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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL**



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**OHCHR Indigenous and Minorities team visits Nepal**

A team from the OHCHR Indigenous and Minorities Unit (IMU) of the OHCHR headquarters in Geneva completed a week-long mission to Nepal today, after having met with indigenous and minority groups in Kathmandu and the regions.

Fiona Blyth-Kubota and Pablo Espiniella of the IMU and OHCHR-Nepal held meetings with NGOs and civil society groups in Kathmandu, and participated in two workshops outside the capital: in Lahan, in the Eastern Region, on Dalits and access to justice, with Dalit activists as well as lawyers, journalists, human rights NGOs, police and local authorities; and in Bardiya, in the Mid-Western region, with a group of over 30 Tharu women discussing their human rights concerns and how to address them. The team also visited a community of ex-Kaimayas in Bardiya District.

The workshops took place at a time when OHCHR-Nepal is increasing its focus on human rights related to social inclusion, and in particular the need to address these issues in the context of the peace process.

The purpose of the two regional workshops was to examine in more detail the issues confronting some of the most marginalised communities in Nepal, and to discuss ways of addressing this discrimination with activists and members of those communities.

“In the workshop with Dalit activists from Siraha and Saptari Districts, the team heard the clear message that now is the time for Nepal to address, at all levels, discrimination and its terrible impact on the lives of Dalit people. With Tharu women, we heard both of the impact of the conflict and how Tharu communities were targeted with human rights abuses – and especially the ongoing impact of disappearances of members of the Tharu community. We also heard of the impact of the marginalisation of this indigenous community on its social, cultural and economic rights and of their determination that the process of democratic transition should address these rights,” said Kieran Dwyer, Spokesperson of OHCHR-Nepal.

The IMU team concluded its visit with meetings with Dalit representatives in Kathmandu, and with international agencies working with indigenous and Dalit communities. OHCHR-Nepal will follow-up these workshops with ongoing work in the particular districts, and with further activities at the local and national level aimed at addressing the issues of discrimination and human rights of marginalised people in Nepal.

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