

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 31/067/2005

15 August 2005

Further Information on UA 199/05 (ASA 31/065/2005, 29 July 2005) Fear of torture or ill treatment / prisoner of conscience

NEPAL Gagan Thapa (m) aged 30, former general secretary of the Nepal Students' Union

Gagan Thapa appeared before the Special Court in Kathmandu on 14 August, where he was charged with sedition before being released pending trial. He had been in police custody since 27 July and was accused of shouting anti-monarchist slogans at a political demonstration.

According to a report published by the Nepal-based news service Kantipur Online, Gagan Thapa has said "If sedition charges are labelled against those who fight for democracy, then I am ready to face several such charges."

During an earlier hearing in his case, Gagan Thapa was provided a copy of the Urgent Action issued on his behalf. He told trial observers then that such international attention had been instrumental in ensuring his safety. "If the international community had not been present at the right moment, the action taken against me would have been even more serious;" he added "As soon as the international pressure started, the police changed their tone."

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network at this time. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.