

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 245/04 (ASA 31/153/2004, 11 August 2004) – Fear for safety/ harassment/arbitrary detention

NEPAL **39 male transvestites**

The 39 *metis* (male transvestites) arrested in Kathmandu on 9 August were released on bail on 20 August.

The Blue Diamond Society, a local organisation which campaigns for the rights of sexual minorities, has sent its "sincere and grateful thanks" for the work done on behalf of the 39, all of whom are members of the Society.

They were arrested on the street and in bars and nightclubs. All were apparently told that they were being taken to a meeting, and to an identity parade to pick out the man who had attacked another *meti* on 7 August. All 39 were reportedly kept together in a very small and overcrowded cell. Police are alleged to have beaten two of the men severely, and verbally abused all of them, saying that acid should be thrown in their faces and they did not deserve to live. Many of the 39 are illiterate, and were reportedly forced to sign statements they could not read, while others, who could read, were not allowed to see the documents they signed.

They are scheduled to face charges of "causing a public nuisance" in a hearing before the Chief District Officer on 20 September. Amnesty International will be monitoring the case closely.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.