

Address Removed

24<sup>th</sup> November 2008

talkSPORT  
18 Hatfields  
London  
SE1 8DJ

Dear Sirs

**MR JON GAUNT**

I am Honorary Lieutenant Tul Bahadur Pun VC, one of only 9 living Victoria Cross winners, and one of the 3 last surviving Gurkha VCs. I fought alongside Joanna Lumley's father, Major James Lumley, in Burma during World War II, and I was awarded the Victoria Cross by His Royal Highness King George VI, following my assault on a Japanese machine gun post on 23 June 1944. The Japanese position had slaughtered over 1,200 of my British Army brothers, and I was tasked with single-handedly taking out the enemy.

For many years as a retired soldier I lived in the mountains of Nepal and life had become very difficult for me. I had become blind and was suffering from serious heart problems. To receive my £135 per month British Army pension, or to get basic medical treatment, I had to be carried 4,000 feet down from my mountain home, strapped to a chair on the back of a Sherpa. The return journey took 2 days, and it took me a week to recover from the journey down my mountain. Last year, 2007, I applied to come and live in the UK, but was told by British visa officials in Nepal that I "did not have strong ties with the UK".

Mr Gaunt was the first radio presenter to air my plight to the British people. He took up and championed my right to come and live in the UK, as a Gurkha who had won the Victoria Cross. Mr Gaunt was one of the very first people to sign my petition on the Downing Street website, and ever since he has been one of the greatest friends to Gurkhas like me, whose only crime was to retire prior to 1997 and thus be banned from Britain (a country we dearly love).

With Jon Gaunt's campaigning and help, the British Government changed their mind in my case. In July 2007 I arrived in London. Shortly after, I suffered a massive heart attack and stroke. I was in the Critical Care Unit of a London hospital for many weeks, but I was lucky because had I still been stuck in my remote Nepali mountain-home, I would now be dead. In many ways, I feel I owe Jon Gaunt my life for bringing my case to the public's attention, and for highlighting the injustice we older Gurkhas have suffered. After I recovered, I was lucky enough to have a cataract operation on both my eyes and for the first time in 10 years I was able to see my beloved wife. My life has changed immensely and I have dedicated my remaining days to fight for the rights of my brother Gurkhas.

I was deeply saddened to learn that Jon Gaunt had been removed from his radio show on talkSPORT over comments he made to a British politician. I understand from the press that Mr Gaunt has apologised for what he said. However, I want you to know that from a Gurkha's point of view he is a good man and his good deeds campaigning for the Gurkhas should be taken into the balance when you consider this honourable man.

The Gurkhas have fought for the people of Britain, loyally, for 200 years. We are famously known as Britain's "faithful friends". Amongst the Gurkhas Mr Jon Gaunt is known as our most "faithful friend". Therefore, regardless of any transgression, I ask you to reconsider Jon Gaunt's many good deeds and the noble causes that he has championed. I may have won a Victoria Cross fighting for Britain during its most dangerous time in history, but Mr Gaunt was one of the first people to stand by me in my hour of need. He gave me a voice when I did not have a voice. He made people listen to my plight, and that of my Gurkha brothers, and brought hope to us in our campaign for justice. I feel it is my duty to stand by Jon Gaunt, now, in his hour of need.

I ask you, as an old soldier, to please reconsider your decision and reinstate Mr Jon Gaunt to his radio show. The Gurkhas miss our "loyal friend".

Yours faithfully

**Hon. Lt. Tul Bahadur Pun VC**