Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's Refworld website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the Knowledge and Information Management Unit.

**NPL105569.E**

Nepal: Threat letters issued by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) CPN-M), Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN), and Young Communist League (YCL) groups, including prevalence; whether regional commanders issue threat letters ordering households to join Maoist militia groups or threats to pay fines or donations; whether people suspected of being informants are sent notifications to file for a pardon from such groups; appearance and content of threat letters; availability of fraudulent threat letters (2014-June 2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Prevalence and Instances of Threat Letters Issued by CPN-M, UCPN and YCL

For information on the different Maoist groups and affiliated student groups, including on activities of extortion, kidnapping and land capture, particularly by the Chand-led Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M) faction, see Responses to Information Requests NPL105360 and NPL104890. A Secretary General from the Human Rights Organization of Nepal (HURON), a Nepal-based human rights organization (HURON n.d.) indicated in correspondence with the Research Directorate that, since 2006, there are approximately six Maoist factions/political parties that have nearly the same name, with different suffixes or prefixes to differentiate amongst them (ibid. 1 July 2016). The HURON Secretary General also indicated that some of these groups are part of the government, while others are opposed to the government and are engaged in boycotts and violent activities (ibid.). Without providing further information, the same source added that "even after the conflict settlement in 2006-2007, the [CPN-M], later transformed into the Unified Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (UCPN-M), and its sister wing, Young Communist League (YCL), were active in intimidating the people, especially [political] opponents" (ibid.). For further information on HURON, including its letters of support to victims of threats or political targeting, see Response to Information Request NPL105568.

In contrast, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative (NPI), a Kathmandu-based non-profit organization working on research, analysis and dialogue on local and national peacebuilding initiatives (NPI n.d.), who has worked on Nepal's conflict and peace processes for 10 years, stated that, since 2006, "there have been hardly any threats for political reasons in Nepal" (ibid. 24 June 2016). However, the NPI representative also indicated that since June 2016, the Maoist splinter group CPN-M, led by Netra Bikram Chand [Biplav, Biplab-led, CPN-Chand], has been "a bit active, especially targeting international organizations" although, to his knowledge, the Chand-led faction has "not attacked any individual so far" (ibid.). The same source provided the opinion that since the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, "CPN-M, UCPN [and] YCL have stopped issuing threat letters," because they have been part of the democratic process and government since then, and because human rights groups and the media monitor political parties and their activities, including the Maoists, which makes sending threat letters "a political blunder" (ibid.). The representative also provided the opinion that, since the UCPN and YCL are no longer fighting against the government, they are no longer involved in the forced recruitment of young people, or the forced collection of donations, as they have developed "party strategies to collect the donations..."
from party members and others" (ibid.). The same source further expressed the opinion that even in the past, issuing threat letters "would have been rare," as threats were normally issued verbally (ibid.).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), a Kathmandu-based human rights NGO that monitors human rights "through research and documentation, community mobilization, public education and awareness, and lobbying and advocacy" (INSEC n.d.), indicated that, based on their information and documentation, there are no cases of issuance of threat letters currently by CPN-M, UCPN, and YCL (ibid. 27 June 2016). The same source indicated that threat letters were a "widespread" practice during the conflict between 1996 and 2006, and then a "few" were issued during the peace process between 2006 and 2009 (ibid.). After 2009, INSEC has documented "some cases of oral threats and beatings," but is not aware of cases of threat letters issued by Maoist groups since 2010 (ibid.).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Nepal researcher for the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), an independent Hong Kong-based NGO that promotes "greater awareness and realization of human rights in the Asian region" (AHRC n.d.), stated that he is not aware of any cases of political targeting or threats by Maoists or any other political parties in the period of 2014 to June 2016 (ibid. 29 June 2016). The AHRC representative also stated that the UCPN, CPN-M and YCL used to issue threat letters before 2006, but the AHRC was not aware of any cases of such threat letters being issued after these parties joined "mainstream politics" (ibid. 28 June 2016). The representative gave the opinion that, if any of these letters have been issued, "it must [have been] a local initiative" as these parties "are not foolish to commit such an act" (ibid.).

1.1 Instances of Threats

Information on specific incidents of CPN-M, UCPN, or YCL sending threat letters demanding fines, donations, demands to file for pardon, or of regional commanders of these groups sending letters demanding recruitment of households for Maoist militias from 2014 until June 2016, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report on the following incidents of letters sent by the Chand-led CPN-Maoist faction asking for donations:

• On 8 January 2015, The Kathmandu Post, an English language daily newspaper (The Kathmandu Post n.d.), reported that the Chand-led CPN-M "has intensified its donation drive to collect funds to run its activities [by] sending out letters to private industries, business houses, schools, colleges and even government offices seeking support" (ibid. 8 Jan. 2015). The same source stated that the letters were signed by Chand and that the party has formed "multiple squads to collect donations" (ibid.). An "industrialist" cited by the article indicates, however, that the letters do not specify any amount and do not use "threatening language," noting that "the tendency of using threatening language has slowed down over the last few years" (ibid.).

• On 8 February 2015, The Kathmandu Post reported that CPN-M formed a "special squad to collect donations' under the orders of the party central steering committee, headed by Chand" (ibid. 8 Feb. 2016). The article indicates that such squads have been seeking donations from individuals, and small and medium-sized businesses through visits, text messages, letters, and "threatening phone calls" (ibid.).

• In July 2015, sources reported that the Chand-led CPN-M launched a donation campaign in the Khotang district, sending letters asking for donations to government offices and Village Development Committees (República 8 July 2015; The Himalayan Times 9 July 2015), and following up with "frequent phone calls" (ibid.).

• On 25 August 2015, The Himalayan Times, a Kathmandu-based English language daily newspaper (The Himalayan Times n.d.), reported that the Chand-led CPN-M "launched a donation drive in Khotang" and that the party sent letters to "various offices, traders and industries demanding donation[s] to launch a campaign to institutionalise the gains of the Maoist insurgency and the second people's movement (ibid. 25 August 2016)." Similarly, INSEConline.org, a human rights news portal in Nepal run by INSEC (INSEConline.org n.d.), reported that the Biplav-led CPN-M "intensified the extortion of money" in the Khotang district by sending letters to governmental and non-governmental offices, traders and businessmen who, reportedly, felt "terrorized" by these letters (ibid. 27 Aug. 2015). The secretary of the CPN-M in Khotang party reportedly denied the allegations and stated that they were asking for "a voluntary contribution from the people" (ibid.).

Information on whether people suspected of being informants are sent notifications to file for a pardon from such groups could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.
2. Content and Appearance of Threat Letters

Regarding the format of threat letters, the Secretary General of HURON stated that threat letters might be handwritten or printed and signed on letterhead, or they might take the format of personal letters from commanders or regional leaders (HURON 1 July 2016). The same source notes that these letters use terms like "our glorious party... Maoist, or the like", and the names used as issuing authority "could be something like 'Biplab', 'Aahuti', or 'Prachanda', popular given names, with or without their real names" (ibid.). The NPI representative indicated that these letters were "normally" issued in the party's letterhead and signed by the district or regional commander under pseudonyms that were given by the party (NPI 24 June 2016). The same source noted that these letters "normally used to glorify the party's aim and ambitions, and why such person had become an obstacle for reaching [these goals]" (ibid.). Further information on the content and appearance of threat letters could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Fraudulent Threat Letters

The NPI representative claimed that, although the Maoists issued some threat letters during the initial phases of the civil war, there were also people who obtained "mostly fake" threat letters and had fake news published in the weekly papers as support for asylum applications in Europe and North America during that period (NPI 24 June 2016). Similarly, the AHRC researcher indicated, without providing further details, that AHRC has come across "a lot of forgery cases" where people have obtained letters speaking about "threats and demands" (AHRC 28 June 2016). The AHRC representative also noted that, in Nepal, one can "easily" design a letterhead and a stamp for less than US$5 at any "designing outlet" (ibid.). The same source further stated that the AHRC has not come across any incidents involving threat letters by Maoist groups since 2006 (ibid.). Further and corroborating information on the availability and prevalence of threat letters by Maoist groups could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. For further information on the availability of fraudulent documents in Nepal, see Response to Information Request NPL105570.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References


Human Rights Organization of Nepal (HURON). 1 July 2016. Correspondence from a Secretary General to the Research Directorate.


Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC). 27 June 2016. Correspondence from a representative to the Research Directorate.


INSEConline. 27 August 2015. DM Chamling Rai. "Biplav Maoists Intensifies Extortion Drive." [Accessed 6 July 2016]


**Additional Sources Consulted**

**Oral sources:** Associate professor of political science, Wright University; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Nepal Office; Lawyer of the Superior Court of Justice, Nepal; Nepal – National Human Rights Commission of Nepal; Professor of political science, Western Michigan University; Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International; The Asia Foundation; BBC; Human Rights Watch; eci.net; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; Freedom House; International Crisis Group; IRIN; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; *Human Rights Quarterly*; NepalMonitor.org; Nepal – National Human Rights Commission; Nepal News; Radio France Internationale; South Asia Terrorism Portal; Transparency International; UN – UN Development Program, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld, Reliefweb; US – Department of State.

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