

UA 152/07 Death threats/fear for safety

NEPAL **Staff working for the Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) in Bastipur Village Development Committee**
Rita Mahato (f)
Dev Kumari Mahara (f)

There are fears for the lives of human rights defenders working at the Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) in Bastipur Village Development Committee, Siraha district, which assists victims of violence against women. They have been reportedly been threatened with rape and death if they do not leave the village by 19 June.

At around 1pm on 14 June, between 60 and 70 men arrived at the WOREC office and threatened WOREC staff with rape and death and called on them to leave the village within five days.

On 2 June, at around 11:50pm, unidentified people began throwing bricks at the WOREC Siraha office. At the time of the attack, WOREC staff were working in the office. When the staff went outside to confront the group, bricks were thrown at them until the attackers fled. The staff were not seriously injured in this attack.

After the attack on the building on 2 June, WOREC staff members contacted the local police. However, according to WOREC staff, the police have not acted on their requests for protection. The staff, who live close to the WOREC office, are in fear for their lives. They claim that the police have failed to initiate any investigation into the incidents.

Individual members of WOREC staff have also been targets of threats as a result of documenting cases of violence against women. Rita Mahato has reportedly received threats of death, rape, kidnapping, shooting and beating, and Dev Kumari Mahara has also received threats of rape, death and kidnapping. WOREC staff believe that men connected to the women whom the organization is assisting may be behind the threats and attack.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WOREC has been working in Siraha for the past four years, focusing on assisting dalit people (a member of a socially and economically marginalized caste) and women, particularly those who are victims of violence. WOREC has documented cases and provides legal support for victims, by registering cases with police and government bodies. However, in defending the rights of the victims, the human rights defenders are facing gross violations of their own human rights, and are regularly threatened and intimidated.

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

- expressing concern that human rights defenders working at the Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) in Bastipur Village Development Committee, Siraha district, have recently been threatened and attacked;
- calling on the authorities to order prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into these incidents and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of these human rights defenders, according to their 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:

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

Brigadier General Nilendra Aryal
Head, Human Rights Cell
Police Headquarters
GPO Box 407

Naxal, Kathmandu, Nepal
Fax +977 1 4415593
Salutation: Dear Brigadier

Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
Minister: Mr. Narendra Bikram Nembang
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal
Fax: + 977 1 4220684
Salutation: Dear Minister

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 27 July 2007.*****