



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN NEPAL**

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United Nations in Nepal concerned about bandhs

Everyone in Nepal has the right to freedom of expression and assembly and the United Nations will continue to defend these important rights. If conducted peacefully, mass demonstrations and other voluntary forms of protest often constitute a legitimate means of political expression. In contrast, a growing culture of disruption seems to be on the rise in many regions of the country, a trend which does not augur well for sustaining the spirit of cooperation that is required to successfully conclude the peace process.

The bandh in the Kathmandu Valley on Monday was harshly enforced by organisers. This included numerous instances of intimidation and violence against members of the general public, in some cases by minors. In addition, journalists, human rights defenders and staff of humanitarian agencies were prevented from carrying out their activities. They should not be impeded in their important work.

“I urge all bandh organisers to ensure that violence and intimidation are not used to prevent freedom of movement and obstruct other people’s rights,” said UN Resident Coordinator Robert Piper. “I remind bandh organisers that the very presence of human rights defenders, for example, helps to ensure that their rights to peaceful protest are also respected.”

For further information contact