

# ***Free Comrades Gaurav and Kiran!***

On August 20, 2003, a leader of the People's War that has been sweeping through Nepal, Chandra Prakash Gajurel, known to millions of people in Nepal and South Asia as Comrade Gaurav, was arrested by the Indian authorities as he attempted to travel to Europe to support the battle against imperialist intervention in his country. On March 29, 2004, another senior leader of the People's War and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) which is leading this struggle, Comrade Mohan Baidhya, known throughout Nepal and the entire region as Comrade Kiran, was also arrested by the Indian police while in India for the treatment of cataracts. Since their arrests the reactionary monarchy ruling Nepal has been carrying out a series of legal and diplomatic moves in an attempt to secure their extradition from India.

For its part, the Indian government has in the past repeatedly sent Nepalese revolutionaries back to the dungeons and torture chambers of the regime in Kathmandu. The most notorious action of this kind occurred on Feb. 8, 2004 when Com.'s Matrika Yadav and Suresh Ale Magar were turned over to the Royal Nepalese Army only 2 days after being arrested by Indian police without even the slightest pretence of legal procedure. It has been reported that since that time they have been held by the Yudha Bhairab Battalion of the Royal Nepal Army at the Shiwapuri barracks where they are kept handcuffed and blindfolded and subjected to repeated mental and physical torture. The Indian government has taken these and similar actions despite the fact that international law and treaties between India and Nepal expressly prohibit the extradition of people facing persecution.

In essence Comrades Gaurav and Kiran are being held as political hostages. At the time of their arrests both were legally on Indian territory. To date the Indian government has only claimed that Comrade Gaurav was in possession of false travel documents, which in India is normally dealt with as a minor matter and processed quickly. He has never been formally charged and has already been imprisoned beyond the maximum time he could receive as penalty even if he were to be convicted. Despite this fact the Indian authorities refuse to release him and have made repeated public threats of extraditing him back to Nepal.

Com. Kiran's situation is very similar. While preliminary charges of "waging war against the Indian state" have been filed against him, this is nothing more than a pretense for his continued imprisonment. No one disputes the fact that at the time of his arrest he was undergoing urgently necessary medical treatment for cataracts at an Indian clinic – treatment not available to him in Nepal. This is hardly "waging war against India". In addition, on July 14 it was reported that the Jalpaiguri District Court in the Indian state of West Bengal refused to grant him bail, despite being ordered to do so by the Siliguri Sub-Divisional Court; once again confirming that this case – and the others like it – have nothing to do with "justice" and everything to do with the political maneuvers of the Indian government in its efforts to maintain the reactionary monarchy in Kathmandu in power.

For much of the duration of the People's War, the Royal Nepal Army has engaged in a US-counterinsurgency-style "dirty war", including carrying out systematic torture and by "disappearing" hundreds of revolutionaries. The World People's Resistance Movement urgently calls on progressive people around the world to defeat these and other attempts to turn these revolutionary leaders over to the hands of their would-be executioners.

To try to justify such crimes, the Indian authorities are loudly repeating US government slanders of the People's War and its leaders as "terrorist". But the world's press, even establishment media like the BBC, France's *Le Monde*, the *New York Times* and *India Today*, have had no choice but to acknowledge that millions of Nepalese have rallied to the side of the popular insurgency in Nepal. At the core of this immense movement is the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), of which Comrades Gaurav and Kiran –members of the party's political bureau – are among the senior leaders. In no way can this struggle for liberation be called "terrorist".

After eight years of revolutionary struggle, the Nepalese people, among the poorest of the world's poor, now hold power in an area comprising 80% of Nepal's total territory and containing the majority of its population. They are seizing the land, building schools, organizing people's clinics and beginning to chart their own destiny. In doing so they have provided a great source of strength and inspiration for people all over the world who are also fighting to free themselves from the shackles of imperialist domination and oppression. Comrades Gaurav and Kiran have been on the front lines of this struggle helping to lead it forward in Nepal and internationally.

The Nepalese armed forces have met the popular upsurge with vicious bloody repression. Amnesty International and many other human rights organizations have documented the campaign of torture, "disappearances" and the many people "killed while trying to escape" conducted by the US and Indian-backed Royal Nepal Army. A key part of any such campaign of suppression has always been targeting the leaders of the people's struggle. The World People's Resistance Movement calls on progressive people around the world to struggle to defeat the plans to extradite Comrades Gaurav and Kiran and other Nepalese prisoners to Nepal, and to demand their freedom. Act now, as tomorrow could be too late!

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**World People's Resistance Movement (Europe)**

**[www.wprm.org](http://www.wprm.org)**

Contact WPRM Europe at: [wprm@wprm.org](mailto:wprm@wprm.org)