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News Flash

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Nepal: Human rights monitors -- a matter of priority

Following reports of a break down of peace talks between the government and representatives of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist), Amnesty International today urged both sides to set up an independent human rights monitoring mechanism.

"Allegations of human rights abuses by both the CPN (Maoist) and the security forces during the cease-fire has led to a souring of the peace process," Amnesty International said. "In order to prevent an escalation -- now talks seem to have broken down -- it is paramount that independent monitors are deployed forthwith."

The organization has been lobbying both sides to sign a Human Rights Accord which would give the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) a mandate to set up five regional offices to monitor human rights with technical assistance provided by the United Nations (UN).

Background

The government and representatives of the CPN (Maoist) called a cease-fire on 29 January 2003. Two rounds of peace talks, with the aim of finding a solution to the seven year conflict or "people's war" launched by the CPN (Maoist) in February 1996, took place in April and May 2003. The Maoists listed a round table conference, an interim government and elections to a constituent assembly to draft a new Constitution among their central demands.

In the lead up to a third round of peace talks in mid-August between the government negotiating team and representatives of the CPN (Maoist), reports of cease-fire violations by both sides to the conflict escalated.

Amnesty International welcomed the appointment by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of a committee to investigate the alleged extrajudicial killings of 19 people by the army in Ramechhap district on 17 August, which it had called for in a public statement released on 22 August. The organization was also encouraged that two further committees had been appointed by the NHRC to investigate reports of cease-fire violations by the Maoists in a number of different districts. The organization called upon both parties to fully cooperate with the NHRC.

Public Document

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