



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



Press Release – 25 January 2008

OHCHR-Nepal reiterates its call for non-violent demonstrations and political rallies

On the eve of planned rallies in Janakpur and Nepalgunj, OHCHR -Nepal is reiterating its call to all concerned actors to exercise restraint and take the necessary steps to ensure that violence will not recur at this critical time in the peace process.

Law enforcement officials must balance respecting the right to freedom of assembly with their duty to protect the population. In the face of aggressive or violent demonstrators, any force used should be proportional to the level of threat. Leaders of protesting groups also have a responsibility to ensure that demonstrations are peaceful and that their supporters carry no sticks, guns or other weapons and refrain from intimidation. OHCHR-Nepal calls on all actors to respect the rights of journalists and human rights defenders to carry out their activities without threat of violence. Threats, attacks and abductions of civil servants are also unacceptable.

Political actors are urged to take all necessary protection measures to avoid exposing people under 18, including young children, to violence and to manipulation for political ends, as well as to stop minors from using violence themselves, as has been witnessed in recent days.

OHCHR is also concerned at the number of explosive devices which have been planted recently, including two following SPA rallies. These incidents only serve the interests of those who wish to spoil the peace process and must be stopped.

“I would like to insist once more that all actors come together in a spirit of tolerance and accommodation to ensure that the rights to freedom of assembly, opinion and association – central to any democratic process – are fully respected,” said OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett.