

PUBLIC

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"Disappearance"

13 September 2000

**NEPAL**

**Ishwari Dahal (60)**

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A leftist politician has "disappeared", after he was seen being taken away by men thought to be police officers. The police have since denied having him in custody.

Witnesses saw a group of about 15 men in plain clothes stop 60-year-old Ishwari Dahal at about 9.30am on 6 September, as he was walking past the Paropkaar secondary school, in the Tahachal district of the capital, Kathmandu. He was heard shouting "Help me!" The men apparently took him away in a jeep. Ishwari Dahal has links with the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist), which has been fighting a "people's war" against the government since 1996.

A complaint has been made to the National Human Rights Commission but so far they have not been able to trace him.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has received reports of increasing numbers of "disappearances" and unacknowledged detentions over the last three years, linked to the CPN (Maoist) "people's war". Amnesty has recorded 24 "disappearances" in 1998, 18 in 1999 and 11 so far this year.

After sustained pressure on the authorities, including mass appeals by Urgent Action appeal writers, some people who had been reported "disappeared" have been released. Some of them have since testified that they were taken away by police officers in plain clothes, in unmarked vehicles with covered number plates, and that they were held incommunicado in unofficial places of detention, including the Maharajgunj Police Training Centre, Kathmandu, and the Armed Police Battalion Headquarters in Pokhara, Kaski district.

Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the government has taken some steps which could help resolve or prevent "disappearances", including the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The Commission's members were finally appointed at the end of May 2000, nearly four years after the Act establishing it was passed in Parliament. On 9 June, when all the members of the Commission met with the Prime Minister, they asked him to provide information about six people reported to have "disappeared". Amnesty International was later informed that the Prime Minister had responded by denying the government was responsible for their "disappearance". The organization is concerned that the government denied responsibility without fully investigating the cases.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ishwari Dahal, who has "disappeared" after he was seen being taken away by a group of men thought to be plainclothes police officers, at Tahachal, Kathmandu, on 6 September;
- calling on the authorities to establish an independent and impartial investigation into his fate and whereabouts and to make the findings public;
- calling on the authorities to allow him, if he is found to be in detention, immediate access to his relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment he may need;
- urging that, if he is detained, he be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or else immediately released, and that steps be taken in the meantime to guarantee his safety;
- expressing grave concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Nepal and appealing for an immediate halt to human rights violations, including "disappearances".

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Rt Hon Prime Minister Giriji Prasad Koirala  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

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

**Faxes: + 977 1 227 286 or 428 570**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

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

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

**Faxes: + 977 1 241 942**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

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

**Telegrams: Inspector General of Police, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 415 593/415 594**

**Salutation: Dear Inspector General**

**COPIES OF YOUR LETTERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO:**

Nayan Bahadur Khatri  
Chairperson  
National Human Rights Commission  
Harihar Bhawan  
Pulchowk  
Lalitpur  
Nepal

**Telegrams: Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal**

**Faxes: + 977 1 525 842**

**Salutation: Dear Chairperson**

and 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 25 October 2000.