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Nepal: need for respect for human rights in policing

Amnesty International is concerned that Nepal's police are using excessive and lethal force during ongoing demonstrations by members of the Madhesi community. Yesterday the police were reported to have fired at a group of protesters in Siraha district in the Terai, killing a 22-year-old protester.

Amnesty International calls on the Nepali Police and Armed Police Force to only use force when absolutely necessary to save lives.

"We recognize that the Nepali police are trying to contain what in some cases have been violent protests. However, by firing live ammunition into crowds and beating demonstrators after their arrest, the police have gone beyond what is acceptable use of force in situations such as this," said Tim Parritt, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific programme. "At times the police showed restraint when faced with crowds throwing stones, but in other cases the police appear to have used disproportionate and excessive force despite assurances from the Home Ministry that security forces had been instructed to show maximum restraint," he said.

Under international standards, law enforcement officials are required as far as possible to apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms.

If the use of force and firearms is unavoidable, Principle 5 of the UN Basic Principles states that officers must exercise restraint in such use and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved.

The government must immediately send clear instructions to the police only to use proportionate force, conduct an independent and impartial inquiry into the police killing and beatings, and prosecute any police officers who are suspected of having used excessive force against protesters.

Amnesty International calls on the organizers of the protests, including the United Democratic Madhesi Front, to ensure their members and supporters show due restraint and responsibly exercise their right to peaceful protest.

Public Document

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