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## **OHCHR Field Missions in Nepal: Not at the expense of democracy**

**(The 10<sup>th</sup> weekly briefing paper on the key human rights concerns in  
Nepal from 7 – 13 April 2005)**

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## 1. MoU with OHCHR: Not a stamp of legitimacy on the coup

As Nepalese Foreign Minister Ram Nath Pandey signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour a few hours before the expiry of the deadline for submission of the draft resolutions on country situations under item 9 of the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission on Human Rights on 11 April 2005, King Gyanendra tightened his grip on power by appointing five regional administrators for the country's five development regions and 14 zonal administrators to replace bureaucrats.<sup>1</sup> He also extended the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Ordinance for another six months.<sup>2</sup>

Under the MoU, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will set up field offices at the regional level in Nepal to "monitor the observance of human rights and international humanitarian law, bearing in mind the climate of violence and the internal armed conflict in the country". Based on the information collected by the field offices, the High Commissioner for Human Rights will submit periodic reports on any human rights violations committed by the Security forces and the Maoists to the Commission on Human Rights, the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General. The OHCHR will

also advise His Majesty's Government on matters related to the promotion and protection of human rights in Nepal and will provide advisory services and human rights support to representatives of civil society, human rights non-governmental organizations and individuals.<sup>3</sup>

The establishment of field offices by the OHCHR is an important step to report to the international community about the gross human rights violations in the country. However, international community must be mindful of the fact that for the government of Nepal it is a ploy to avoid censure by the international community against the coup. The government of Nepal had earlier failed to implement its 25 point commitments on human rights made on 26 March 2004 as well as the statement of the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights of April 2004.

### The process of reinstatement of the Panchayati system:

After the *coup d'état* on 1 February 2005, King Gyanendra took a series of measures to take full control over the administration of the country. King Gyanendra brought alive the fossils such as Tusli Giri, Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers, from the Panchayat era who had taken retirement from active public life.

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<sup>1</sup> . HM appoints Regional, zonal administrators, The Kathmandu Post, 12 April 2005

<sup>2</sup> . Nepal King extends anti-terrorist law, The Indian Express, 12 April 2005

<sup>3</sup> .

<http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/NewSRoom?OpenFrameSet>

On 17 February 2005, King Gyanendra set up the Royal Commission on Corruption Control (RCCC) undermining the existing bodies such as the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA). Mr Bhakta Bahadur Koirala who was the Secretary of Home Affairs during the repression of the People's Movement of 1990 and was found to be the most culpable by the Mallik Commission that inquired into human rights violations during pro-democracy uprisings in 1990s was appointed as the Chairperson. The Supreme Court judges too were brought under the ambit of the Royal Commission on Corruption Control.

A month later on 17 March 2005, King Gyanendra delivered the final assault on the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRC) by forming a *cover up* high-level nine-member Human Rights Committee headed by the Attorney General. The nine-member committee will include the secretaries of the Ministries for Home, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Secretaries of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Education and the National Director at the Human Rights Promotion Centre are also in the committee. The Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers is the committee's member- secretary.

With Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Nepal, Justice Hari Prasad Sharma wholeheartedly supporting the February 1 royal move "to rectify bad governance, eradicate corruption and instill transparent public life" at the 11th

conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific held on 20 to 24 March 2005 in Australia<sup>4</sup>, King Gyanendra did not require to make any interference with the judiciary.

On 25 March 2005, King Gyanendra innocuously promulgated the Local Administration Fifth Amendment Ordinance 2061 to revive the post of 14 *Anchaladhishes*, the chief administrators of 14 anchals, regions -mainly political appointees abolished after the 1990 movement. There was no hue and cry.<sup>5</sup>

On 11 April 2005, King Gyanendra made the final move to take full control of administration of the country by appointing five regional administrators for the country's five development regions as well as the zonal administrators in the 14 administrative zones to replace bureaucrats.

The King has appointed former *Anchaladhis* (zonal commissioner during panchayat-time) as the new regional governors:

- Jagadish Khadka in the eastern region
- Rabindra Chakrabarti, former Royal Nominee in the upper house, for the central region and
- Mr Chhatra Bikram Malla, former Army officer,

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<sup>4</sup>. Chief Justice Sharma under fire, Kantipur Online, 9 April 2005

<sup>5</sup>. <http://209.41.191.254/cnn.cfm?id=193323&category=Politics&Country=NEPAL>

Mrigendra Kumar Singh Yadav, former member of Rashtriya Panchayat and leader of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi) leader and Ganesh Sherchan, former panchayat-time assistant minister for the western region.

In the post of 12 zonal administrators, the King has appointed university teachers, former administrators and supporters of the single-party panchayat system. Among those appointed as zonal administrators are:

- Dr Shyam Kishor Singh, professor of political science for Mechi zone,
- Rana Bahadur Chand, former Deputy Inspector General of Police for Koshi zone,
- Ram Kumar Subba, RPP Central Committee Member for Sagarmatha zone,
- Janak Jungali, Office Secretary of the RPP (Nationalist) for Janakpur zone,
- Prajapati Koirala for Narayani zone,
- Prof. Dr. Shekhar Gurung for Bagmati zone,
- Kumar Bahadur Karki, a member of anti-corruption team during Lokendra Bahadur Chand government for Gandaki zone,
- Ram Krishna Pant, retired administrator for Lumbini zone,
- Advocate Ram Ji Bishta for Dhawalagiri zone,

- Lalit Bahadur Thapa Magar, retired regional administrator for Rapti zone,
- Uttar Tamata for Karnali zone,
- Min Bahadur Pal for Bheri zone,
- Karna Bahadur Dhimal, former Rashtriya Panchayat member for Seti zone and
- Mahendra Man Byathit, expelled cadre of CPN-UML for Mahakali zone.<sup>6</sup>

With the King being Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Nepal Army, the control over the administration is complete.

### **Field offices must not be at the expense of democracy:**

While the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the OHCHR is an important step to monitor gross violations of human rights and humanitarian laws by the Royal Nepal Army and the Maoists, international community must not put the stamp of legitimacy on the coup and successive illegal measures. The call for restoration of multi-party democracy, release of all political detainees, lifting of restrictions on press freedom etc within a specific time frame must be clearly demanded under the resolution on technical assistance under agenda item 19 of the CHR.

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<sup>6</sup> . HM appoints Regional, zonal administrators, The Kathmandu Post, 12 April 2005

The restructuring of administration in Nepal through ordinances shows that King Gyanendra has no immediate plans to restore democracy and meet the demands of the international community. The Narayanhiti Palace believes that international scrutiny will come to an end with the adoption of the resolution under item 19. At the same time, the repression on political activists, students, journalists and human rights defenders, academicians etc continue unabated.

### **Recommendations:**

As the MOU has been signed with the OHCHR, international community must increase its coordination to put further pressure by suspending aid until King Gyanendra restores multi-party democracy. International community must also hold consultations on immediate setting up of the field offices of the OHCHR in Nepal.

The suspension of aid by Denmark for the projects related to rural energy, community forestry, industrial environment and the Revenue Administrative Support Project is welcome. At the same time, assistance of Rs 29.72 million for rehabilitation of Fatehpur-Kunauli Road Phase-II in eastern Saptari District of Nepal by India raises concerns.<sup>7</sup> The government of Nepal simply does not have the capacity to undertake development activities or deliver humanitarian aid.

Unless the troika of the United States, United Kingdom and India take strong

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**7. Indian assistance for Fatehpur –Kunauli road, Nepal News.com, 8 April 2005**

measures, King Gyanendra is unlikely to relent under the pressure of countries like Denmark and Switzerland. Otherwise, the release of G P Koirala and the signing of the MoU with the OHCHR might as well prove to be premature euphoria.

### **2. Human rights violations by the security forces**

The RNA claimed hundreds of casualties on the side of the Maoists. Because of the ban on press freedom, it has not been possible to verify the claims of the RNA.

On 6 April 2005, Royal Nepal Army claimed to have gunned down 85 alleged Maoist insurgents during various security operations since February 1. 12 security personnel also lost their lives during the same period.<sup>8</sup>

On 6 and 7 April 2005, at least eight alleged Maoists were reportedly killed in security actions across the country. On 6 April 2005, the security forces killed one rebel each in Rautahat and Dang district, while three rebels identified as Vijay Adhikari, Kamal VK and Nikan were killed in Kalikot. Three rebels were killed at Okhare area of Dang district on 7 April 2005.<sup>9</sup>

On the night of 7 April 2005, the Maoists reportedly attacked a security base at Khara in the mid-western district of Rukum. As on 10 April 2005, the security forces claimed to have

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<sup>8</sup>. RNA's achievement, The Kathmandu Post, 7 April 2005

<sup>9</sup>. 8 Maoists killed in security action, Kantipur Online, 8 April 2005

recovered 113 dead bodies of Maoists from the encounter site. Three security personnel were also killed in the incident.<sup>10</sup> 35 more bodies of Maoists were reportedly found buried in Arma and Muru areas near Khara.<sup>11</sup>

### **3. Suppression of Political Activists**

King Gyanendra also continues with the repression on the political activists.

#### **Political activists:**

On 12 April 2005, 30 political activists detained in Bhaktapur were handed three-month arrest warrants under the Public Security Act. The political activists include Modnath Prashrit, Shanta Manawi, Goma Devkota and Devshankar Poudel of the CPN-UML; Meena Pandey, Duryodhan Singh and Ramchandra Adhikari of the Nepali Congress; and Deep Kumar Upadhyay and Rudramani Bhandari of the Nepali Congress-D. Police also detained seven political cadres from Nepal Majdoor Kishan Party, including the party's central committee member Dilli Prasad Kafle at Khalanga in Jumla for protesting against the government.<sup>12</sup>

On 10 April 2005, several more political leaders and activists were reportedly sent to jail for three months under the Public Security Act. Four opposition leaders

including Pratap Lal Shrestha were jailed in Tanahun. 8 opposition leaders including NC convention member Tulsi Giri in Syangja, and two leaders including former minister Yamlal Kandel in Surkhet were sent to jail.<sup>13</sup> Baglung district CPN-UML committee members Janak Poudel and Khem Prakash Pathak, who were arrested on 9 April 2005, were also handed over warrants for three-month detention under the Public Safety Act.<sup>14</sup>

Although, a total of 171 political activists arrested on April 8 were reportedly released on 9 April 2005, eight detainees including NC central committee member Farmullah Mansur, who were arrested in Bara, were handed down three-month detention warrant by police under the Public Safety Act.<sup>15</sup>

On 8 April 2005, five major political parties held nationwide demonstrations against February 1 royal proclamation. About 1,000 activists were reportedly arrested and over 150 persons were injured in police baton charge across the country. In Kathmandu district, 107 persons were reportedly arrested by the police. They included former ministers Deep Kumar Upadhyaya, Sushila Snwar, Moda Nath Prashrit, and Bramha Narayan Choudhari. In Birgunj, about 120 activists were reportedly arrested, including former MP Khaga Raj Sharma. Some leaders were picked up from their

<sup>10</sup>. 16 more bodies found in Khara, Maoist toll now 113, Kantipur Online, 11 April 2005

<sup>11</sup>. 35 more bodies of Maoists found buried in Khara, Kantipur Online, 13 April 2005

<sup>12</sup>. Deuba barred from meeting detained leaders, Kantipur Online, 13 April 2005

<sup>13</sup>. Journo, protesters get arrest warrants, Nepal News.com, 11 April 2005

<sup>14</sup>. Detention warrant against 3 UML cadres, The Kathmandu Post, 12 April 2005

<sup>15</sup>. 171 activists freed, The Kathmandu Post, 10 April 2005

home prior to the actual demonstration. Police also arrested 100 leaders and cadres in Sarlahi, 61 including NC leader Tek Bahadur Gurung in Chitwan, 82 including Upper House MP Lalit Basnet in Hetauda, 57 in Banke, 39 in Pokhara, 42 in Syangja, 14 in Baglung, 10 each in Nepalgunj and Tanahun and 9 each in Siraha and Gorkha districts. Former minister Yam Lal Kandel and another UML cadre were arrested in Birendranagar of Surkhet. Of those arrested, 96 in Sarlahi, 44 in Banke and 15 in Surkhet were released later. Police also arrested 9 protestors in Siraha, 5 in Palpa and 4 in Nawalparasi. In Tanahun, 7 demonstrators including NC leader Ram Chandra Pokharel were seriously injured in police baton charge.<sup>16</sup>

On 6 April 2005, police arrested 10 political activists for demonstrating in support of democracy and fundamental rights in Patan of Lalitpur district. Those arrested included Pradeep Mardan KC, Urmila Karki, Umesh Bajgain, Yagya Raj Pant, Hari Krishna Byanjankar, Bishnu Tripathi, Tej Limbu, Januka Lama, Rajiv Poudel and Pradeep Lama. In Dharan, police arrested nine political activists, including six women – Nara Kumari Limbu, Indira Palikhe, Shyama Regmi, Padma Rai, Amrita Ghale, Kamala Rai, Bishnu Kumar Limbu, Ganesh Limbu and Nara Bahadur Limbu.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>. About 1,000 protesters arrested nationwide, over 150 injured, The Kathmandu Post, 9 April 2005

<sup>17</sup>. Parties take out rally in Patan, The Kathmandu Post, 7 April 2005

### **Disappearances:**

On 7 April 2005, Nepal government made public the status of 60 people missing during the nine-year-old conflict. According to the statement of the Home Ministry, 33 people are still in detention, 16 were released shortly after interrogation and 6 were released after a period of detention. The Home Ministry further claimed that 4 people had escaped the security cordon while one Laxmi Pandey from Nawalparasi was never arrested by the security forces. The government has reportedly made public the whereabouts of total 442 people so far.<sup>18</sup>

### **Students and academicians:**

On 12 April 2005, University teachers across the country resorted to “pen down” to protest arrest of academicians.<sup>19</sup> On the same day, Appellate Court of Pokhara reportedly ordered the local administration to produce Kamalmani Dhakal, president of Nepal Student Union, campus committee of Prithivi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, before the court.<sup>20</sup>

On 10 April 2005, police arrested Lawas Kumar Rai, student leader and chairman of Patan campus unit from the campus premises.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>. Condition of 60 made public, The Kathmandu Post, 8 April 2005

<sup>19</sup>. University teachers pen down, Kantipur Online, 13 April 2005

<sup>20</sup>. Administration ordered to produce detainee at court, The Kathmandu Post, 13 April 2005

<sup>21</sup>. 5 more leaders released, teachers to pen down, Kantipur Online, 11 April 2005

On 7 April 2005, Police detained Prof. Bhupati Dhakal “Kamal” immediately after he came out of Padma Kanya Campus in Kathmandu where he participated in an interaction programme titled “Current political context and academic freedom.”<sup>22</sup> Earlier Police had obstructed entry of members of Nepal University Teachers Association into the programme venue and barred the media from covering the programme.<sup>23</sup> Prof. Bhupati Dhakal has been given detention order of three months under the Public Safety Act. According to Nepal University Teachers Union (NUTA), over half a dozen university teachers are still in detention since February 1.<sup>24</sup>

On 7 April 2005, security personnel arrested Chandra Bhandari, former general secretary of the Nepal Students' Union (NSU), student organization of the Nepali Congress (NC), from Gaushala in Kathmandu.<sup>25</sup>

On 5 April 2005, police reportedly arrested two teachers at Saptagandaki Campus – Nanda Lal Poudel and Tika Ram Devkota.<sup>26</sup> In the night on the same day, police raided the boys' hostel at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, and arrested six student leaders – Ganesh Bahadur Bishta, Dharma Bhandari, Tika

Phulara, Narendra Bhatta, Chiranjivi Poudel and Shankar Dhvaj Nemwang.<sup>27</sup>

### **Denial of access to the detainees:**

On 6 April 2005, the RNA in a statement reiterated that its doors were always open for the national and international human rights activists to meet detainees held in the barracks across the country. The statement clarified that “security forces have not restricted free movement of national and human rights workers” nor will there be “restriction in the future as well.”<sup>28</sup> But on 8 April 2005, police denied access to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) team consisting of commissioner Kapil Shrestha to meet detainees at ward police office at Tinkune in Kathmandu.<sup>29</sup> Earlier on 6 April 2005, the local administration reportedly barred National Assembly members from meeting their colleagues who have been kept under preventive detention at Mahendra Yuvalaya at Jawalakhel since February 1. Five members of the National Assembly, Kashinath Adhikari, Bachaspati Devkota, Beduram Bhusal, Ranga Nath Chaudhary and Laxmi Das Shrestha had gone to the detention centre to meet three detained lawmakers, Bir Bahadur Singh, Lal Bahadur Bishwokarma and Akkal Bahadur Bista. But the police told them that they had no permission to meet the detainees. Three other lawmakers, Shukra Raj Sharma in Pokhara, Ashok Koirala in Biratnagar

22. University teachers to go for ‘Pen Down’, Nepal News.com, 11 April 2005

23. Police interrupt in academics’ program, Nepal News.com, 7 April 2005

24. University teachers to go for ‘Pen Down’, Nepal News.com, 11 April 2005

25. Ex NSU leader arrested, The Kathmandu Post, 8 April 2005

26. Parties take out rally in Patan, The Kathmandu Post, 7 April 2005

27. Parties take out rally in Patan, The Kathmandu Post, 7 April 2005

28. Doors are open for rights observers: RNA, Nepal News.com, 7 April 2005

29. NHRC denied access at detention center, Kantipur Online, 9 April 2005

and Mohan Bam in Dhangadi, are also under preventive detention since the royal takeover.<sup>30</sup>

On 10 April 2005, security personnel prevented Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) president Subodh Raj Pyakurel from meeting CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, who has been under house arrest since February 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>31</sup>

On 12 April 2005, security personnel barred former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba from meeting Bamdev Gautam of the CPN-UML, and members of his own party Bimalendra Nidhi and Bal Krishna Khand at separate detention centers in Kathmandu.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. Valley detention

On 6 April 2005, Human Rights Promotion Centre under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers said that there was no restriction on national and international human rights observers from traveling within the country or from going abroad. The statement clarified that no obstructions had been created in the traveling of individuals associated with human rights.<sup>33</sup>

This is an incorrect statement. As Asian Centre for Human Rights in its previous briefing papers reported, many prominent human rights activists, politicians and academicians have been prevented from going outside of the Kathmandu valley.

On 7 April 2005, the Supreme Court issued an interim order to the Home Ministry not to enforce travel restriction on former Speaker and member of the present constitution drafting committee, Daman Nath Dhungana. He was prevented from flying to the United States in March 2005. The court said, "Dhungana's travel restriction cannot be enforced without meeting the provisions in the Public Security Act 1990."<sup>34</sup>

On 10 April 2005, security personnel at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) barred Prof. Lok Raj Baral, a political scientist and former Royal Nepalese ambassador to India, from flying to the United States to participate in a conference at the invitation of the Kennedy School of Governance of the Harvard university. Security personnel reportedly told Baral that they had orders not to allow him to travel abroad. However, no further reason was given. In March 2005, he was prevented from flying to India to participate in a seminar.<sup>35</sup>

#### 5. Restrictions on the press freedom

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<sup>30</sup>. Parliamentarians barred from meeting detained colleagues, The Himalayan Times, 7 April 2005

<sup>31</sup>. HR activist Pyakurel barred from meeting MK Nepal, Nepal News.com, 11 April 2005

<sup>32</sup>. Deuba barred from meeting detained leaders, Kantipur Online, 13 April 2005

<sup>33</sup>. Rights observers free to travel: Govt, Kantipur Online, 7 April 2005

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<sup>34</sup>. SC lifts travel ban on Dhungana, The Kathmandu Post, 8 April 2005

<sup>35</sup>. Prof. Baral barred at the TIA once again, Nepal News.com, 10 April 2005

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Complete restrictions on press freedom continue unabated. In order to further tighten the repression on press freedom, the government has reportedly decided not to give government advertisements to the private media. On 16 March 2005, the Ministry of Information and Communications sent an instruction to various ministries, commissions, secretariats and government agencies stating that advertisements were only to be given to media fully owned by the government. The circular said the Ministry had taken the decision on 15 March 2005 as a new advertisement policy for state agencies was being discussed.<sup>36</sup> The ban on news reporting by the FM radios continues.<sup>37</sup>

On 7 April 2005, Krishna Prajapati, a correspondent of *Sandhya Times* daily published from Kathmandu, was reportedly detained at Banepa.

On 8 April 2005, police detained Kashinath Yadav, the editor of *Brahmastra* daily, and Rabindra Singh, a correspondent of *Kalaiya* weekly. They were on the way to cover reports on protest by the political parties in Birgunj. Kamal Raj Regmi who was taken into security custody some days ago was sent to jail on 8 April 2005 citing security reasons.<sup>38</sup>

In Dharan, police have reportedly warned the local media and reporters of

the national dailies against publishing any news or photographs related to protests of the agitating political parties against the February 1 royal proclamation. On 8 April 2005, the Area Police Office summoned Kishor Kumar Karki and Keshav Ghimire, editor and news coordinator of the *Blast Times* daily; Bimal Shakya and Rajesh Bidrohi of *Morning Post* daily; Pradeep Meyangbo local reporter of the *Morning Post* and Robin Giri of *Annapurna Post* and ordered them to follow the instructions.<sup>39</sup>

On 9 April 2005, Police reportedly questioned *Kathmandu Post* reporter, Ghanashyam Khadka regarding the news on political parties' demonstration and police intervention, which was published on the edition of the same day. Armed security personnel reportedly arrived at his residence in Tanahun in a van around 3.15 pm and took him to District Police Office. DSP Devilal Khanal and Inspector Himalaya Kumar Shrestha reportedly interrogated him and used force to retract the report in writing, which he refused to do.<sup>40</sup>

On 10 April 2005, sub-editor Robin Poudel of Tanahun Aawaj weekly was handed a warrant for 3-month detention under the Public Security Act. He was arrested from Damauli on 8 April 2005 while collecting news regarding protests demanding restoration of complete democracy.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>. No more govt ads to private media, Kantipur Online, 7 April 2005

<sup>37</sup>. Govt to allow FM broadcast news other than politics, Kantipur Online, 12 April 2005

<sup>38</sup>. 3 journalists detained, Kantipur Online, 9 April 2005

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<sup>39</sup>. Journos warned, The Kathmandu Post, 9 April 2005

<sup>40</sup>. Police grill Post reporter, The Kathmandu Post, 10 April 2005

<sup>41</sup>. Arrest warrant against journo, The Kathmandu Post, 11 April 2005

Apart from lack of independence of judiciary, there is no respect for the Court in Nepal.

## 6. Atrocities by the Maoists

The Maoists continue to be responsible for violations of international humanitarian laws.

### Unlawful killings

On 7 April 2005, at least 25 persons including four security personnel were injured in an explosion carried out by suspected Maoists in the mid-western town of Nepalganj in Banke district. Three of them were injured seriously.<sup>42</sup>

On 8 April 2005, two Russian tourists were injured in a Maoist triggered bomb blast near Jiri along Araniko Highway, some 75 kilometres east of Kathmandu. They were heading for the Mount Everest. One of the injured, Sergey Kaymanchnirkov reportedly sustained serious injuries on both of his legs. The Russian government thereafter asked its citizens to refrain from traveling to Nepal.<sup>43</sup>

On the night of 8 April 2005, the Maoist rebels shot dead Bidhay Sagar Mahato, a farmer of Babargunj VDC-4 in Sarlahi. According to police, a group of six to seven armed Maoists came to Mahato's

house and took him some distance away from his house and shot him dead.<sup>44</sup>

On the morning of 9 April 2005, Maoist rebels shot dead Bharat Dev Bharati, the Chairman of Town Development Committee of Surkhet valley, at his residence in Mulpani area of Uttarganga VDC in Surkhet district. A group of three rebels came to Bharati's house and opened fire at him, killing him.<sup>45</sup>

On 10 April 2005, a minor boy identified as Bam Bahadur Karki (9) reportedly died after a bomb allegedly planted by Maoists exploded in the terrace of his house at Padampur of Latikoili VDC in Surkhet. Another unidentified youth was injured in the blast.<sup>46</sup>

On the evening of 11 April 2005, Maoists shot dead Balanand Kafle, acting Chief District Officer of Bardia at his residence. Two Maoists reportedly came on bicycles and fired at Kafle's temple and neck while he was entering his quarter at around 5.25 pm. He later succumbed to his injuries in a hospital.<sup>47</sup>

On the evening of 11 April 2005, at least one dozen people, including five policemen, were injured when suspected Maoist rebels exploded an improvised

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<sup>42</sup>. 25 injured in explosion; seven Maoists killed in separate clashes, Nepal News.com, 8 April 2005

<sup>43</sup>. Russians asked to refrain from visiting Nepal, Kantipur Online, 11 April 2005

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<sup>44</sup>. Maoists kill 2, 200 rebels surrender, The Kathmandu Post, 10 April 2005

<sup>45</sup>. Maoists kill 2, 200 rebels surrender, The Kathmandu Post, 10 April 2005

<sup>46</sup>. Minor dies in bomb explosion, Nepal News.com, 10 April 2005

<sup>47</sup>. Maoists shoot dead acting chief district officer, Kantipur Online, 12 April 2005

device at Mahendrapul area in the western town of Pokhara.<sup>48</sup>

## 7. Hardship on civilians: Economic Blockade

The Maoists' ongoing blockade has negatively impacted upon lives of all sections of society.

Students appearing for the Public Service Commission examination in Dipayal have reportedly been facing great financial crisis, as they could not return to their homes due to lack of transportation. They have started to sell even their clothes, ornaments to pay for food and lodging. Farmers in Ambhanjyang and other VDCs in Makawanpur district have reportedly started feeding milk to their cattle after they could not take the milk to the dairy. Narayan Devkota, chairman of District Productive Cooperatives said, "The farmers who had taken loan for dairy business, are sure to suffer due to the current problem".<sup>49</sup>

Due to lack of transportation facility, many patients who are in need of urgent medical attention are unable to be taken to hospitals for treatment. In Dipayal, all the four ambulances available for service have reportedly been struck somewhere in the midway along the Bhimdutta Punta highway due to the blockade,

causing untold suffering for the people.<sup>50</sup>

The security forces escorted as many as 300 to 500 vehicles going out of the Kathmandu everyday.<sup>51</sup> To foil the Maoists' blockade, security personnel used force on the traders. On 6 April 2005, the security forces forced open shops in Nepalgunj.<sup>52</sup>

On the afternoon of 9 April 2005, at least five passengers, including a minor, died while 27 others sustained injuries, 12 seriously, when a bus (Na. 2 Kha. 3813) escorted by security forces ran over a Maoist-laid landmine at Sakhawachwok along the Chandranihaharpur-Gaur section of the highway. Those killed on the spot have been identified as Hushnahari Khatun, 10, Samid Miya Kawari and Mukesh Kumar Saha, an Indian national. Two died at Army hospital in Kathmandu. The bus was heading towards Gaur, the headquarters of Rautahat district, from Kathmandu.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>. One dozen injured in explosion in Pokhara, Nepal News.com, 12 April 2005

<sup>49</sup>. Lack of transportation affects life, The Kathmandu Post, 12 April 2005

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<sup>50</sup>. Patients suffer due to road obstruction, The Kathmandu Post, 10 April 2005

<sup>51</sup>. Blockade gets mixed results, Kantipur Online, 8 April 2005

<sup>52</sup>. Nepalgunj traders forced to open shop, The Kathmandu Post, 7 April 2005

<sup>53</sup>. Maoists ambush passenger bus, 5 killed, The Kathmandu Post, 10 April 2005