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Prachanda  
Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)  
Nepal

18 August 2004

Dear Prachanda,

**Open letter condemning the abduction and killing of civilians and the “blockade” of Kathmandu by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)**

I am writing to express Amnesty International’s concern about the continued abduction and killing of civilians by the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist).

In the last month Amnesty International has received reports of at least 16 people being killed and hundreds of people being abducted by CPN (Maoist). In many cases large numbers of civilians, who were often students or teachers, were taken away apparently to be given political education or military training. In other cases, individuals have been abducted in a targeted way and in these cases we consider them to be at particular risk of being killed.

Amnesty International strongly condemns the killing of journalist and human rights defender, **Dekendra Raj Thapa**, on 11 August 2004. He was abducted in Dailekh district on 27 June after being summoned by the CPN (Maoist) to discuss a drinking water project he had been managing. We note that the CPN (Maoist) has taken responsibility for his killing, and justified it by accusing him of spying for the security forces and acting as master of ceremonies at an event attended by the King of Nepal. We request further details as to the evidence on the basis of which he was accused of spying and the process by which the “charges” against him were proven. Amnesty International is also concerned that since his killing, other journalists in Dailekh district have reportedly been threatened and harassed by CPN (Maoist) members.

Amnesty International draws your attention to the following cases of eleven people who have reportedly been abducted by CPN (Maoist) members and whose fate or whereabouts remain uncertain:

- **Raj Bahadur Rokaya, Dangale Rokaya Bijalal Rokaya, Satarsi Rokaya and Raj Bahadur Rokaya** were all reportedly abducted in Mugu district by CPN (Maoist) on 13 January 2002. Earlier this year their families received information that Raj Bahadur Rokaya had been killed but the other three were still being detained by the (CPN Maoist) at an unknown location.
- **Ram Prasad Rijal** (aged 73) was abducted from his home in Pyuthan district on 23 July along with his son **Devi Prasad Rijal** (aged 42) and daughter in law **Pratibha Rijal** (aged 35) by 12 armed CPN (Maoist) members. They are believed to have been targeted because of their relationship to Ram Prasad’s other son who is a local politician in Pyuthan district. The latter, Hari Rijal, himself has reportedly received death threats from the CPN (Maoist). Furthermore, Ram Prasad Rijal’s brother, **Durga Rijal** was reportedly abducted on 24 December 2003 and the whereabouts of all four are now unknown.

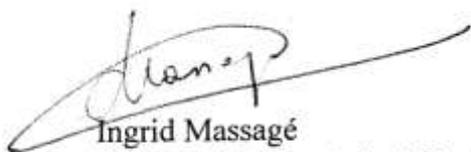
- **Sita Bhattarai** (aged 17) was abducted from her home in Gulmi district at 7.30pm on 26 June 2004 by 10 armed CPN (Maoist) members. Her family own a small hotel in Gulmi district and they believe she may have been targeted by the CPN (Maoist) because army personnel sometimes stay at the hotel.
- **Uddhav Bahadur Adhikari** (aged 54), who is the Chair of Betauna Village Development Committee, Siraha district, was reportedly abducted whilst he was supervising the construction of a road at 11am on 6 July.
- **Laxman Bista** (aged 52) was reportedly abducted from his home in Gulmi district on 7 August by five CPN (Maoist) members. He is believed to have been targeted because is a member of the mainstream Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist).
- **Kripa Ram Bhattarai** (aged 41) was reportedly abducted from his home in Kalikot district by five CPN (Maoist) members at 6pm on 11 August. He is a farmer and was formerly a member of the Nepali Congress party but has not been active in politics for two years.

Amnesty International urges the CPN (Maoist) to guarantee the safety of all civilians currently under its control, including those mentioned above, and to release them immediately and unconditionally. We also appeal to the CPN (Maoist) leadership to uphold previous commitments to abide by fundamental human rights standards and the Geneva Conventions. This means complying with minimum humanitarian standards contained in Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which prohibit violence to life and person, the taking of hostages and summary executions of those not actively engaged in the conflict.

Amnesty International is also deeply concerned at the “blockade” of all vehicles entering or leaving Kathmandu declared by the CPN (Maoist) which began today. News reports suggest that only a few vehicles have been able to pass along highways in and out of Kathmandu since and as a result some people have been unable to get back to their homes. Amnesty International is concerned that the “blockade” will restrict the supply of food and essential medical supplies to civilian populations not only in Kathmandu but in other districts which rely on access to Kathmandu for the supply of these goods. We remind the CPN (Maoist) of its responsibilities under international law to ensure that its acts do not violate the right of the population to be free from hunger, to medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

Amnesty International once again reminds the CPN (Maoist) that international humanitarian law prohibits means and methods of warfare which fail to distinguish between civilians and combatants. It also expressly prohibits starvation of civilians as a method of combat in both internal and international armed conflict. This prohibition is violated not only when lack of food or denial of access to medical assistance causes death, but also when the population suffers hunger because of deprivation of food sources or supplies.

Yours sincerely,



Ingrid Massagé

Interim Director, Asia & Pacific Regional Program

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