



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



Press release, 17 September 2009

OHCHR urges Government to address Kapilvastu violence two years on

17 September, Kathmandu,

The people of Kapilvastu and neighbouring districts of Dang and Rupandehi will never forget the violence of 16-21 September 2007 which was triggered by the murder of Mohid Khan, a local landowner. The subsequent clashes left a total of fourteen people dead and several thousand displaced. In addition, there was widespread destruction and looting of property, including five mosques and 200 houses. Victims and the families of those killed continue to express concern for their security and to demand that the perpetrators of the violence be held accountable.

The security situation in Kapilvastu has yet to fully return to normal although determined efforts in the past year by civil society organizations in the district have resulted in substantial improvements in inter-communal dialogue as well as understanding of and respect for human rights. On 16 and 17 September, OHCHR-Nepal supported the Awareness Campaign to Promote Peace, Justice and Communal Harmony organized in Kapilvastu by the Accountability Watch Committee and other partner organizations.

Unfortunately, the police have yet to properly investigate the crimes committed during the outbreak of violence, in particular investigations into the killings. In many cases the perpetrators have been identified by community members.

OHCHR on February 2009 published a report¹ on their investigations into the incidents and made detailed recommendations to the Government, including that thorough and impartial criminal investigations must be conducted and the Office stands by those recommendations. The report submitted by Government formed judicial commission has not made public yet.

“It is to the credit of the Kapilvastu community itself and others neighbouring, with the support of human rights defenders, that they have taken responsibility to improve communal understanding and harmony. Two years after the incidents, it is beyond time for the Government to match that effort by taking genuine steps to hold the perpetrators of the violence accountable,” said Richard Bennett, Representative of OHCHR Nepal.

¹ <http://nepal.ohchr.org/en/index.html>