

## Profile: Advocacy Forum (Nepal), ICJ Affiliated Organisation

Established in 2001, Advocacy Forum is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to contest impunity and promote human rights and rule of law in Nepal. It seeks a fair, efficient and accessible justice system in Nepal. Advocacy Forum became an ICJ Affiliated Organization in 2003. Working closely with the ICJ Asia-Pacific Programme and many other international human rights NGOs, Advocacy Forum has become one of the leading human rights organizations in the country.

Committed to respecting and trusting the core values, principles and guidelines of the UN human rights system, the organization's main objectives in Nepal are:

- Curbing the deep-rooted culture of impunity for the perpetrators of human rights violations,
- Increasing access to justice to victims of human rights violations,
- Developing a proactive and cost-effective legal aid system,
- Reforming structural weaknesses in the criminal justice system and improving the judicial system,
- Contributing to create a culture that respects human rights and rule of law.

Advocacy Forum is engaged, through its five departments, in the following major activities:

- Documenting and monitoring human rights violations: in 2005-06 Advocacy Forum documented 2837 cases of human rights violations ranging from extra-judicial executions to illegal detentions,



- rape and torture.
- Monitoring the custodial system, including detention centres and addressing issues such as detention conditions and legal aid to detainees.
- Monitoring the impact of the conflict on children's rights (addressing issues such as child abduction, attacks on schools, threats and violations of children's integrity and dignity) and promoting a juvenile justice system.
- Providing legal aid in a wide range of cases concerning human rights violations and strengthening the criminal justice system. On 15 October, Advocacy Forum launched a program on Transitional Justice.
- International lobbying and advocacy.

Mandira Sharma, Advocacy Forum's Executive Director, recently received Human Rights Watch (HRW) highest honor. HRW recognized her "remarkable personal courage" by continuing the organization's work, notwithstanding the government's threats and harassments.

Advocacy Forum has proven to be a dedicated and pro-active organization, which has clearly made a difference in Nepal. Through the years, it has shown its ability to expand and manage an increasing number of issues, thus setting a forward looking trend in the effective protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

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