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OHCHR-Nepal encourages government to take steps to end *Kamalari* practices and undertake search for missing girls and women

OHCHR-Nepal notes with concern that no concrete steps have been taken to end the practice of *Kamalari*, by which adolescent girls from poor Tharu families are sent to work in private homes, where they are at risk of severe exploitation, including sexual exploitation. This is despite a Supreme Court order of 10 September 2006 to effectively implement existing law that prohibits child exploitation, including the *Kamalari* system,

On 6 January, OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett received a 10-member delegation representing 600 *Kamalaris* from the Mid and Far Western regions. They are in Kathmandu to campaign for the implementation of the Supreme Court decision and for the liberation and rehabilitation of all *Kamalaris*, as well as clarification of the fate of *Kamalaris* who have gone missing and justice for those who have been subject to sexual or other kinds of exploitation. The campaign is also calling for an end to the practice of contracting *Kamalaris* during the Tharu festival of *Maghi*, which is celebrated in mid-January.

OHCHR-Nepal's Mid Western Regional Office has been supporting the Civil Society Network in Dang to end the practice of *Kamalari* and support former *Kamalaris* and their families. The support includes enhancing understanding and knowledge of the international human rights framework, sharing advocacy tools, improving information sharing and monitoring emblematic cases of human rights violations.

“It is clear that parents send their daughters to be *Kamalaris* as a last resort when they are under extreme pressure to settle debts; many of them end up being trafficked,” said Bennett. “I urge the Government to take concrete steps to prohibit this practice, search for the missing *Kamalaris*, and provide for rehabilitation to those who have been victims of this practice.”

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