

19 August 2009

Re: India – Arbitrary detention of human rights defenders protesting against summary executions by security forces

On 4 and 5 August 2009, human rights defenders, Mrs **Phanjoubam Sakhileima**, Mrs **Lourembam Nganbi Devi**, Mrs **Yumlembam Mema**, Mr **Phurailatpam Devan Sharma**, Mr **Chingtham Dayananda**, Mr **Th. Naobi** and Mr **Karam Sunil** were detained by police in Manipur following a protest against the summary execution of an unarmed former militant by security forces. Phanjoubam Sakhileima is the President of Apunba Manipur Kanba Imma Lup (AMKIL), a womens civil society umbrella group in Manipur. Lourembam Nganbi Devi is the vice-president of AMKIL and Yumlembam Mema is the general secretary of AMKIL. Th. Naobi and Karam Sunil are coordinators of Apunba Lup, an umbrella group coordinating the civil protest of police brutality in Manipur who are currently demanding the resignation of the chief minister of Manipur and the termination of the police personnel involved in the so-called “encounter killings.” Phurailatpam Devan Sharma is the secretary of All Manipur United Club Organisation (AMUCO) and Chingtham Dayananda is the assistant publicity secretary of AMUCO.

On 4 August 2009, a group of women activists marched towards Raj Bhavan (Government House), to meet the Governor of Manipur, in response to the publication of photographs in a Delhi-based news magazine which indicated that the security forces in fact carried out an “encounter killing” of an unarmed man in Imphal, Manipur on 23 July 2009. A police team stopped the women at the Palace compound and allowed three of them, Phanjoubam Sakhileima, Lourembam Nganbi Devi, and Yumlembam Mema through the barricades to meet the Governor. The women were subsequently arrested by a group of policemen. On 5 August 2009, the women were brought before the Judicial Magistrate First Class at Imphal and were remanded in judicial custody. On 10 August 2009, District Magistrate of Imphal West issued order number Cril/NSA/No. 72 of 2009 and detained Lourembam Nganbi under the National Security Act (NSA). The prison authority did not however provide any grounds for the detention of Phanjoubam Sakhileima and Yumlembam Mema. They were produced before the court today, 19 August, and we are awaiting reports of the formal grounds for detention. They are currently being held in the Central Jail in Imphal.

On 5 August 2009, a team of police led by the Additional Superintendent of Police, Imphal West arrested Phurailatpam Devan Sharma, Chingtham Dayananda, Th. Naobi and Karam Sunil on charges of rioting, causing damage and breaking the peace of the people. On 6 August 2009, they were brought before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate at Imphal and remanded in police custody till 10 August 2009. On 10 August 2009, they were detained under the NSA with the separate order issued by District Magistrate, Imphal West. They are currently being held in the Central Jail in Manipur.

Under the NSA a person can be detained without charges (preventative or administrative detention) for a period of up to one year.

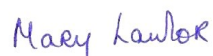
Front Line is concerned that the arrest and detention of Phanjoubam Sakhileima, Lourembam Nganbi Devi, Yumlembam Mema, Phurailatpam Devan Sharma, Chingtham Dayananda, Th. Naobi and Karam Sunil are directly related to their work in defense of human rights in Manipur, particularly their protest of summary executions or “encounter killings” by security forces. Front

Line is concerned for the physical and psychological integrity of the aforementioned defenders and calls for their immediate release.

Front Line urges the Indian authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Phanjoubam Sakhileima, Lourembam Nganbi Devi, Yumlembam Mema, Phurailatpam Devan Sharma, Chingtham Dayananda, Th. Naobi and Karam Sunil as Front Line believes that they are being held solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the arrest and detention of Phanjoubam Sakhileima, Lourembam Nganbi Devi, Yumlembam Mema, Phurailatpam Devan Sharma, Chingtham Dayananda, Th. Naobi and Karam Sunil;
3. Ensure that the treatment of Phanjoubam Sakhileima, Lourembam Nganbi Devi, Yumlembam Mema, Phurailatpam Devan Sharma, Chingtham Dayananda, Th. Naobi and Karam Sunil, while in detention, adheres to all those conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/111 of 14 December 1990*';
4. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological security and integrity of the aforementioned human rights defenders;
5. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Lawlor
Director

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