

[WA 16/04 Closing text - Nepal: Protect human rights defenders from "disappearance"]

According to news reports Jeetaman Basnet, a 28-year-old lawyer and investigative reporter for Sagmarmatha Times newspaper, was released by the Nepali army on 18 October 2004. He had been held for over eight months in Bairab Nath army barracks. Following his "disappearance" the army had repeatedly denied that he was being detained by them.

The government has recently admitted that human rights activist Sujindra Maharjan, is being held at Sundarijal Detention Centre in Kathmandu. Before this announcement his family had been unable to locate him. He had been arrested by security forces in November 2003.

Despite this good news, human rights defenders have continued to be targeted by both sides in the conflict between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the government. Lawyers, journalists, members of human rights organisations and ordinary people who speak out against human rights abuses have been threatened, tortured, detained, abducted, "disappeared" or killed. They are particularly at risk in remote districts away from the scrutiny of the national press and the international community.

Amnesty International continues to campaign for an end to human rights violations against human rights defenders in Nepal.

Many thanks to all those who took part in this action.