



UNITED NATIONS

Press Release

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT CRACKDOWN ON DEMONSTRATORS IN NEPAL

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20 April 2006

The following statement was issued today by United Nations human rights experts, whose names appear below:

"We are gravely concerned at the escalating wave of violence surrounding pro-democracy demonstrations throughout Nepal in recent days.

We are aware of numerous incidents in which disproportionate and excessive use of force has resulted in demonstrations descending into violent clashes with members of the police and Armed Police Force, with protestors attacking them with stones and projectiles, and with serious injuries being sustained by police officers.

While we call upon demonstrators to exercise their right to protest peacefully, we strongly condemn the excessive and deadly use of force by members of the security forces against protestors and innocent bystanders. The law enforcement agencies have resorted to indiscriminate firing of rubber bullets - even on occasion live ammunition - into crowds, beatings, raids on homes and destruction of property. Scores of bystanders and demonstrators, including women, children, journalists and lawyers have been identified among the casualties. It is unacceptable that peaceful protestors, including many human rights defenders, have been arbitrarily detained for participating in non-violent demonstrations.

We call upon the Government to exercise restraint in policing demonstrations; to guarantee fundamental human rights for all, including the rights to life; to physical and psychological integrity; to not be arbitrarily deprived of one's liberty; and to freedoms of opinion, expression, association, and assembly."

The experts are:

Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions; Hina Jilani, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders; Ambeyi Ligabo, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Manfred Nowak, Special Rapporteur on Torture; and Leïla Zerrougui,

Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

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