

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 14/13/98

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 25 per section.

1 October 1998

Further information on UA 217/98 (ASA 14/07/98, 7 August 1998) - Torture / Fear of torture

BHUTAN Needup Phuntsho, aged 19, school pupil

and new names: Dorji Wangdi, aged 45
Ugyen Dorji, aged 41
Kinzang Wangdi, aged 46
Dorji Needup, aged 26

There are concerns that all those named above continue to be at risk of torture and ill-treatment while under interrogation in police custody at Zilnoen Namgyeling prison (police headquarters).

Needup Phuntsho was arrested by Royal Bhutan Police on 28 July 1998. The four others named above were among six people arrested several days later as a result of a house-to-house search in Thimphu in which Needup Phuntsho was dragged around in handcuffs and told to identify other members of the Druk National Congress (DNC) and the United Front for Democracy (UFD). Needup Phuntsho reportedly showed signs, at the time, of torture and ill-treatment.

The other four detainees are believed to be held for questioning about their alleged membership of the DNC and UFD, two political organizations in exile in Nepal. Two other people arrested, Ugyen Dorji and Jambay, are reported to have been released.

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

- expressing concern that the five above-named men, reported to be detained at Zilnoen Namgyeling prison in Thimphu, have been tortured and ill-treated and urging the authorities to fully investigate these reports and to bring the perpetrators to justice;
- asking the reason for the continued detention of Needup Phuntsho and the four other detainees and urging that, unless they are to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, they be immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging the authorities to grant the five detainees immediate access to a legal adviser (*jabmi*) and any medical treatment they require;
- reminding the government of Bhutan of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*".

APPEALS TO:

Lyonpo Thinley Gyamtsho

Minister of Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan, Tashichcho Dzong, Thimphu, Bhutan

Telegrams: Home Affairs Minister, Thimphu, Bhutan

Salutation: Dear Minister

Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Royal Government of Bhutan, Tashichcho Dzong, Thimphu, Bhutan
Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Thimphu, Bhutan
Salutation: Dear Minister

Major Kipchu Nangyal
Chief, Special Branch
Royal Bhutan Police
Police Headquarters
Zilnoen Namgyeling
Thimphu
Bhutan

Telegrams: Chief, Special Branch, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu, Bhutan
Salutation: Dear Major Nangyal

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Bhutan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 October 1998.

***"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman
or degrading treatment or punishment"***

Article 5, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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