



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



Press Release – 17 March 2008

**OHCHR-Nepal urges the Government to respect the rights to assembly
and expression**

OHCHR-Nepal is very concerned that Nepal Police appear to have dispersed, in some instances with excessive use of force, peaceful protests that have taken place in front of the United Nations building in Kathmandu in recent days.

The right to peaceful assembly as well as the right to freedom of expression are guaranteed under international law. However, on at least two occasions the exercise of these rights appears to have been unduly restricted. Moreover, OHCHR human rights officers have observed police lathi-charging and using tear-gas on peaceful demonstrators who were protesting current incidents taking place in Lhasa. A number of demonstrators have been injured as a result of police actions.

OHCHR is seeking clarification from the Government about the instructions given to police as well as the apparent excessive use of force by police officers against protesters. The Office's human rights officers will continue to monitor events and interview individuals involved, including those injured by the use of force.

“I urge the Government to respect its obligations under international human rights law and to uphold the fundamental rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression,” said Richard Bennett, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Robert Piper added, “At no time have police been requested by the UN to intervene in peaceful protests in front of UN House.”