



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL**



Press Release - 30 August 2006

On the Occasion of International Day of the Disappeared

On the occasion of International Day of the Disappeared OHCHR-Nepal renews its call to all parties to take steps to clarify the fate or whereabouts of, and establish accountability for, the hundreds of Nepali people who disappeared in the context of the armed conflict.

OHCHR-Nepal notes that the Ceasefire Code of Conduct agreed upon by the Government and the CPN-Maoist includes a provision in which both parties agree to make public “at the earliest” the whereabouts of citizens who have been disappeared. On 25 July, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Human Rights directed the Government to form an “all-powerful commission to solve the issue of disappearances once and for all”. OHCHR-Nepal similarly has recommended that an independent and impartial commission of inquiry be established, with adequate resources and full powers to investigate and clarify all cases of disappearances.

Cases which remain unclarified in Nepal today include the torture and disappearance of a group of over 40 detainees from Maharajgunj Army barracks in Kathmandu in 2003-2004, as documented in OHCHR-Nepal’s May 2006 report. The Government has not yet responded to this report and its recommendations. Some communities have been especially affected by disappearances, and OHCHR-Nepal is focusing investigations on over 100 cases of disappearances from 2002-2003 in Bardiya District. A large majority of those who disappeared are members of the Tharu community.

Unclarified, long-term abductions by the CPN-Maoist remain a major concern of OHCHR-Nepal. Between May 2005 and April 2006, OHCHR raised concerns about more than 150 cases of abductions by the CPN-Maoist. Among them were a number of teachers, members of District Development Committees and members of political parties. OHCHR-Nepal has received few responses to its appeals for clarification of the fate or whereabouts of these people.

“The Government and the CPN-Maoist must fulfill their commitments and responsibilities to clarify the fate or whereabouts of the missing. Disappearances are ongoing human rights violations, and the families of the disappeared have the right to know what happened to their loved ones, to justice and to receive compensation in the case of death. It is essential to end impunity for those who are responsible for cases of disappearance and thereby prevent future human rights violations.

“On this International Day of the Disappeared I would like to express OHCHR-Nepal’s solidarity with the families and friends of victims of disappearance, and to publicly recommit our Office to supporting efforts to determine the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones and to attain justice,” said David Johnson, Officer in Charge of OHCHR-Nepal.

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