



# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

*" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "*

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## **P R E S S R E L E A S E** ICJ calls on Government of Nepal and Maoists to respect journalists on Global Day of Action for Press Freedom in Nepal

In support of the Global Day of Action for Press Freedom in Nepal the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) today called on the Government of Nepal to lift legal restrictions on media freedoms and to immediately take measures to end intimidation, censorship, and unlawful detention of journalists. The ICJ also called on the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) to cease immediately attacks on journalists.

“A strong, free and independent media is an essential element of a vibrant democracy. Yet the harassment, intimidation and censorship of journalists that followed the imposition of the state of emergency on 1 February have continued even after the emergency was formally lifted on 30 April”, said Nicholas Howen, ICJ Secretary-General.

“The ongoing restrictions are in clear violation of Nepal’s Constitution and obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including the right to seek, receive and impart information,” said Nicholas Howen.

Those targeted recently include the editors of Kantipur Publications and the Kathmandu Post, who were summoned by the Chief District Officer of Kathmandu, after publishing a cartoon about constitutional monarchy on 21 August. On 25 August the Minister for Information and Communication reportedly stated that the Government has initiated action against them for publishing an “objectionable” cartoon.

In another case, on 3 August the Government initiated a procedure to cancel the license of Nepal FM, a leading FM station, after it allegedly broke a ban on the airing of news on FM radio. The case was taken to the Supreme Court, which has issued an interim order to stop the licence cancellation until the court produces its final verdict. In its order, the Supreme Court reportedly noted that a ban would impact on people’s right to information.

The ICJ has also received reports of abductions, harassment and threats against journalists by the Maoists. Earlier this month, the Maoists banned the reporting and sale of Blast Times Daily, a regional publication, and accused it of publishing stories against the Maoists. In the past, the Blast Times Daily has received threats from the security forces.

“Journalists in Nepal, especially in the districts, are caught between the unacceptable actions of the Maoists and the Government. Both parties in the conflict must give journalists space to carry out their work without fear or intimidation,” said Nicholas Howen.

The ICJ paid tribute to the many journalists who have continued to report on human rights abuses by both sides in spite of the restrictions and harassment they face. The organization

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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also called on the international community to take urgent measures to provide support to those journalists forced to leave Nepal as a result of fears for their personal safety and to assist the 2000 journalists who have reportedly become unemployed as a result of the governments restrictions on the media.

**For further information please contact Susan Appleyard, +4122 979 3800**

**For background information on the Global Day of Action for Press Freedom in Nepal please contact the International Federation of Journalists ([ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)) or visit their website [www.ifj.org](http://www.ifj.org).**