

PUBLIC

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25 April 2006

Further Information on UA 42/06 (ASA 31/010/2006, 17 February 2006) and follow-up (ASA 31/011/2006, 17 February 2006) - Arbitrary detention/human rights defenders at risk

NEPAL                    Krishna Pahadi (m)  
                              Dr Devendra Raj Panday (m)  
                              Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha (m)  
                              Shyam Shrestha (m)  
                              Hundreds of other civil society and political party activists

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Prisoners of conscience Krishna Pahadi, Dr Devendra Raj Panday, Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha and Shyam Shrestha were among hundreds of civil society and political party activists who were released on 25 April amid a historic political transition in Nepal.

On 24 April, following nearly three weeks of massive nationwide public protests against palace rule, King Gyanendra announced the reinstatement of Parliament. Since King Gyanendra seized direct control of the government on 1 February 2005, he has used the security forces to spearhead a massive crackdown on dissent. Members of the non-violent political opposition have been arbitrarily detained, beaten, and even shot. In his latest announcement, the King conceded that "Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Nepal is inherent in the people of Nepal" and recognized "the spirit of the ongoing people's movement."

Krishna Pahadi, a former chair of Amnesty International Nepal and founder of the Human Rights and Peace Society; Dr Devendra Raj Panday, former president of the anti-corruption organization Transparency International-Nepal; Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Nepal; and Shyam Shrestha, editor of the political journal *Mulyankan*, are all leaders of the Citizens' Movement for Democracy and Peace (CMDP). The CMDP has played a key role in organizing pro-democracy demonstrations over the past year.

Speaking to Amnesty International by phone, Krishna Pahadi thanked all those who sent appeals on behalf of prisoners of conscience in Nepal. He also gave special thanks to members of the AI delegation that visited him and Shyam Shrestha in custody in March 2006.

"Peace and human rights must be the priority now," Krishna Pahadi said. "The politics of violence must end."

**No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**