



འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་གཞུང་གི་འཇམ་གླིང་སྤྱི་ཚོགས་གཏན་བཞུགས་སྐྱེ་ཚབ་ཡིག་ཚང་། ཇི་ནི་སྤྱི་

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENEVA**

PMBG.UN2.10.2.3

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honor to refer to communication AL BTN 1/2025 dated 22 April 2025 transmitting the joint communication from the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders; the Vice-Chair on Communication of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, and the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan has the honour to provide herewith the Royal Government of Bhutan's reply to the Joint Communication with a request for the response to be transmitted to the Special Rapporteurs.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the OHCHR assurances of its highest consideration.

2 July 2025



Special Procedures Branch
OHCHR
Geneva



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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENEVA**

AMBASSADOR

PMBG.UN2.10.2.2

2 July 2025

To:

1. Ms.Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders
2. Mr.Matthew Gillet, Vice-Chair on Communication of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
3. Ms.Gabriella Citroni, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
4. Ms.Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression,

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is with reference to the Joint Communication AL BTN 1/2025 dated 22 April 2025 concerning information received by the Special Procedures pertaining to an alleged case of deprivation of liberty and enforced disappearance.

In this regard, as shared earlier with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) in 2016 and 2017 and Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022, a thorough investigation was carried out when the case was brought to the attention of the Royal Government of Bhutan in 2016. All relevant agencies of the government were consulted, such as the Royal Bhutan Police, the Royal Bhutan Army, detention centers and prisons, the Ministry of Health and the Hospital in Wangdue Phodrang where he was reported to have been seen, escorted by police personnel. All concerned have confirmed that no such person had been encountered by them. The Home Ministry's records have confirmed that Mr. Lok Nath Acharya along with his parents and two brothers left Bhutan in 1992 and registered themselves as Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.

The Royal Government, therefore, reiterates that Mr.Lok Nath Acharya was neither arrested nor detained by the Bhutanese authorities, as alleged in the Joint Communication. The allegation that he was arrested by Bhutanese officials in Indian territory is indefensible as there is no way that Bhutan can carry out an arrest in a foreign country.

The above facts have been re-verified by the Royal Government of Bhutan. It may also be noted that in its Opinion No. 2/2017 (dated 30 May 2017), the WGAD concluded that based



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on the information received by the Working Group, it is not in a position to conclude that the case of Mr. Lok Nath Acharya falls within any of the categories of arbitrary deprivation of liberty applied by the WGAD.

The Royal Government of Bhutan would like to reaffirm that it has no knowledge of the whereabouts of Mr.Lok Nath Acharya and the allegation of Mr.Acharya's arrest by Bhutanese authorities is untrue.

With assurances of my highest consideration,



(Tenzin R Wangchuk)
Ambassador, Permanent Representative