
AdvocacyNet

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200 NEPALESE ACTIVISTS FLEE TO INDIA AS EMERGENCY DEEPENS IN NEPAL

- Fears grow for 17 human rights defenders in detention

Washington, DC: Over 200 Nepalese civil society activists have fled to India and 17 human rights defenders have been arrested in Nepal itself following the imposition of military rule by the King, according to reports reaching the Advocacy Project.

Many of those now in India narrowly escaped arrest as they left Nepal. One of the latest to reach New Delhi is Sujata Koirala, daughter of the former Nepalese Prime Minister, Girija Prasad Koirala. After meeting with Nepali exiles, Ms. Koirala announced that she will take part in a rally in front of the Nepalese embassy in New Dehli that is being organized by a broad coalition of democratic activists.

In Nepal itself, it is clear that the Nepalese Army is intensifying its operations against Nepalese civil society, in spite of world-wide condemnation of King Gyanendra's February 1 coup. The United States Ambassador to Nepal said last Friday that American aid to Nepal could be suspended unless detainees are released. The government of India announced today that it was suspending all military aid to Nepal for an indefinite period, and Human Rights Watch has warned that those arrested could be "disappear" and even face death.

The Nepalese authorities appear indifferent to the criticism, to judge from the arrest last Thursday of 10 officials from the Nepalese Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES). The HURPES president, Krishna Pahadi, was detained on Wednesday. Nine other HURPES officials were arrested the following day as they were about to hold a public protest in Kathmandu.

The protest would have been among the first public demonstrations to take place since the coup, and it had been widely publicized in advance by several organizations. The Advocacy Project had urged that foreign diplomats were present and visible, to provide some cover for the demonstrators. In the event, the security forces moved quickly to stamp out the protest, and arrested the nine HURPES members as they began to shout pro-democracy slogans. The names are listed below.

Thursday's arrests bring to 17 the number of human rights defenders reportedly now in detention, and there is growing concern for their safety. Human Rights Watch pointed out in a statement on Friday that the last state of emergency in Nepal (2001-2002) resulted in a surge in extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention. The UN's working group on disappearances asked Nepal to explain 31 new cases of disappearances in 2004 – the largest number submitted to any government.

The risks that face pro-democracy forces have been graphically spelled out in the latest e-update

from the Nepal Democracy Desk. According to the update, which has been posted on the Advocacy Project website, one of those missing is Kundan Kafle, from the Nepal Students Union. Mr. Kafle's leg was broken while he was detained and beaten after taking part in a student protest in 2001.

The nine detained activists are:

Suresh Chandra Pokhrel, Vice President, Human Rights and Peace Society

Balaram Aryal, Treasurer

Narayan Dutta Kandel, Member

Jayaram Basnet, Office Assistant

Laxmi Pariyar, Coordinator

Suman Shrestha, Secretary, Kathmandu District Committee

Jib Lal Hharel, Member

Basu Devkota

Laxaman Achrya

- For background on the crisis, visit the website of the [International Dalit Solidarity Network](#).
- View the [press release](#) by Human Rights Watch on disappearances in Nepal.
- Visit the [UN working group](#) on disappearances.