

PUBLIC

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25 August 2006

UA 228/06 Fear for safety/ torture

INDIA **Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei (m) aged 35**
Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei (m) aged 26

Human rights defenders Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei and Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei have reportedly been tortured in police custody in Manipur province, close to the border with Myanmar. Their exact place of detention is unclear. Amnesty International is concerned that they could face further torture or ill-treatment.

Reports received by Amnesty International indicate that Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei (Public Secretary of the Threatened Indigenous People's Society, Manipur (TIPS), and spokesperson for a Manipur-based coalition of human rights organizations, known as Apunba Lup, was arrested at his home at 4am on 23 August by police and military personnel. The arresting officers produced a memo relating to section 41 of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, under which police may arrest a person without an order from a magistrate and without a warrant.

Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei (Secretary General of TIPS) was detained at his home at 4am the following day. According to Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei's wife, the police did not produce an arrest warrant when he was detained. However, when his wife and brother went to the Imphal City Police Station to visit him, police showed them a warrant for his arrest, which stated the time of his arrest as 9.30am on 24 August.

According to reports, both men have appeared before a chief judicial magistrate since being detained. Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei has been remanded in police custody until 29 August and Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei has been remanded in custody until 1 September. The chief judicial magistrate allegedly failed to record the men's complaints that they had been tortured and ill-treated before extending the period of time for which they will be held. A case under Sections 38 and 39 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967, relating to charges of being a member and providing support of a terrorist organisation, has been filed against Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei. It remains unclear as to what charges have been brought against Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that human rights defenders Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei and Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei have been tortured in police custody;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that their place of detention is revealed immediately, and to give both men immediate access to their families, lawyers, and any medical attention they may require;
- urging the authorities to carry out an independent and impartial investigation into allegations that Leitangthem Umakanta Meitei and Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei are being subjected to torture while in police custody, including an examination by independent medical experts, with the findings made public and anyone found responsible for torture brought to justice;
- asking the authorities for details of the charges faced by the two men, and urging them to release Yengkokpam Langamba Meitei immediately unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling for guarantees that the men are being treated humanely in detention, and reminding the authorities of India's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, quoting Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

APPEALS TO:

Mr. Okram Ibobi Singh
Chief Minister, Manipur
Government Secretariat
Imphal 795 001,
Manipur
India

Fax: + 91 11 2611 1803
Email: cmmmani@man.nic.in
Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

COPIES TO:

Shivraj Patil
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
104 – 107 North Block
New Delhi 110 001
India

Fax: + 91 11 2309 2979

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 6 October 2006.