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OHCHR-Nepal welcomes CPN (Maoist) unilateral ceasefire as positive opportunity for human rights

OHCHR-Nepal welcomes the announcement by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) of a three-month unilateral ceasefire. OHCHR-Nepal recalls that Secretary-General Kofi Annan has repeatedly called for a mutual cessation of hostilities and the establishment of lasting peace through an inclusive process of dialogue.

A new ceasefire offers a positive opportunity for the CPN(Maoist) to implement its commitment to human rights and humanitarian principles recently detailed in its Chairman's statement of 17 April 2006. This statement, as well as declaring general respect and commitment to principles and norms of international humanitarian and human rights law, contains specific pledges which, if implemented, would support political pluralism, and would end torture and secret or arbitrary detention, as well as the recruitment of children under 18 to the PLA. The statement further commits the CPN(Maoist) to cooperation with OHCHR-Nepal, and OHCHR-Nepal will intensify its engagement with the CPN(Maoist) at all levels to promote respect for the full spectrum of human rights and requirements of international humanitarian law.

“There are some key steps that the CPN-Maoist can take now that would make an important contribution to the protection of human rights in Nepal, and prove their commitment to live up to the undertakings of the 12-Point Understanding with the Seven-Party Alliance. Firstly, it should immediately release all civilians abducted and still held by them; secondly, it should ensure that its cadres do not pressure or intimidate civilians from different political parties, and so respect political pluralism; and thirdly, it should end actions it has taken against the families of security forces personnel.” said Ian Martin, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.

“At the same time, I will be urging the new government to abandon the use of TADO¹, which is in breach of international human rights standards, and to review immediately the cases of all those detained under its provisions.”

¹ Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Ordinance