



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



PRESS RELEASE – 8 April 2006

Excessive Use of Force

OHCHR-Nepal expresses grave concern at reports of shooting into a crowd of demonstrators by the Royal Nepalese Army in Pokhara today, resulting in the death of one person and the injury of at least one other.

The shooting by a soldier from the top of a building at demonstrators throwing stones at police in the street below, killing one person on the spot, is in clear violation of international standards for law enforcement which require that "(i)n the dispersal of violent assemblies, law enforcement officials may use firearms only when less dangerous means are not practicable and only to the minimum extent necessary". From OHCHR's investigations, it is clear that the soldier resorted to excessive force in a situation where there was no direct threat to life.

Recent days have seen non-violent demonstrations challenging Government bans and curfews, and some aggressive demonstrations including throwing of rocks, bricks and other projectiles, and attacks on public property.

OHCHR-Nepal reiterates its call for the use of minimum force required by those responsible for policing during public demonstrations. Ian Martin, the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated:

“It is essential that Government requires members of the security forces to observe their obligation to minimise use of force and firearms in the current context of demonstrations. The use of force against peaceful demonstrators is not acceptable. In the case of demonstrations involving aggressive throwing of rocks, bricks and other projectiles, security forces must exercise restraint and as far as possible use less dangerous means than firearms, so that they respect and preserve human life.”