



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

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For immediate release

5 May 2005

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Government of Nepal continues to defy Supreme Court orders: The ICJ calls for immediate release of student leader

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) today called on the government of Nepal to immediately comply with the Supreme Court's order to release student leader, Gagan Thapa.

Gagan Thapa, who was arrested on 26 April and held in Hanuman Dhoka detention facility, remains detained despite the order of the Supreme Court.

"It is disturbing that the government of Nepal is continuing to defy orders of the Supreme Court," said Nicholas Howen, Secretary-General of the ICJ. "Compliance with court orders is a critical measure of the government's commitment to human rights. It has been built into both US Congressional and United Nations scrutiny of the Nepali government's human rights record."

Last month the 53 governments of the UN Commission on Human Rights unanimously agreed on a resolution on Nepal stating that judicial remedies must be safeguarded. In particular they stated that habeas corpus orders must be respected. Nepal, as a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights agreed to this resolution and is therefore committed to implementing it. Even before the King assumed direct power on 1 February the US congressional resolution of December 2004 on military assistance to Nepal set out four conditions including substantial progress in complying with habeas corpus orders issued by the Supreme Court of Nepal.

"If Gagan Thapa is not swiftly released or is re-arrested, as has happened in past cases, the Supreme Court should begin contempt proceedings to hold the government accountable for failure to comply with court orders," said Nichols Howen.

For further information please contact Susan Appleyard, International Commission of Jurists, +4122 979 3809

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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