



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

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COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

30 October 2003

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Nepal: Arrest and Disappearance of Lawyer

The Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (CIJL) of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) today condemned the arrest and disappearance of Nepalese lawyer, Shyam Kumar Shrestha, and called for his immediate release.

Mr. Shrestha, a member of the Nepal Bar Association, was arrested by security forces at 9:00 pm on 23 October at his home in Bagbazar, Kathmandu. The security forces stated that they were taking Mr. Shrestha to Maharajgunji in Kathmandu for questioning. They then took him away in a taxi without giving any further reasons for his arrest. Calls from the Nepal Bar Association to the Home Ministry and the human rights investigation bodies within the army and the police have not been answered. To date, the reasons for Mr. Shrestha's abduction remain unknown.

"The arrest and enforced disappearance of Mr. Shrestha constitutes a grave violation of his right to liberty and security", said Linda Besharaty-Movaed, Legal Advisor of the ICJ/CIJL. "He must be immediately released and if any charges are brought against him, they must be in strict conformity with Nepalese law and international human rights standards."

The ICJ/CIJL conducted a fact-finding mission to Nepal in January 2003. It has denounced the army killings and the increase in the number of disappearances by the security forces and abductions by the Maoists since fighting between the two sides resumed in August.

For further information, please contact: Linda Besharaty-Movaed at 41 22 979 38 09.

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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