



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

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COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

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HUNDREDS DETAINED IN NEPAL *King suspends human rights protections*

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) urges the King and Royal Nepalese Army to ensure the safety of the former President of the Nepal Bar Association, who along with hundreds of political and student leaders has been detained by the Nepali security forces. Mr. Sindhu Nath Pyakurel was arrested at his office in Kathmandu on 1 February and is being detained at Armed Police Force headquarters in Halchowk. The ICJ calls for his immediate release.

The ICJ urges the King and the Royal Nepalese Army to release the hundreds of persons arbitrarily detained and to desist from carrying out further arrests. The authorities must grant detainees immediate access to lawyers and their families and medical assistance where necessary. The authorities must also grant the International Committee of the Red Cross and the National Human Rights Commission full access to all places of detention.

Mr. Sindhu Nath Pyakurel's detention is part of a wider crackdown by the Army on political parties, media and human rights organisations in Kathmandu and a number of districts since King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency and assumed direct rule on 1 February. The ICJ is concerned for the hundreds of lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists, trade unionists and democratic activists whose safety is threatened.

The King has reportedly suspended many of the provisions of the Constitution that protect fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the right to privacy and freedoms of expression, press, assembly and association. It is also reported that habeas corpus has been suspended but under both the Nepali Constitution and international law this vital safeguard for all detainees can never be suspended even during a state of emergency. These sweeping suspensions of constitutional protection are in clear violation of Nepal's international legal obligations.

The ICJ urges the King to immediately restore the rule of law and fully respect human rights.

For further information, please contact: Ian Seiderman, Legal Adviser at + 41 22 979 3800

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

81A, avenue de Châtelaine, P.O. Box 216, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41(0) 22 979 3800 – Fax: +41(0) 22 979 3801 – Website: <http://www.icj.org> - E-mail: info@icj.org