



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



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**Failure to prosecute killers of Maina Sunuwar perpetuates culture of impunity –
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

GENEVA-The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights today marked the fourth anniversary of the killing of 15-year-old Maina Sunuwar with a call for further efforts to be made to combat impunity in Nepal.

Maina Sunuwar was tortured and killed in February 2004 while in the custody of the Nepalese Army. Her case has come to symbolize the fate of hundreds of other Nepalis who were disappeared, by both sides, during the decade-long armed conflict.

“Lack of accountability in this and numerous other cases is helping to perpetuate a culture of impunity in Nepal,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, who visited Nepal in January 2007. “And there is a danger this could become a barrier to achieving lasting peace.”

“Maina Sunuwar’s case presents a significant opportunity for the Government of Nepal to send a signal that the culture of impunity is ending,” she added. “The successful prosecution of those responsible for her murder will strengthen the rule of law and uphold victims’ rights to a remedy.”

In September 2007, Nepal’s Supreme Court directed the police to conduct an investigation and report back to the Court within three months. And on 31 January, the District Government Attorney’s Office duly submitted to the District Court in Kavre a charge sheet naming four accused. The Court subsequently issued summons for the accused to appear before it.

Arbour noted these developments, but stressed that more needs to be done if justice is to be served in this case. In particular, the Army needs to cooperate fully with the ongoing investigation.

The fate of many of the others who disappeared remains unknown. In June 2007, the Supreme Court ordered the Government to establish a commission of inquiry into disappearances and to enact a law making enforced disappearances a crime.

Arbour said her office, alongside other national and international human rights bodies, would continue to urge the Government to pursue initiatives that will provide victims and their families with truth, justice and redress in line with international standards.