

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 31/10/99

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per section.

UA 209/99 Arbitrary arrest/"disappearance"

13 August 1999

NEPAL **Bikash Sharma (arrested 30 November 1998)**
 Dundu Tiwari (arrested 3 February 1999)
 Gore Bahadur Purkoti, 25, labourer (arrested 16 May 1999)
 Palshang Lama, 23, taxi driver (arrested 16 May 1999)
 Nabin Gautam, 27, student (arrested 21 May 1999)
 Kamala Sharma, 35, political activist (arrested 21 May 1999)
 Dandapani Neupane, 47, political activist (arrested 21 May 1999)
 Milan Nepali, journalist (arrested 21 May 1999)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the eight people named above, whose whereabouts are unknown since they were reportedly arrested between 30 November 1998 and 21 May 1999.

Bikash Sharma was reportedly arrested in Dang district, Mid-Western region, while the other seven were reported to have been arrested in Kathmandu municipality. Relatives stated at a press conference in Kathmandu on 14 June that they had not been told where the eight people were detained.

In May several of the relatives filed *habeas corpus* writs in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ordered the police to produce the detainees, and the authorities responded by denying that they had been arrested. At a further hearing in July the Supreme Court reportedly dismissed the *habeas corpus* writs on the basis that the petitioners had not provided enough details about the circumstances of the arrests.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The eight people named above are believed to have been arrested in the context of ongoing police operations against armed members of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist), who declared a "people's war" in February 1996.

Since the declaration of the "people's war" the police have reportedly committed widespread human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances". Serious human rights abuses by the CPN (Maoist) have also been reported.

Since June 1999 armed members of the CPN (Maoist) are reported to have stepped up their activities in several districts in Nepal.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety and welfare of the eight people named above, who are reported to have been arrested by the police;
- calling on the authorities to establish an impartial investigation into their fate or whereabouts and to make the findings public;
- calling upon the authorities, if they are in detention, to allow them immediate access to their relatives, a lawyer and medical treatment, if required;
- urging that, if they are detained, they be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, or immediately released;
- expressing grave concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Nepal and appealing for an immediate halt to human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

Rt Hon Prime Minister K P Bhattarai
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Singha Durbar
Kathmandu

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Nepal

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Kathmandu, Nepal

Faxes: +977 1 227 286 or 428 570

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Hon Purna Bahadur Khadka

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 1 415 593

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 24 September 1999.