

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Nepal: Amnesty International urges international community to press for human rights at Nepal Development Forum

In the run up to the Nepal Development Forum (NDF), which opens tomorrow in Kathmandu, Amnesty International is calling on the donor community to place human rights at the centre of discussions.

Amnesty International believes that the NDF is a unique opportunity for the international community to demand real action from the Nepal government on human rights, building on the momentum generated at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April, where a Chairperson's Statement on "Human Rights Assistance to Nepal" was released.

"Nepal is facing a human rights crisis, with reports of widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions, hostage-taking, torture, "disappearances" and unlawful killings, perpetrated by both the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) and the military. Without urgent and comprehensive measures to address this situation and protect the basic human rights of the Nepali people, broader plans for social and economic development will become increasingly irrelevant and difficult to implement", said Amnesty International. "Therefore, delegates at the NDF must insist that human rights protection, monitoring and redress are central to all national development plans and donor assistance".

In particular, Amnesty International requests donor delegates to the NDF to:

Urge the Nepal government to sign the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which provides for technical assistance and capacity building to Nepal's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to enable it to take on an enhanced monitoring and protection role.

Insist that the Nepal government meet its existing human rights commitments, including those in the international treaties to which it is party and those contained in the government's "Commitment on the Implementation of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law", of 26 March. Delegates should highlight recent violations that are in clear breach of these commitments, for example arbitrary arrests and police violations during demonstrations, continued "disappearances" at the hands of the security forces, and requests that NHRC teams investigating complaints against the security forces include a representative from security forces in the investigation team.

Demand an end to impunity and the establishment of effective systems of redress for victims of human rights abuses. This must include strengthening the independence of the judiciary, and bringing perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice.

Background

Amnesty International has become increasingly concerned about the spiralling human rights crisis in Nepal. It has called on both the government and the CPN (Maoist) to abide by relevant international standards of human rights and humanitarian law, as well as their own stated commitments to human rights.

The NDF is a regular event that brings together representatives from government, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, and civil society to review national development plans and priorities. The last NDF, held in 2002, resulted in agreement on the framework of Nepal's 10th Plan/Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (2002-2007), which provides an overall structure for national development and donor assistance, as well as pledges by donors to help meet the annual US\$500m funding gap in the national budget required to implement the plan.