



Press Statement

26 January 2021

Stop excessive use of force

Respect the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression

Accountability Watch Committee (AWC) and Advocacy Forum-Nepal (AF) are deeply concerned about the use of excessive force by the Police against peaceful protesters staging a symbolic protest, under the banner of the Broad Citizens' Movement, resulting in several protesters injured.

The inexcusable acts of baton charging, kicking with boots and using water cannons on peaceful protestors (including civil society members, rights activists, writers, and other people from different walks of life) by law enforcement agencies in a bid to disperse a peaceful protest followed by the unlawful detention of over 20 rights activists on Monday (25 January 2021) in Baluwatar while protesting against the Prime Minister's recent move is a serious breach of human rights and democratic culture.

AWC and AF highlight that the Constitution of Nepal guarantees the right to assemble peacefully and the right not to be tortured as fundamental rights, and that Nepal is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention against Torture (CAT) and therefore has an international obligation (i) to allow the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly without any restrictions, (ii) to refrain from subjecting anyone to physical or mental torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and (iii) to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible for such crimes.

AWC and AF strongly condemn the unnecessary and excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies on the peaceful protesters in recent days. Concerned that law enforcement agencies are backtracking from their lip service to human rights commitment and rule of law and years of efforts

of Human Rights Defenders to make security agencies human rights friendly and accountable to rule of law, we call on the Government of Nepal and the law enforcement agencies to:

- Adhere to its legal obligations to respect, protect and promote human rights at all times,
- Ensure that it remains fully committed, in practice, to its human rights commitments and rule of law,
- Refrain, in all forms, from the use of any forms of inhuman or degrading treatment against protesters/detainees while taking him/her into control and/or while under control,
- Ensure prompt, credible, impartial, and independent investigations into the incident and prosecute those responsible and ensure compensation for the victims as per the law,
- Express their commitment to refrain from exercising excessive use of force.



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