

PUBLIC

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Fear of "Disappearance"/Torture

26 January 1999

NEPALBhanu Sharma, age 35

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Bhanu Sharma, a resident of Chailahi Village Development Committee, Dang District. He has reportedly been held in unacknowledged detention at the Police Training Centre in Maharajgunj, Kathmandu since 5 January 1999. There are fears that he could be tortured in custody.

Bhanu Sharma was reportedly taken from his home on 30 November 1998 by a group of policemen in civilian dress. They asked Bhanu Sharma, who runs a chemist shop, for some medicine. On the way to the shop he was allegedly forced into a van belonging to the Land and Watershed Conservation office and taken to the District Police Office.

On 5 January a weekly newspaper *Janadesh* carried a report that Bhanu Sharma had been taken from Dang District to the Maharajgunj Police Training Centre.

Amnesty International appealed to the Inspector General of Police on 12 January, urging for clarification of Bhanu Sharma's whereabouts and requesting assurance that he was being treated humanely. To date, the organization has not received any response.

A writ of habeas corpus was filed in the Supreme Court on 13 January.

Bhanu Sharma is a member of the Dang District Committee of the Forum for Protection of Human Rights, and a member of the People's Rights Concern Movement, two human rights organizations actively involved in reporting human rights violations in the country.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The "disappearance" of Bhanu Sharma occurred in the course of ongoing police operations in several districts of Nepal, mainly in the mid-Western region. The operations are aimed at flushing out armed members of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist).

Following a declaration of a "people's war" by the CPN (Maoist) in February 1996, there have been widespread reports of human rights violations by police including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions. Serious human rights abuses by the CPN (Maoist) have also been reported.

An alarming deterioration in the country's human rights situation followed the start of a large-scale police operation aimed at armed members of the CPN (Maoist), initiated on 26 May 1998. An increase in abuses by the CPN (Maoist) has also been reported.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Bhanu Sharma who has not been seen since he was arrested by police on 30 November 1998;
- urging that the government provide immediate information about his whereabouts and the reason for his arrest;
- urging that, if he is in detention, that he be promptly charged with a recognizable offence, or immediately released, and that steps be taken in the

meantime to safeguard his physical integrity and to allow him immediate access to his family, legal counsel and medical care;  
- urging that those responsible for his "disappearance" be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Fax tones may be difficult to obtain. Please keep trying.**

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

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

**Faxes: + 977 1 227 765**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Hon. Govinda Raj Joshi  
Minister of Home Affairs  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

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

**Faxes: + 977 1 241 942**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Mr. Achyut Krishna Kharel  
Inspector General of Police  
Police Headquarters  
GPO Box 407  
Naxal  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

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

**Faxes: + 977 1 41 55 93**

**Salutation: Dear Inspector 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 5 March 1999.