

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Nepal: Adoption of human rights agreement crucial**

Amnesty International today urged the government and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) to ensure as soon as possible the effective monitoring of human rights in the context of the prevailing cease-fire in the country.

"We are concerned by increasing reports of human rights abuses by both the security forces and members of the CPN (Maoist) and troubled that even though more than three and a half months have gone by since the declaration of cease-fire, still no effective monitoring mechanism has been put in place," Amnesty International said.

"We urge both parties to establish immediately a strong, independent and impartial monitoring mechanism."

The organization also urged that the monitoring mechanism be provided with the necessary powers and resources to carry out prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into any reported human rights abuses.

Amnesty International welcomed the initiative of the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRC) which had presented a draft human rights agreement to the government and the CPN (Maoist) last week.

"We have not yet seen the text of this draft and have requested the Chairman of the NHRC to provide us with a copy. This would allow our legal experts to examine it from a point of view of Nepal's treaty obligations and especially to verify whether the agreement will be able to address the kind of human rights abuses that have been and continue to be reported. Above all, it will be on the ground, in times of crisis, that it will be absolutely essential for the agreement to be workable and effective", Amnesty International said.

The organization has noted the appointment, on 9 May, of a 13-member monitoring committee for the Code of Conduct regulating the cease-fire which was adopted on 13 March 2003. It is concerned however about the confusion surrounding the terms of reference of this 13-member committee.

"Both parties should clarify the exact composition, mandate and powers of the monitoring mechanism -- both at the national and district level -- and its relation to any monitoring provisions put forward by the NHRC," Amnesty International said.

In separate communications, the organization also informed the Prime Minister and the leadership of the CPN-Maoist, of its intention to send a delegation to Nepal in early July 2003 to discuss these

concerns in more detail.

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