



**UNITED NATIONS
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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL**



Press Release – 20 December 2009

OHCHR-Nepal Urges Restraint

20 December, 2009, Kathmandu

OHCHR-Nepal expresses serious concern about the violence that erupted on Sunday 20 December on the first day of the general strike called by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M), especially at New Baneshwor, Kathmandu in the context of the Prime Minister's return to the country. A number of police and protesters were injured, some seriously, when police used force to remove protesters on the Prime Minister's planned route. After a calm morning, OHCHR-Nepal monitors observing the events at New Baneshwor witnessed the situation deteriorate rapidly after the DSP in command appeared to sustain a serious head injury when attacked by protesters. Thereafter, Police were observed to use excessive force on the crowd, including inappropriate use of lathis and tear gas, and even stone-throwing. Earlier, tensions were inflamed when police used a water cannon on protesters who were sitting passively on the road resulting in an aggressive response, including much stone-throwing by the demonstrators.

"I recognise the right of the Police to keep clear the public highways and the right of demonstrators to protest peacefully, however I call on all groups to exercise restraint, to avoid provocation and to reduce tension through dialogue. Today's display of violence was some of the worst on the streets of Kathmandu for several years, perhaps since Jana Andolan-II. It must not be repeated and those responsible should be held to account" said Richard Bennett, Representative of OHCHR-Nepal.

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