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**OHCHR-Nepal concerned about arrest and detention of demonstrators in Kathmandu**

OHCHR-Nepal is concerned about the arrest of 28 Madhesi activists and political party members yesterday in Maitighar, Kathmandu. They were arrested for their involvement in the burning of part of a copy of the Interim Constitution, and 14 continue to be detained in Nepal Police custody under the authority of the Kathmandu District Administration Office.

The Nepal Police informed OHCHR-Nepal that the group had been arrested for acting against the interest of Nepalese people, but could not explain the legal basis for the arrests. Similarly, the District Administration Office informed OHCHR-Nepal that 14 persons would be detained for ten days pending investigation, but stated only that they had acted against the public interest in violation of the Public Offences Act. It has not been alleged that the group was disturbing the peace or obstructing public order.

The Government of Nepal is required under its international human rights obligations to respect the freedom of opinion and expression, which can only be restricted under highly limited circumstances. The arrest and detention appears to be a violation of these freedoms - freedoms which are enshrined in the new Interim Constitution of Nepal adopted earlier this week. In addition, OHCHR-Nepal's is concerned about the failure of the authorities to provide the legal basis for the arrests and continued detention.

“I am concerned that despite repeated requests the authorities were unable or unwilling to give an adequate explanation of the legal basis for the arrests and continued detention, including whether the burning of the constitution is a legal offence in itself. Freedom of expression must not be compromised by authorities other than in exceptional circumstances and in all such cases clear reasons should be given,” said Lena Sundh, Representative in Nepal of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.