



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



**Briefing with the media on OHCHR-Nepal's Agreement with the
Government of Nepal, 17 June 2009**

OHCHR-Nepal has had its agreement with the government extended for three months **for now**. Both the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister's International Affairs Advisor have told OHCHR that the Government will discuss a longer agreement soon after the government is formed.

OHCHR came to Nepal during the conflict, but its agreement with the government was not limited to investigating conflict-related violations such as disappearances. This mandate, which was renewed in 2007 includes:

- Monitor the observance of human rights and international humanitarian law throughout the country, including by carrying out investigations.
- Advise the authorities on policies, programmes and measures to promote and protect human rights.
- Submit analytic reports to the Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly.
- Provide support to the NHRC, other national institutions and civil society
- The Comprehensive Peace Agreement also includes an provision whereby OHCHR will continue to monitor the human rights components of the peace agreement

OHCHR does not plan to be in Nepal indefinitely. The confidence of ourselves and others that the required level of human rights protection in Nepal can be provided without us will be the main criterion for our departure as a country office. OHCHR will support Nepal in the longer term as well but perhaps not with a Country Office.

OHCHR considers it can add value by continuing to ensure the protection of human rights in the peace process, including by providing advice when requested about human rights in the constitution and also through supporting transitional justice initiatives. Impunity remains a key concern and OHCHR will support efforts to strengthen the rule of law and see significant steps taken towards ending impunity.

NHRC has been designated the constitutional body for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nepal. OHCHR supports this status, and is devoted to strengthening the NHRC. We are not competing with the NHRC or any other organisation working for human rights in Nepal: there is enough work for all of us. OHCHR continues working with the NHRC. This includes monitoring, such as in Ramechhap (May) and Sindhupalchok (June); capacity building, eg. workshops on human rights investigation and documentation; grant support e.g \$50,000 project on detention.

OHCHR and NHRC developed and signed *Guidelines for Cooperation* in February. They did not change the mandate of either organisation. The guidelines say that OHCHR will no longer investigate new cases, but can continue to investigate conflict-related cases or in the event that there is a dramatic change in the human rights situation. We are now discussing how those guidelines should work in practice.

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