



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



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OHCHR condemns murder of journalist Birendra Sah

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal condemns the murder of journalist Birendra Sah. The killing was announced yesterday by the CPN-M on the basis of the findings of its probe committee. It is now imperative that the State authorities carry out a full and impartial investigation to prosecute those responsible, in accordance with the law and with international human rights standards. OHCHR-Nepal has noted assurances by the CPN-M that it will cooperate with the authorities; locating the body of Birendra Sah must be a priority in that regard.

OHCHR-Nepal has previously condemned the abduction and disappearance of Sah. In two meetings in October, and in a more recent letter, OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett told CPN-M leaders that the abduction and disappearance of Sah was unacceptable and an abuse of the rights to liberty and security of person.

OHCHR-Nepal notes CPN-M statements that the abduction and murder of Birendra Sah was not party policy. However, the abduction was one of the latest in a continuing pattern of abductions by CPN-M cadres. Taking individuals to undisclosed locations for interrogation, ill-treatment or worse violates the most basic of human rights principles.

Disappearances and killings are the worst consequences of such abusive practices, which undermine the commitments of the CPN-M to uphold human rights. OHCHR-Nepal has repeatedly raised these concerns with the CPN-M at all levels and is reiterating its call on the leadership to ensure that these practices cease.

Persistent impunity for human rights violations, abuses and other acts of violence by CPN-M cadres, State agents, illegal armed groups, and others has created a climate in which perpetrators act in the knowledge that they will not be held accountable. OHCHR-Nepal has repeatedly called for strong measures to end impunity and reestablish the rule of law.

“Journalists, like all individuals, have the right to conduct their daily activities in an environment of security and without fear of being threatened, abducted or physically harmed,” said OHCHR-Nepal Acting Representative Sandra Beidas. “It is essential that those responsible for the murder of journalist Birendra Sah be brought to justice. Prosecuting the perpetrators of all violations, abuses and other acts of violence sends a clear message that such practices are no longer tolerated.”