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UN congratulates NHRC's initiative on exhumation of suspected burial site in Dhanusha

Kathmandu - The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) congratulates the significant achievement of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in leading an exhumation in Dhanusha into the suspected burial site of five students who were allegedly the victims of enforced disappearance during the armed conflict in Nepal. An exhumation team under the leadership of the NHRC experts and consisting of the Nepal Police, national and international forensic experts, with the support from OHCHR, have found human remains of four persons. The exhumation has been temporarily closed on Saturday to be resumed at a later stage to search for the remains of the fifth person allegedly disappeared.

The human remains found are extremely useful for experts to conduct a DNA analysis in order to determine the identity of the persons buried and to eventually help clarify these cases of enforced disappearances. The Supreme Court of Nepal in February 2009, ordered the Nepal Police to register a First Information Report (FIR) and to proceed with investigation into the Dhanusha disappearances but no progress had been achieved so far in the implementation of this decision.

“This exhumation is a vital step forward to advance transitional justice and accountability on a key emblematic case of human rights violation related to the conflict. By acting upon the request of families of the disappeared, the NHRC has respected the victims’ right to truth and strengthened their hope for realizing their right to justice,” said Jyoti Sanghera, Acting Head of OHCHR-Nepal, "I welcome this commendable undertaking by the NHRC and the support extended by the Nepal Police as well as by the Government. Space has now opened up to implement critical verdicts of the Supreme Court of Nepal in relation to human rights violations committed during the conflict.”

The support by the UN Human Rights Office for this exhumation included monitoring, technical and other logistical assistance. OHCHR views its inclusion in the exhumation team and its contribution, as an important step in its cooperation with the NHRC and hopes that it will be further strengthened in the future.