



Ref: TG ASA 31/2004.28

AI Index: ASA 31/124/2004

Colonel Nilendra Prasad Aryal
Head, Royal Nepal Army Human Rights Cell
Army Headquarters
Singha Durbar
Kathmandu
Nepal

28 May 2004

Dear Colonel,

Open letter on “disappearances”

I am writing to express concern about the arrests and subsequent “disappearances” of Santoshi Ale Gurung and Rabindra Bhandari who were reportedly arrested on 13 May 2004.

Santoshi Ale Gurung, a 24-year-old married woman from Devinagar, Butwal Municipality, Rupandehi district, was arrested by about 50 to 60 security forces personnel while on a visit to Dhungagade Gaon, Siddha Village Development Committee (VDC), at about 9am on 13 May. The reasons for her arrest are not known, but may be because the authorities suspect she is a member or supporter of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist). Her whereabouts are unknown, and there are fears for her safety.

Rabindra Bhandari, a 28-year-old security guard working for Kantipur Security Service, is originally from Ward No. 1, Gokarna Suktakhan Village, Baluwa VDC, Kathmandu district. He is currently living in Kirtipur municipality, Baghghairab, Kathmandu. He was arrested from his rented room in Kirtipur at around 8pm on 13 May, and reportedly taken to No. 2 Nepal Police barracks in Maharajgunj. He had phoned his relatives to tell them this, saying that he would be released the following day. When he did not return home the next day, his relatives went to make inquiries at the barracks, but the police there denied his arrest. They also made inquiries at the Hanuman District Police Office (DPO) in Kathmandu.

The relatives of both Santoshi Ale Gurung and Rabindra Bhandari have reported their arrest and “disappearance” to local human rights organizations, and the National Human Rights Commission and the Nepal Bar Association, who are making inquiries on their behalf.

Amnesty International is appealing for the whereabouts of Santoshi Ale Gurung and Rabindra Bhandari to be made public; for assurances that they will be treated humanely and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment; and for them to be given access to their relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment they may require. We urge the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

Tel: Int. Code: 44 (20) 7413 5500. UK Code: 020 7413 5500. Fax: Int. Code: 44 (20) 7956 1157. UK Code: 020 7056 1157

E-Mail: amnestyis@amnesty.org

Web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

We look forward to receiving your response to the concerns we have raised about the individuals named above.

Yours sincerely,

Ingrid Massagé
Interim Program Director
Asia & Pacific Regional Program