made further inquiries on 2 November at the district police office in Damauli, but the police there also denied arresting her.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has received reports of increasing numbers of "disappearances" and unacknowledged detentions over the last three years, linked to the CPN (Maoist) "people's war". Amnesty has recorded 24 "disappearances" in 1998, 18 in 1999 and 12 so far this year.

After sustained pressure on the authorities, including mass appeals by Urgent Action appeal writers, some people who had been reported "disappeared" have been released. Some of them have since testified that they were taken away by police officers in plain clothes, in unmarked vehicles with covered number plates, and that they were held incommunicado in unofficial places of detention, including the Maharajgunj Police Training Centre, Kathmandu, and the Armed Police Battalion Headquarters in Pokhara, Kaski district.

Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the government has taken some steps which could help resolve or prevent "disappearances", including the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The Commission's members were finally appointed at the end of May 2000, nearly four years after the Act establishing it was passed in Parliament. Amnesty International is urging the government to ensure the Commission is able to function independently, is well resourced and receives full cooperation from the police and other institutions.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Geeta Shahi, who has "disappeared" after she was seen being taken away by two men thought to be plainclothes police officers, at Bhany Marg, Tanahu district;
- calling on the authorities to establish an independent and impartial investigation into her fate and whereabouts and to make the findings public;
- calling on the authorities to allow her, if she is found to be in detention, immediate access to her relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment she may need;

- urging that, if she is detained, she be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or else immediately released, and that steps be taken in the meantime to guarantee her safety;

- expressing grave concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Nepal and appealing for an immediate halt to human rights violations, including "disappearances".

**APPEALS TO:**

Rt Hon Prime Minister Giriji Prasad Koirala  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 227 286 or 428 570**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Hon Ram Chandra Poudel  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

**Telegrams: Home Affairs Minister, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 241 942**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Mr Pradeep Shamsheer J B Rana  
Inspector General of Police  
Police Headquarters  
GPO Box 407  
Naxal  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

**Telegrams: Inspector General Police, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 415 593/415 594**

**Salutation: Dear Inspector General**

**COPIES OF YOUR LETTERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO:**

Nayan Bahadur Khatri  
Chairperson  
National Human Rights Commission  
Harihar Bhawan  
Pulchowk  
Lalitpur  
Nepal

**Faxes: + 977 1 525 842**

**Salutation: Dear Chairperson**

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 21 December 2000.