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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL**



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Kalikot Clashes – International Humanitarian Law and Civilians

The Representative in Nepal of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Ian Martin, reiterated this afternoon his concern that international humanitarian law must be fully respected in the context of recent clashes between the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) forces in Kalikot District.

“I am very concerned for the safety of the civilian population in the vicinity of the fighting and, once again, urge both parties to respect international humanitarian law. This requires that every effort is made to protect civilians, as well as persons who are no longer taking part in hostilities,” he said.

Mr. Martin said that, through direct contact with the CPN (Maoist) leadership as well as through the media, he had called upon the CPN (Maoist) to treat captured RNA personnel in accordance with international standards. “I welcome the public assurance that this will be the case and that those captured will be released.”

The High Commissioner’s Representative also referred to RNA allegations that a number of surrendering soldiers had been executed and that some were mutilated by the CPN (Maoist), and the CPN (Maoist) denial of these allegations. An OHCHR monitoring team had earlier viewed fourteen of the dead at Birendra Military Hospital in Kathmandu.

“These allegations need to be carefully verified. If confirmed, they would be very serious violations of international law,” Mr. Martin emphasized. “I therefore urge the RNA to ensure that a full forensic examination of the victims is conducted by qualified, independent experts.”
