

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 40/05 (ASA 31/020/2005, 17 February 2005) Fear for Safety

NEPAL Gauri Pradhan (m), President of the Child Workers in Nepal Concern Centre (CWIN)

Gauri Pradhan, founder and President of the Child Workers in Nepal Concern Centre (CWIN), was released from police custody on 28 February on the order of the Supreme Court, only to be promptly rearrested outside the court house by security forces in plain clothes. "They dragged me out of my car... and whisked me off to Singha Durbar Ward Police Office [in Kathmandu]," he told the *Kathmandu Post* newspaper. "But they were soon ordered over a walkie-talkie to release me. Then only did they take me home, to my utter relief."

Gauri Pradhan, one of Nepal's leading advocates for children's rights, is now at home with family and friends. He has expressed his deep appreciation for all those who supported him and fought for his release. Police had arrested him at Kathmandu Airport on the afternoon of 17 February, following his return from meetings in Europe.

The Supreme Court order for Gauri Pradhan's release came at the end of an all-day hearing on his *habeas corpus* petition, requiring him to be brought before a court or judge. His case was argued by Shambu Thapa, president of the Nepal Bar Association, and other leading human rights lawyers before a packed court room, according to the *Kathmandu Post*. The newspaper reported that the Court ordered his release on the grounds that he was being held "in illegal detention".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 1 February, King Gyanendra of Nepal dismissed the Government, assumed direct power, and declared a state of emergency. Fundamental rights were suspended, including freedom of opinion, freedom of assembly, the right to privacy, and freedom from preventive detention. Within days, the security forces had arrested hundreds of people, including political leaders, trade unionists, student activists, journalists, and human rights defenders. While some people have been released, many others remain in detention, and arrests are ongoing.

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. Thanks to all who sent appeals.