

# URGENT ACTION

## NEWSLETTER



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### “A human rights catastrophe is looming in Nepal.”

— Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

Photo: Krishna Pahadi speaks to Irene Khan. ©AI

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## Releases!

### INDONESIA: Nirmala Ohee.

Nirmala Ohee, aged 29, wife of human rights activist Demy Bebari, is safe and well after returning to her family in Papua province. AI currently has no information on what happened after she went missing on May 12. (UA 124/05 issued May 16, 2005)

### IRAQ: Rebwar Arif.

Rebwar Arif was released on May 10 without charge and has returned to his home in Sulaimaniya, northern Iraq. He had been held incommunicado since May 5 after speaking critically of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the two leading Kurdish political parties controlling an area of northern Iraq. (UA 117/05 issued May 9, 2005)

### SUDAN: Adib Abdel Rahman Yusuf.

Adib Abdel Rahman Yusuf, aged 30, was released on April 19. He had spent seven months in custody without charge or trial. He is the director of the office of the Sudan Development Organization (SUDO) in Zalingei, West Darfur State. SUDO undertakes training in human rights and humanitarian work in Darfur. He does not know why he was released. During the whole time he was in custody, he was never brought before a prosecutor or judge, and had no contact with his family. He said there were more than 200 political detainees from Darfur at the detention centers. (UA 285/04 issued Oct. 8, 2004)

### SUDAN: Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, Chair of the Sudan Development Organization (SUDO), Yasir Salim, and SUDO driver Abdallah Taha.

Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam's driver Abdallah Taha was released without charge on May 11, Yasir Salim was released on bail on May 12, and Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam was set free on May 16. However, the charges against him (espionage and photographing military areas), have not been officially dropped. AI believes he was detained solely to prevent him from traveling to Ireland to receive the inaugural Front Line Human Rights Defender award from Irish President Mary McAleese on May 13. His wife traveled to Dublin to receive the prize on his behalf. (UA 116/05 issued May 9, 2005, & re-issued May 13 & 17, 2005)

### SUDAN: Human rights lawyer Sati' Mohamed Al-Hajj, Yusuf Hussein, Tariq Ahmed Gasim, and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed.

All four men were released without charge on April 22. Because they were detained solely for exercising their right to peaceful expression of their opinions, they were prisoners of conscience. (UA 98/05 issued Apr. 22, 2005)

### UNITED KINGDOM: Palestinian refugee Mahmoud Abu Rideh.

Mahmoud Abu Rideh, aged 34, was moved to a hospital on May 6, and is now receiving treatment as an inpatient. The UK authorities agreed to relax the control order to which he

has been subject under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 so that he could return to the hospital. **His lawyer has asked us to pass on his thanks to the Urgent Action Network.**

(UA 108/05 issued May 4, 2005)

### USA: Abdullah William Webster.

Abdullah Webster was released from prison on April 30. His release on grounds of “good conduct” comes three months before the completion of his 14-month sentence. He is back at home with his family in the USA and has been able to spend time with his wife and two-year-old daughter. **Abdullah Webster has sent his sincere thanks to all those who sent appeals on his behalf. He believes that these appeals were instrumental in securing his early release. While in detention he received hundreds of letters of support from around the world and he has stated that these letters kept him strong.**

(UA 267/04 issued Sep. 17, 2004 & re-issued Mar. 10, 2005 & Apr. 13, 2005)

### VIET NAM: Le Thi Hong Lien.

Former prisoner of conscience, Le Thi Hong Lien, was released from the prison wing of Bien Hoa Mental Hospital on April 28. Family and friends from the Mennonite community took her home to Ho Chi Minh City where she will be seeking medical attention. She was included in a prisoner amnesty that the Vietnamese authorities announced for April 30, 2005, to mark the end of the Viet Nam war.

(UA 1/05 issued Jan. 7, 2005 & re-issued Apr. 14, 2005)

## Nepal: A Troubled Kingdom

*This story is excerpted from an article of "Urgent Action Network," an international newsletter for UA coordinators produced by the UA Team at AI's headquarters in London, UK.*

For many years the people of Nepal have been suffering grave and widespread human rights abuses. In the tenth year of the internal conflict between the security forces and armed insurgents of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist), Nepal is on the brink of a human rights and humanitarian catastrophe.

The human rights situation in Nepal had been deteriorating steadily since the breakdown in the ceasefire between the Maoist insurgents and the security forces in August 2003. An increase in Urgent Actions on torture, detention, "disappearances", abductions and unlawful killings by both the security forces and Maoist insurgents has testified to this crisis. Thousands of activists around the world, including members of the UA Network, have been mobilized.

### State of Emergency

On February 1, King Gyanendra seized direct power and declared a State of Emergency. Fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement, were suspended. More than 3,000 people have since been arrested, including political leaders, student activists, trade unionists, journalists and human rights defenders.

While some leaders have been released, more are being arrested, particularly in rural areas. Editors and reporters have faced constant harassment by both the security forces and the civilian authorities as part of a strict clampdown on political dissent. Although a number of leading human rights defenders are in hiding or have fled the country, Nepal's human rights community is still finding ways to operate and get information.

### AI Mission to Nepal

In February, AI Secretary General Irene Khan

led a high-level mission to Nepal. Delegates visited detention centers in the capital, Kathmandu, and went to the towns of Nepalgunj and Biratnagar. They met recent victims of human rights abuse including rape survivors, child soldiers and torture victims. Irene Khan noted, "Wherever we went, we encountered a deep sense of fear, uncertainty and insecurity among the people."

The delegation also visited AI Nepal's former chairperson, Krishna Pahadi, who is also the founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES). He is currently in detention at police headquarters in Naxal, Kathmandu, having been arrested at his offices by four members of the security forces on February 9. He was seized the day before a rally in Kathmandu organized by HURPES to protest emergency rule and challenge the ban on public demonstrations. Eleven other HURPES activists were arrested at the rally itself, where protestors chanted slogans such as "Human rights have been violated." While other protestors were released after a few days, Krishna Pahadi remained in custody under the terms of Nepal's Public Security Act. [See this month's *UA Newsletter Appeal* on page 4 to take action on behalf of Krishna Pahadi.]

Irene Khan had a private audience with King Gyanendra during which she conveyed to him AI's serious concerns about Nepal's deteriorating human rights situation. In response, the King assured her of his commitment to uphold human rights and Nepal's international obligations. "The King will be judged, not by his promises, but by how those promises are put into action by his government," said Ms. Khan.

### UN Calls Nepal to Account

On April 12, during the 61st session of the

## Urgent Action

## In Focus

An insight into the stories behind UAs

United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, the Nepal government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights providing for deployment of an international human rights monitoring presence to Nepal. UN offices are to be created in Kathmandu and regional centers to help ensure accountability for rights abuses and prevent further violations by government forces and Maoist rebels. This agreement followed intensive lobbying by groups including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists. They issued a joint statement welcoming the agreement as a step forward, but warned that the international community must remain vigilant to ensure that the terms are complied with effectively and fully.

Members of Amnesty International, including the UA Network, will continue to work on behalf of individuals at risk in Nepal. The organization maintains the objectives of restoring fundamental freedoms, suspended under the State of Emergency, and the release of all prisoners of conscience. It calls for effective human rights monitoring and protection and calls on the Government of Nepal to improve its human rights performance. This should include ending impunity for security forces personnel. It also calls on the CPN (Maoist) to abide by international humanitarian law.

Through these efforts, a long-ignored human rights crisis can be kept on the international agenda. The daily violence and terror that the people of Nepal face will not be allowed to happen in the shadows.

## Executions / Stays / Commutations

### IRAN: Rasoul Mohammadi and Mousa Ali Mohammadi.

17-year-old Rasoul Mohammadi has been granted a stay of execution, but his father, Mousa Ali Mohammadi, was publicly hanged in a central square in the city of Esfahan. Rasoul Mohammadi was granted a stay of execution because of "ambiguities" about his age, according to local judicial officials quoted in the press.

*(UA 86/05 issued Apr. 14, 2005)*

### IRAN: Hojjat Zamani.

The death sentence against Hojjat Zamani, aged 29, has reportedly been upheld by the Supreme Court and could be carried out any time. He is believed to have been represented by a court-appointed lawyer during his trial, who AI fears may not have provided effective counsel. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

*(UA 318/03 issued Nov. 5, 2003 & re-issued Aug. 20, 2004)*

### IRAN: Afghan national Abbas Hosseini.

Abbas Hosseini, aged 19, has not been executed, and his case has been referred to

the judiciary in Tehran for review. On May 7, the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Shahrودي, ordered the local judiciary in Mashhad not to proceed with the execution. The planned execution is suspended while the case file is under review by the central Judiciary in Tehran. No details of the nature of the review are known.

*(UA 87/05 issued Apr. 15, 2005 & re-issued May 3, 2005)*

### SINGAPORE: Shanmugam s/o Murugesu.

Shanmugam s/o Murugesu was hanged on May 13.

*(UA 104/05 issued Apr. 29, 2005)*

**USA (Connecticut): Michael Bruce Ross.** Michael Ross, white, aged 45, was executed in Connecticut on May 13, after dropping his appeals against his death sentence. This was the first execution in Connecticut in 45 years. (UA 107/05 issued May 3, 2005)

**USA (Oklahoma): George James Miller.** George Miller, black, aged 39, was executed in Oklahoma on May 12. (UA 110/05 issued May 4, 2005)

**YEMEN: Amina Ali Abdulatif and Muhammad Ali Said Qaba'il.**

The May 2 scheduled execution of Amina Ali Abdulatif, aged 21, has been stayed pending a review of her case. Yemen's Attorney General has reportedly appointed a "special committee" to review her case. One of the aims of the review is to investigate whether Amina was indeed under 18 when she allegedly committed the crime. Her execution will be stayed until the committee submits its findings on the case to the Attorney General, who will then review her sentence.

Amina Ali Abdulatif was sentenced to death when she was 16 years old for the murder of her husband. There is no news on the case of Muhammad Ali Said Qaba'il, a 26-year-old male, who was also sentenced to death for the murder of Amina Ali Abdulatif's husband. (UA 99/05 issued Apr. 26, 2005)

## Other News

**ERITREA: Pastor Kidane Weldu, 14 members of the Kale Hiwot Evangelical church, and Demoze Afewerki, chair of the Gideons (Bible) International branch in Eritrea.**

Demoze Afewerki, 67, married with three children, is now known to have been arrested at the same time as Pastor Kidane Weldu, and is detained without charge, incommunicado, in the same prison. He is head of the inspection department of the Housing and Commerce Bank of Eritrea, and chair of the Gideons (Bible) International branch in Eritrea. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA network for continued action.

(UA 73/05 issued Mar. 24, 2005 & re-issued May 13, 2005)

**NEPAL: Sailendra Maske.**

Sailendra Maske is now known to be at the Shivapuri Army Barracks. He is reportedly suffering from an eye infection and has chest pains. He has so far been denied access to a doctor and remains at risk of being tortured. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 83/05 issued Apr. 12, 2005 & re-issued May 6, 2005)

**NEPAL: Dinesh Limbu, Balam Rai, and Siddant Paudel.**

Dinesh Limbu, who was arrested in August 2004, was seen on May 13 being taken away from the Central Jail in Kathmandu in a government-registered police van. His whereabouts are unknown, and he is at risk of torture or "disappearance". AI has received no further information about Balam Rai or Siddant Paudel. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 271/04 issued Sep. 24, 2004 & re-issued May 13, 2005)

**NEPAL: Krishna Pahadi.**

Krishna Pahadi, the founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES), is being detained at the armed police compound in Naxal, Kathmandu. He is also featured in the *Urgent Action in Focus* on page 2 of this newsletter, and this month's *UA Newsletter Appeal* on page 4.

(UA 31/05 issued Feb. 9, 2005 & re-issued May 17, 2005)

**OMAN: Muhammad Bin Rashid Al-Gharbi, Dr. Ali Bin Hilal al-Arbi, Dr. Jabir al-Sa'di, Said al-Harhi, and possibly over 100 other detainees.**

On May 2, three men named above were sentenced to prison terms, along with 27 other men. AI believes that many may be prisoners of conscience. The State Security Court in the capital sentenced Muhammad Bin Rashid Al-Gharbi and Dr. Jabir al-Sa'di to seven years' imprisonment, and Dr. Ali Bin Hilal al-Arbi to ten years' imprisonment.

They had reportedly been convicted of "plotting to overthrow the regime by force... by setting up a banned underground organization." There was no further information on the fate of Said al-Harhi or the others. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network.

(UA 26/05 issued Jan. 28, 2005 & re-issued May 10, 2005)

**RUSSIA: Doctors publicly branded as terrorists.**

Fourteen women doctors in the Russian Republic of Ingushetia have repeatedly had their pictures and names distributed by the Russian authorities on posters, in the media and on the internet. The women, all of who reside in Ingushetia, and work for the International Medical Corps, were declared as "wanted on suspicion of their involvement in terrorist activities." At a meeting on March 4, 2005, between the doctors and high-level officials in Moscow, officials acknowledged that the allegations against the doctors were unfounded, but reportedly were not prepared to take responsibility. However, officials agreed to the demands of the Deputy Chair of the Federation Council that all posters should be removed, including those from websites.

(MA 19/04 issued Nov. 11, 2004)

**SYRIA: Grocery store manager 'Abd al-Rahman al-Musa.**

'Abd al-Rahman al-Musa was allowed to see his family once during April, for the first time in several weeks. AI does not have information about where he is held and is concerned

## California Local Group Holds 15th Annual Write-A-Thon

Confirming once again their belief that "Words Can Right Wrongs," members of the Ventura/Oxnard, California, Local Group #452 will be holding their 15th Annual Urgent Action Write-A-Thon on June 2.

Each year about 25 members and friends get together for 3 hours to socialize, enjoy some music and snack on refreshments. But principally they gather for the very serious purpose of writing letters in response to Urgent Actions supplied by the UA office. Over this 15-year period, the group estimates that 3,750 letters have been written and sent to authorities all over the globe. Letters are directed to authorities from Bangladesh to Mexico, from Sudan to the USA. These Urgent Action letters are written on behalf of people whose human rights have been abused: death threats, fear of torture, incommunicado detention, legal concerns, the death penalty, and legislation restricting approval of asylum cases.

An important component of Group #452's Write-A-Thon is fundraising. Members have solicited donations from friends and relatives that have brought in many thousands of dollars over the 15 years. The funds support the group's activities (everything from rent for meeting space, putting on special events to buying stamps for the letters). Additionally, the funds enable the group to make a substantial pledge each year to help support AIUSA.

For any group seeking more information on how this Write-A-Thon is put together, please contact Area Coordinator Bob Gips at (805) 643-6605 or [bandbgips@vcnet.com](mailto:bandbgips@vcnet.com).

that he may be in danger of torture or other ill-treatment. There are also concerns that he has not had access to a lawyer, is being held without charge, and has not been brought before a court. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network.

*(UA 22/05 issued Jan. 26, 2005 & re-issued Apr. 18, 2005 & May 17, 2005)*

**SAUDI ARABIA: Dr. Matrouk al-Falih, Dr. Abdullah al-Hamid, Ali al Deminy, and Abdel Rahman al-Lahem.**

On May 15, prisoners of conscience, Dr. Matrouk al-Falih (Professor of Political Science at King Sa'ud University), Dr. Abdullah al-Hamid (former professor of contemporary literature at Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud University), and writer Ali al Deminy were imprisoned by a closed court in Riyadh after an unfair trial. The men have one month to appeal this decision. AI had asked the authorities whether they could send an

observer to the trial, but were denied a travel permit. The men were arrested in 2004 when they called for political reform. AI considers them to be prisoners of conscience detained solely for peaceful criticism of the government. Lawyer Abdel Rahman al-Lahem remains detained without trial at al Ha'ir prison in Riyadh. AI also considers him to be a prisoner of conscience detained solely for carrying out his legitimate work as a lawyer. This UA has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

*(UA 112/04 issued Mar. 17, 2004, re-issued Apr. 30, 2004, Jul. 2, 2004, & May 17, 2005)*

**USA: Malik Jarno.**

AIUSA's Refugee Program Director Bill Frelick received an official response from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties regarding Malik Jarno, a mentally disabled war

orphan from Guinea who spent 35 months in immigration jail. Frelick writes, "*Even though Malik lost his asylum bid (the case is now on appeal, and we have asked law students at American University to write an amicus brief on our behalf), I think this letter suggests that our intervention in this case has already improved the treatment of children (and others) in immigration detention in the United States. We have also been told that the fact that the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties opened an investigation prevented Malik from being deported when he was first ordered deported, and bought time both to win his release from detention and to get a rehearing of the asylum claim. Thanks to all of you who have worked long and hard on Malik's case.*"

*(NSA 3/04 issued May 20, 2004)*

## UA Newsletter Appeal for June 2005

**Each month we include one case that may benefit from appeals sent by those in the UA Network who wish to work on an additional appeal. You are encouraged to write on behalf of this individual until July 10, 2005. Thanks!** *(This appeal is based on Urgent Action 31/05 issued Feb. 9, 2005 & re-issued May 17, 2005).*

**Fear for safety / fear of torture / prisoner of conscience**

**NEPAL: Krishna Pahadi, founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society**

Krishna Pahadi, the founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES), is being detained at the armed police compound in Naxal, Kathmandu. Amnesty International (AI) considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for carrying out his peaceful and legitimate work in defense of human rights.

Following his arrest on February 9, he was served with a 90-day detention order under the Public Security Act (PSA), which was extended for another 90 days after it expired on May 9. He is not believed to have been tortured, and was given a full medical check-up in early May.

Krishna Pahadi was arrested on February 9 at the Kathmandu office of HURPES, by police officers wearing plain clothes. Later that month, Irene Khan, Secretary General of AI, visited Krishna Pahadi in police custody. Since then, three other AI delegations have visited him, including on his 42nd birthday on March 30. "I think the situation will be OK one day," Krishna Pahadi told the delegation then, "and we will continue our human rights work, so I am not depressed."

Krishna Pahadi, the former president of AI's Nepal section, is well-known as one of Nepal's leading human rights defenders. Since King Gyanendra assumed power on February 1, at least 45 human rights

defenders are reported to have been arrested. Some of them remain in prison. Hundreds of political leaders and student activists have also been detained. Many of them are being held under the Public Security Act (PSA), which allows the authorities to detain a person who allegedly threatens the "sovereignty, integrity or public tranquility" of Nepal for up to 90 days without charge or trial.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals:**

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Krishna Pahadi, founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES), who is being detained for his peaceful and legitimate defense of fundamental rights;
- urging that he be treated humanely while in detention and not tortured or ill-treated;
- urging the government to release all human rights defenders immediately if they have been detained purely for their peaceful and legitimate defense of fundamental human rights;
- urging the government to repeal or amend repressive legislation used to detain prisoners of conscience, including the Public Security Act (PSA) and the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Ordinance (TADO);
- reminding the authorities of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their

activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties.

**APPEALS TO:**

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Inspector General of the Armed Police Force

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Swayam, Nepal

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**Email: [armedpolice@wlink.com.np](mailto:armedpolice@wlink.com.np)**

**Salutation: Dear Inspector General**

Lieutenant Colonel Raju Nepali

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**Salutation: Dear Lieutenant Colonel**

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