



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



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United Nations calls for restraint during upcoming protests

29 April, 2010 Kathmandu

In the light of the programme of protests announced by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN-M), the United Nations Human Rights Office in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) urges all actors – the UCPN-M, the Government and the Security Forces – to exercise the highest level of restraint to prevent violence amid a tense political environment.

The right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are central to the principles of democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights – the very foundations of Nepal’s peace process.

The UCPN-M is urged to ensure that demonstrators do not engage in any form of provocation, confrontation or hostile behavior, including wielding *laathis* and other weapons that could cause bodily harm. In this context the UCPN-M has a special responsibility to ensure that children are not put in harm’s way.

While recognizing the duties and responsibilities of the state and its agencies to maintain the rule of law, OHCHR calls upon the security and the law enforcement agencies to uphold human rights and respect international standards for law enforcement.

OHCHR stresses the need for significant steps to be taken by all political parties to address the country’s political problems consistent with the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to take every possible measure to avoid the possibility of violence and human rights violations.

OHCHR has been meeting with leaders to obtain their commitment to the observance of peaceful means of protest on the part of the Maoists and respect for human rights in enforcing rule of law by the state agencies and will be monitoring the demonstrations in the Kathmandu valley and elsewhere.

“I urge the Government of Nepal to ensure that fundamental rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are fully respected and protected. Equally, the organizers of the protest programmes must ensure that the demonstrators behave calmly and respect the rights of others, including the general public,” said OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett.