



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



Press Release – 19 January 2008

OHCHR-Nepal condemns bus bombing in Bara District; urges non-violent demonstrations and political rallies

OHCHR-Nepal condemns the bombing Friday of a bus in Bara District, which killed at least seven people and injured many others. The Office offers condolences to the families of the victims, and urges security officials to take swift action to bring to justice members of the Tarai Army, which has claimed responsibility for the bombing.

The incident occurred one year after the start of the *Madheshi Andolan*, which ended in the deaths of at least 24 people, and on the eve of a series of planned rallies and demonstrations in the Tarai relating to the upcoming Constituent Assembly elections. OHCHR-Nepal is calling on all concerned actors to exercise restraint and take the necessary steps to ensure that violence will not recur at this critical time in the peace process.

Law enforcement officials must balance respecting the right to freedom of assembly with their duty to protect the population. In the face of aggressive or violent demonstrators, any force used should be proportional to the level of threat.

Leaders of protesting groups also have a responsibility to ensure that demonstrations are peaceful and that their supporters carry no sticks, guns or other weapons. OHCHR-Nepal calls on all actors to respect the rights of journalists and human rights defenders to carry out their activities without threat of violence. At the same time, they are urged to take all necessary protection measures to avoid exposing young people under 18 to violence, or to manipulation for political ends.

Constituent assembly elections are an essential step in the peace process towards creating a more equal and representative Nepal. OHCHR-Nepal urges the Government to establish an authentic participatory dialogue and confidence-building measures in the Tarai as important ways of addressing genuine grievances related to the rights to non-discrimination, participation and representation of all marginalized groups, including Madheshis, Dalits and Janajatis/Adivasis.

Armed groups that claim to be pursuing political objectives must immediately end criminal activities such as killings, abductions, bombings and extortion, as well as threats and intimidation, and use peaceful means to achieve their stated objectives. Such activities are having a serious impact on the human rights of others and on establishing an environment conducive to free and fair Constituent Assembly elections.

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In addition, credible investigations still need to be carried out to determine the facts surrounding the killings which occurred during the *Madheshi Andolan*, which should result in prosecution of those responsible.

“The *Madheshi Andolan* was a critical event that regrettably ended in the killings of at least 24 people and injuries to many more. Such violence must not be repeated. The Government has pledged to ensure participation of marginalized groups in the Constituent Assembly elections and in the general State machinery. I urge all these actors to come together in a spirit of co-operation to ensure human rights are respected and to move the peace process forward,” said OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett.