

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 31/03/98

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per section

EXTRA 57/98      "Disappearance" / Fear of extrajudicial execution 17 August 1998

NEPAL Bishweswor Prasad Pokhrel, aged 55

---

Amnesty International is concerned at the "disappearance" of Bishweswor Prasad Pokhrel following his arrest at his home in Simrutu, Rukum District on 5 August 1998 and fears he may have been killed by police in retaliation for the killing of two policemen earlier that day.

According to press reports, the policemen were killed by members of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) who had laid an ambush in the early morning of 5 August at Bhalakcha 7, Laha Kholu, Rukum district. They were among a group of eight police officers who had been on their way to the district headquarters in Musikot, Rukum District.

According to sources close to the CPN (Maoist), Bishweswor Pokhrel was arrested soon after the incident by three policemen from the Simrutu police station. He was allegedly then seen being taken to Bhalakcha 7 where he is said to have been deliberately shot dead - although this cannot be confirmed as his body has not been found or returned to his relatives.

Unconfirmed reports suggest that other civilians may also have been killed by police at that same spot. Amnesty International is in the process of verifying these reports.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

From 1992 to 1996, Bishweswor Prasad Pokhrel was an elected member of the Rukum District Development Committee. He was also the Rukum District President of the *Samyukta Jana Morcha*, United Peoples' Front (Bhattarai), (SJM), the political wing of the CPN (Maoist). This was up to February 1996 when he was arrested and imprisoned for 15 months on charges of attempted murder and arson.

Following the declaration of a "people's war" by the CPN (Maoist) in February 1996, there have been widespread reports of human rights violations by police mainly in the mid-Western region. These include extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture and widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions.

A recent upsurge of these violations has followed the start of a large-scale police operation aimed at armed members of the communist party of Nepal (Maoist). This was reportedly initiated on 26 May 1998 and has resulted in an alarming deterioration in the country's human rights situation.

Initial reports indicate that many civilians, including members or sympathizers of the SJM, have been among those reported killed and that police appear to have resorted to deliberate killings as an alternative to arresting armed members of the CPN (Maoist). Members of the CPN (Maoist) have also been responsible for deliberate killings and other grave human rights abuses.

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

- expressing serious concern at the "disappearance" of Bishweswor Pokhrel after he was arrested by police on 5 August 1998;

- urging that an impartial investigation is established to ascertain his fate or whereabouts and that the findings of the inquiry be made public;
- expressing grave concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Nepal which includes an upsurge in extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions in the context of ongoing police operations against armed members of the CPN (Maoist);
- reminding Nepal's government of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person".

**APPEALS TO:**

Rt. Hon Prime Minister Girija Koirala  
 Prime Minister  
 Office of the Prime Minister  
 Singha Durbar  
 Kathmandu  
 Nepal

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 22 77 65**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Hon Govinda Raj Joshi  
 Minister of Home Affairs  
 Ministry of Home Affairs  
 Singha Durbar  
 Kathmandu  
 Nepal

**Telegrams: Minister Home Affairs, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 24 09 42 / 22 51 56 (fax tones for Minister of Home Affairs can be difficult to obtain)**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Hon. Achyut Krishna Kharel  
 Inspector General of Police  
 Police Headquarters  
 GPO Box 407  
 Naxal  
 Kathmandu  
 Nepal

**Telegrams: Inspector, Police Headquarters, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 41 55 93**

**Salutation: Dear Inspector General**

**COPIES TO:**

diplomatic representatives of Nepal accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 September 1998.