

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 31/13/99

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 20 per section.

EXTRA 125/99

Disappearance / Fear of Torture

8 September

NEPAL Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, school teacher and human rights defender

---

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, whose whereabouts are unknown after he was forced into a jeep in a reported arrest on 2 September 1999.

Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, a teacher at Mangal Secondary School, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, was last seen being forced into a Maruti Gypsy jeep with dark windows and number plate Ba. A. Ch. 6981. He had just got off a bus at Satumangal, Kathmandu, where he was going to visit a relative. It is believed that the jeep had followed the bus from Kalanki Chowk, Kalimati, three kilometres away. Those who saw him being forced into the jeep heard him shout "my name is Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, please inform the police post". Witnesses suspect those responsible were plain-clothed police.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that the Maruti Gypsy jeep had been registered with the police at Jawalakhel but no further details about the owner are known.

After being informed of his reported arrest by local people, police at Satumangal police post tried to call the Kalimati police post but got no response. Police at several other posts and at police headquarters told relatives who made inquiries that Bishnu Pukar Shrestha was not in their custody.

Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, also a qualified lawyer, is a member of the Nepal Bar Association and the People's Rights Concern Movement (PRCM), a human rights organization. He had taken part in fact-finding missions, carried out with other human rights groups, to investigate reports of human rights violations in the context of the Maoist "people's war", declared in 1996. He was General Secretary of the Nepal National Teachers Association from 1992 to 1996.

Bishnu Pukar Shrestha has been arrested several times before, most recently in 1998 in Bhaktapur, a town near Kathmandu, and also in April 1999 in Lalitpur, Kathmandu municipality. Both times he was detained for over a month before being released on the order of the Supreme Court.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

There has been a serious deterioration in the human rights situation in Nepal since the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) declared a "people's war" in February 1996. The police have reportedly committed widespread human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture and arbitrary arrests. Serious human rights abuses by the CPN (Maoist) have also been reported.

Since June 1998 ten people are reported to have "disappeared" after being arrested by police in Kathmandu municipality and other districts of Nepal.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety and welfare of Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, who is reported to have been arrested by plain-clothed police who forced him into a Maruti Gypsy Jeep with dark windows and number plate Ba. A. Ch. 6981 at around 5.30pm on 2 September 1999 at Satumangal, Kathmandu;
- calling on the authorities to establish an independent and impartial investigation into his fate and whereabouts and to make the findings public;
- calling upon the authorities, if he is found to be in detention, to allow him immediate access to his relatives, a lawyer and medical treatment, if required;
- urging that, if he is detained, he is promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, or immediately released and that steps be taken in the meantime to safeguard his safety;
- expressing grave concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Nepal and appealing for an immediate halt to human rights violations.

**APPEALS TO:**

Rt Hon Prime Minister K P Bhattarai  
 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 Purna Bahadur Khadka  
 Minister of Home Affairs  
 Ministry of Home Affairs  
 Singha Durbar  
 Kathmandu  
 Nepal

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

**Faxes: + 977 1 241 942 (this number can be difficult to obtain)**

**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**

**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 20 October 1999.