



New York, 5 April 2006 - Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on Nepal

The Secretary-General is concerned about the confrontation developing in Nepal, where the Government has imposed a ban on protests in Kathmandu on the eve of planned demonstrations by the Seven-Party Alliance. He is also troubled by reports of a large number of arrests of government opponents. While maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the State, security considerations should not be the basis for denying citizens their right to peaceful protest -- a right for which virtually all avenues seem to be closing.

In the context of stated security considerations, the Secretary-General notes the recent announcement by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) that it has suspended military activity in the Kathmandu Valley. He urges the Maoists to take further steps to fulfill the commitments they have publicly made.

The Secretary-General appeals to all sides in Nepal to work towards ending the conflict through a reciprocal ceasefire agreement.