

2 July 1997

Further information on Extra 57/97 ASA 20/21/97, 22 April 1997 and follow-ups: ASA 20/26/97, 28 May 1997 and ASA 20/39/97, 23 July 1997 - Imminent Extradition

INDIA/BHUTAN Rongthong Kunley Dorji (59), Bhutanese national

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Rongthong Kunley Dorji was released on bail on 12 June 1998, after being held in judicial custody in New Delhi for nearly 14 months. Amnesty International is encouraged by this development, but remains concerned that he is still at risk of extradition to Bhutan where he could face serious human rights violations, such as torture and ill-treatment.

Rongthong Kunley Dorji was arrested on 18 April 1997 after the Indian authorities received an extradition request from the Bhutanese authorities. Amnesty International is further concerned that the basis for his extradition is politically motivated.

Rongthong Kunley Dorji is the founder of the Druk National Congress (DNC) and chairman of the United Front for Democracy in Bhutan, two Bhutanese political organizations set up in exile in Nepal. The stated aims of the DNC are the establishment of a democratic system of government in Bhutan and the protection of human rights.

Under the conditions of his bail, Rongthong Kunley Dorji is obliged to remain in New Delhi under police surveillance. He has also volunteered to report twice weekly to New Delhi police and to surrender his travel documents.

Rongthong Kunley Dorji's release came after the New Delhi High Court upheld the order of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate for his release, which the central government had challenged. Numerous applications for Rongthong Kunley Dorji's release on bail have been made during the past year by the Public Interest Legal Support and Research Centre (PILSARC), a public interest law firm.

Following his release from judicial custody, Rongthong Kunley Dorji wrote "*The prompt action and appeals sent out by Amnesty International were instrumental in bringing the position of my case to what it is now, resulting in my bail finally being granted and my release*".

The case for Rongthong Kunley Dorji's extradition has been heard by an extradition magistrate appointed by the government, who has since stepped down following charges of bias. The question of law as to whether the central government has the power to appoint a new extradition magistrate in this case or if the case is to be heard by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, is currently pending before the High Court and is due to be decided this month.

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

- welcoming Rongthong Kunley Dorji's release from judicial custody on bail;
- expressing concern that if returned to Bhutan, Rongthong Kunley Dorji may be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- urging the Indian authorities to abide by the internationally recognized principle of non-refoulement.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee  
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India  
**Telegrams: Prime Minister, New Delhi, India**  
**Faxes: + 91 11 301 9817**  
**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Mr Lal Krishna Advani  
Minister of Home Affairs  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
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New Delhi 110 001  
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**Faxes: + 91 11 301 5750**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

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and to diplomatic representatives of India accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 August 1998.**