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## **Two “disappeared” prisoners released at end of AI visit to Nepal**

At the end of a week of high level meetings between Amnesty International and the Nepal government, two prisoners who “disappeared” more than eight weeks ago have been released, Amnesty International said today welcoming the release of Suresh Ale Magar and Pawan Shrestha on 26 February.

Secretary General Pierre Sané, who led an Amnesty International delegation to the country last week to highlight the organization’s growing concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in the country, said he was delighted to hear the authorities had taken swift action to trace the two men and release them.

Mr Sané also expressed hope that the Nepal government would soon announce the results of investigations into 42 other cases of “disappearances” which the Amnesty International delegation had brought to the attention of the government.

Suresh Ale Magar and Pawan Shrestha were seen being taken away in a police van immediately after they were released from Kathmandu Central Jail on the orders of the Supreme Court on 23 December 1999. It is understood that for the large part of their illegal detention they were held at the Western Region Armed Police Forces Section in Pokhara town, Kaski district. They were never issued with any detention order or taken to court.

The Western Region Armed Police Forces Section has been among a number of secret places of detention around the country where people arrested on suspicion of being members or sympathizers of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) are held in illegal custody. A number of other people arrested in Kathmandu in mid-1999 were also reported to be held at this Armed Police Forces Section in Pokhara while others are reported to be held at the Armed Police Forces Section situated within the premises of the Maharajgunj Police Training Centre in Kathmandu.

Amnesty International reiterated its recommendation to bring an immediate halt to the use of secret places of detention and to punish those police officers responsible for “disappearances” including the cases of Suresh Ale Magar and Pawan Shrestha.

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**For background information on these cases, AI’s visit to Nepal and its concerns in the country, please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**