
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 19/95

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 25 JANUARY 1995

AI INDEX: NWS 11/19/95
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS: 458

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **NEPAL**: (this is being given to media attending an AGN in Nepal)

URGENT NOTE:

There is a mistake in the Colombia paragraph on the UN Commission on Human Rights news release (sent out on NS 19/95), so please ignore existing news release. A revised news release will be sent out shortly.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Sudan - 25 January - SEE NEWS SERVICES 275 AND 261

UN Commission on Human Rights - 31 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 06/95

Turkey - 8 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 261

Northern Iraq - 28 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 266

Women's Campaign - 8 March

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

News Service 19/95

AI INDEX: ASA 31/WU 01/95
25 JANUARY 1995

NEPAL: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA ANNOUNCED BY NEW GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International welcomes the newly-elected Government of Nepal's stated commitment to human rights in Nepal, but is urging that these pledges be followed by concrete action to substantially improve safeguards for human rights in Nepal.

"We particularly welcome the government's pledge to take steps towards forming a National Human Rights Commission, abolishing the death penalty and introducing legislation to provide compensation to torture victims," Amnesty International said.

The organization is calling on the government, among other things, to ratify international human rights and humanitarian standards.

For a number of years, Amnesty International has been concerned about torture and ill-treatment in police custody in Nepal, and is urging the Government of Nepal to introduce a law defining torture as a specific criminal offence. It is also calling on the government to make additional declarations under the United Nations (UN) Convention against Torture to recognize the competence of the UN Committee against Torture to consider complaints of alleged torture.

The human rights organization is also urging the government to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at abolishing the death penalty. Although prohibited under the 1990 Constitution of Nepal, provision for the death penalty remains in law.

Amnesty International also hopes the new government will address the issue of the people currently living in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal, many of whom the organization believes were forcibly exiled from Bhutan because of their ethnic origin or political beliefs. It is also urging the government to ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967.

Amnesty International is calling on the Nepali Congress Party and other opposition parties represented in parliament to ensure that initiatives for strengthening human rights protection in Nepal are in accordance with international human rights standards. The organization calls on all parties to consider improvements to human rights safeguards in a constructive light, regardless of which political party initiates such improvements.

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