



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



Press Release – 4 June 2007

OHCHR-Nepal welcomes Supreme Court's ground-breaking decision on disappearances

OHCHR-Nepal welcomes the Supreme Court's ground-breaking decision on 1 June 2007 in relation to a number of pending enforced disappearance cases. The decision included an order that the Government enact a law which would criminalize enforced disappearance in line with the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance; establish a high level commission of inquiry on disappearances in compliance with the international criteria on such commissions of inquiry; require investigations and prosecutions of persons responsible for disappearances; and provide for adequate compensation and relief to the victims and their families.

The decision is a significant step forward in recognizing the rights of victims of enforced disappearance and their families to truth, justice and reparations. OHCHR has repeatedly advocated for the setting up of an independent commission of inquiry to establish the whereabouts and fate of the disappeared. OHCHR-Nepal also reiterates its recommendation to the Government of Nepal that the "Disappearance Bill" which has been tabled before the Interim Legislature-Parliament be strengthened so that it is more fully in accordance with international human rights standards. On 25 May 2007, OHCHR-Nepal had presented its comments and recommendations on the Bill to the Speaker of the Interim Legislature-Parliament.

"The Supreme Court's historic decision is a highly positive development and must be fully and promptly implemented. It is hoped that this decision will boost the efforts of victims and their families in finding out what happened to their loved ones and in their pursuit of justice, as well as in ending impunity for persons responsible for serious human rights violations in Nepal," said Lena Sundh, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.