

Ref.: ASA 31/2004.24
AI Index: ASA 31/113/2004

Colonel Nilendra Prasad Aryal
Head, Royal Nepal Army Human Rights Cell
Army Headquarters
Singha Durbar
Kathmandu
Nepal

30 April 2004

Dear Colonel,

Open letter on “disappearance”

I am writing to express concern about the reported arrest and subsequent “disappearance” of Mr Dharma Raj Adhikari on 14 April.

Dharma Raj Adhikari, a 31-year-old businessman, was arrested at 7.30pm from his grocery shop at Gongapu, Kathmandu district, by seven security forces personnel in plain clothes. Dharma Adhikari is originally from Battabartoli, Suryamati Village Development Committee (VDC), Ward No 2, Nuwakot district. He is currently a resident of Gongapu VDC, Ward No, 5, Kathmandu district. According to witnesses, the seven security forces personnel asked for him by name, saying they wanted to take him for inquiry and would return him home the same evening. He was then taken away, on foot, to an unknown destination. Dharma Raj Adhikari has been arrested on two previous occasions. On 22 October 2003 he was arrested and held for over a month before being released without charge on 3 December. On 20 February 2004 he was arrested with his wife and two year old son and taken to Sorakhutte Police Post in Kathmandu. They were questioned mainly about family matters and were released after six hours when Dharma Raj Adhikari signed a document agreeing to present himself at the police station when required. The Defence and Home Ministries have been informed of the recent arrest of Dharma Raj Adhikari, but to date there is no information on his whereabouts and he remains “disappeared”.

Amnesty International is appealing for the whereabouts of Dharma Raj Adhikari to be made public, for assurances that he will be treated humanely and for him to be given access to his relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment he may require. It urges that he be released unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

We look forward to receiving your response to the concerns we have raised about the individual named above.

Yours sincerely,

Ingrid Massagé
Interim Director, Asia & Pacific Regional Program