



# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

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## **Nepal: Government and Maoists must declare indefinite ceasefires**

On the day the Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist, extended a unilateral ceasefire for one month, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) called on both sides to the conflict in Nepal to declare indefinite ceasefires and take the next steps towards peace.

"The Maoists' one month ceasefire extension is a small step but far from enough. The people of Nepal are suffering gravely at the hands of the Maoists and the Government and deserve more. Both sides should now declare indefinite ceasefires to allow for progress towards a genuine peace agreement that respects human rights and restoration of a constitutional, democratic government", said Nicholas Howen, Secretary-General of the ICJ.

The extension of the Maoist ceasefire comes ten days after the 22 November Letter of Understanding between the Maoists and the alliance of seven Nepali parliamentary parties, which pledged full respect for "multi-party democracy, civil liberties, human rights (and) the concept of the rule of law", including freedom of the press and freedom for other political parties to be active in Maoist-controlled areas.

"I welcome this agreement and its human rights commitments. It is up to the Maoists to show that this time they are serious about implementing their paper pledges, including taking swift action whenever abuses are reported", commented Nicholas Howen.

The agreement sets out steps towards the restoration of democracy and accepts that the conflict can only be resolved through dialogue involving all Nepalis. It envisages a role for the UN or "any other reliable international supervision" to monitor the armed forces of both sides during elections to a constituent assembly, and recognises the need for international mediation.

"The ceasefire extension and the Maoist-political parties agreement create a unique opportunity. If the Government is serious about restoring peace and democracy it should declare its own ceasefire and embrace the steps set out in the agreement", said Nicholas Howen.

The ICJ also welcomed the statement of the meeting of a group of Nepal's development donors on 23 November 2005 which expressed continuing concern at violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by both sides of the conflict and called on all actors to commit to a durable ceasefire as a first step to a wider peace process.

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The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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