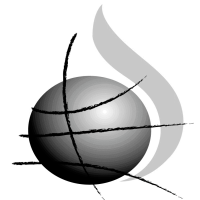




Amnesty International



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INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION
OF JURISTS

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

24 November 2003

IMMEDIATE

NGOS AND GOVERNMENTS SAY HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING URGENTLY NEEDED IN NEPAL

Seven international human rights organisations have strongly endorsed the call by the Nepal's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and eight Governmental donor agencies and Embassies in Kathmandu for international monitoring of the human rights situation in Nepal and have urged the international community to fully support this appeal. The organisations, Amnesty International, the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), Human Rights Watch (HRW), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) also have called on the Government of Nepal to extend invitations to visit the country to the human rights experts of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

On 18 November, the NHRC issued a call for United Nations human rights experts, including those charged with examining arbitrary detention and torture, to visit the country. The NHRC has presented a proposal for a Human Rights Accord to the Government and the Maoist rebels which would provide for five NHRC regional monitoring units in the country to operate in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In a joint statement of 18 November, the Canadian Embassy, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the French Embassy, the German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Royal Danish Embassy, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Netherlands Development Organisation have expressed concern about "the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation" and declared that there is an "urgent need" for the Government and the Maoist rebels to sign the proposed Human Rights Accord.

The Nepal Bar Association and many Nepalese human rights organisations have made similar calls for an international monitoring presence.

Background

Since the breakdown of peace talks in August, the incidents of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detentions in Nepal have risen dramatically. A large number of persons have been held incommunicado in army barracks. Officers at army barracks have been refusing to accept habeas corpus notices issued by the Nepal Supreme Court, on behalf of detainees.

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The Government of Nepal has recently sought to undermine the independent NHRC by proposing the establishment of a parallel human rights unit directly under the supervision of the Prime Minister. Army officials have challenged the NHRC over the findings by its independent experts that at least 19 unarmed persons were extra-judicially executed by army personnel in Ramechhap District on 17 August 2003.

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