

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 14/05/97

UA 338/97

Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment / Health concern

29 October 1997

BHUTAN

Kinzang Chozom (f), pregnant, aged 25

Kinzang Chozom, who is the final stages of pregnancy, has been held in incommunicado detention at Samdrup Jonkhar jail since 17 October 1997 when she was arrested by the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP). She is reportedly not receiving medical care and is being denied access to her four-year-old daughter. Amnesty International believes that her conditions of detention amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Karma Dorji, the husband of Kinzang Chozom, recently travelled to Nepal to publicize his wife's detention. He had previously been in hiding in Bhutan to escape arrest by the RBP. The Bhutanese authorities reportedly suspect Karma Dorji of being a supporter of two political organizations set up in exile in Nepal, the Druk National Congress (DNC) and the United Front for Democracy (UFD). The stated aims of the DNC/UFD are to establish a democratic system of government in Bhutan and to protect human rights. Amnesty International believes that Kinzang Chozom could have been arrested in reprisal for her husband's suspected involvement with the DNC and the UFD.

There have been scores of recent arrests in the districts of Mongar, Tashigang, Samdrup Jonkhar and Pema Gatshel, in eastern Bhutan.

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

- seeking assurances that Kinzang Chozom's detention conditions do not amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- requesting that full medical attention be provided to Kinzang Chozom and that she be granted bail if her detention conditions cannot guarantee full medical attention and proper pre and post-natal care;
- requesting a guarantee that Kinzang Chozom's is not separated from her baby in the event that her detention continues until the birth;
- urging the authorities to grant Kinzang Chozom immediate access to a *jabmi* (a legal adviser) and to her family members;
- requesting information about the reasons for her detention, and urging that unless she is to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, she be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO:

Lyonpo Dago Tshering
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan
Tashichho Dzong
Thimphu, Bhutan

Telegrams: Home Affairs Minister, Thimphu, Bhutan

Salutation: Dear Minister

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Major Kipchu Nangyal
Chief of the Special Branch
Royal Bhutan Police
Police Headquarters
Zhilnen Namgyelling
Thimphu, Bhutan

Telegrams: Chief, Special Branch, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu, Bhutan
Salutation: Dear Major Nangyal

No fax numbers were obtainable for the two addresses supplied but faxes may be sent to the following numbers with a request for them to be forwarded to the above addressees:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Fax + 975-2-22079
Speaker of the National Assembly: Fax + 975-2-24210

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Bhutan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 December 1997.