



Statement to the Press

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United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Good afternoon,

I am very happy to be here again in Nepal, and look forward to six days of fruitful work. The purpose of my visit is to show my direct support for human rights and the peace process in Nepal, both to the Government and the people of Nepal.

Since my last visit to Nepal in January 2005, significant changes have taken place. Bringing an end to the 11-year conflict has been a great achievement, and the process of building lasting peace and an inclusive democracy is a great challenge.

Further, it is a credit to the people and government of Nepal that they sought assistance in this process, including through asking me to establish an Office in Nepal, which we did in May 2005. I want to affirm that my Office will continue to work with all the people of Nepal to ensure that the protection and promotion of human rights remains at the centre of this process.

In the coming days I will be meeting with members of the Government, including Prime Minister Koirala, as well as the Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and a number of other political parties. I will also meet with victims of human rights violations, and groups representing victims and their families, as well as the broad human rights community and other civil society representatives.

I am looking forward to making two trips outside Kathmandu, to Nepalgunj and Bardiya in the Mid-Western Region and to Sindapulchowk in the Central Region. Monitoring the human rights situation in communities where they are most vulnerable will continue to be among the highest priorities of my Office in Nepal.

I will also focus on three issues we consider essential to the protection and promotion of human rights in this transitional period: ending impunity for serious human rights violations, including the need to resolve all outstanding cases of disappearances; the need for a well-functioning law enforcement and criminal justice system as an essential means of strengthening human rights protection; and the need to address long-standing discrimination and social exclusion.

The conflict has ended, but Nepal faces important human rights challenges in this period of transition. My visit to Nepal is part of the commitment of my Office to fulfill its responsibility to work with the Government and people of Nepal to help meet those challenges.

In the coming days I will be available to the media at a number of events, and I will give a more detailed press conference before I depart.

Thank you.