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

Press Release - 31 January 2006

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OHCHR-Nepal repeats its call to CPN (Maoist) leadership

OHCHR-Nepal repeated today its call to the leadership of the CPN(Maoist) to state publicly and to all its cadres that it is against its policy to harm unarmed civilians, including electoral candidates, in violation of their right to life and physical integrity.

Ian Martin, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal, said:

> "I regret that the Maoist leadership has been silent since I urged them to condemn the killing of Mr. Bijay Lal Das in Janakpur on 22 January. This silence calls into question the commitment expressed by Party Chairman Prachanda that physical action against unarmed individuals had been halted, and the assurance given to me recently that this would apply to candidates and officials in the municipal elections."

In addition to the killing of Mr. Das, OHCHR-Nepal immediately requested information from the CPN(M) about the abduction on 25 January of Mr. Ram Kumar Tharu, prospective mayoral candidate in Gulariya, Bardiya District; no response has yet been received. OHCHR-Nepal condemns the shooting yesterday of Mr. Dal Bahadur Rai, deputy mayoral candidate in Lalitpur. It calls for the CPN(M) to state whether its cadres were responsible in each of these cases, which have occurred in the context of several threatening statements by local CPN(M) representatives, including the 28 January press statement by Mr Prabhakiran on behalf of the CPN(M)'s Valley Bureau threatening "the most serious consequences" to those filing candidacy or participating in the elections.

“The response of the CPN (Maoist) leadership to my request for clarification will be an indication of their commitment to respect international human rights and humanitarian law”, Ian Martin concluded.

OHCHR-Nepal also deplores all other violence or threats of violence against candidates aimed at coercing them to withdraw, or not withdraw, from the electoral process.

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