

**Stories from Nepal's Transitional Justice Process**

# Healing the Wounds



**With Facts, Context & Utility Information**

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*Stories from Nepal's Transitional Justice Process*

**Media Foundation**  
Kathmandu

This booklet compiles journalistic narrative profiles of ten victims of political conflict that took place in Nepal between 1996 and 2006. These victims represent one of the most excluded sections of Nepali society. In addition, as a victims' booklet, this publication includes factual and actionable, "utility" information for those seeking support or help.

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Cover photo: Ekal Silwal (Santa Bahadur Magar of Devendrapur, Chitwan, helping his disabled wife and conflict victim Durga Maya, 55, in March 2011.

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# Healing Words

- How much more should I wait for justice? -- *Devi Sunar*, mother of Maina Sunar, 17, killed by government forces in 2060.
- The most shocking fact about war is that its victims and its instruments are individual human beings, and that these individual beings are condemned by the monstrous conventions of politics to murder or be murdered in quarrels not their own. -- *Aldous Huxley*
- The people of Nepal have taken a stand for democracy, and it would be especially inspiring for the entire world to see Nepal, which already makes such a tremendous difference in peacekeeping for others, overcome its own conflict and achieve lasting peace at home. -- *Ban Ki-Moon*
- The practice of peace and reconciliation is one of the most vital and artistic of human actions. -- *Nhat Hanh*
- An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. -- *Mohandas Gandhi*
- If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. -- *Mother Teresa*
- If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner. -- *Nelson Mandela*
- Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth. -- *Buddha*
- Yesterday we obeyed kings and bent our necks before emperors. But today we kneel only to truth, follow only beauty, and obey only love. -- *Khalil Gibran*
- In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same. -- *Albert Einstein*
- At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst. -- *Aristotle*
- Punishment is justice for the unjust. -- *Saint Augustine*
- Forgiveness is the answer to the child's dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is made clean again. -- *Dag Hammarskjold*
- For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent. What is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights. -- *B. R. Ambedkar*
- In a free society the state does not administer the affairs of men. It administers justice among men who conduct their own affairs. -- *Walter Lippmann*

- Always forgive your enemies – nothing annoys them so much.-- *Oscar Wilde*
- Compassion, forgiveness, these are the real, ultimate sources of power for peace and success in life.-- *Tenzin Gyatso, The 14th Dalai Lama*
- Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future. -- *Paul Boese*
- Without forgiveness life is governed by an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation -- *Roberto Assagioli*
- Forgiveness is of high value, yet it costs nothing. -- *Unknown*
- Without forgiveness, there's no future.--*Desmond Tutu*
- If you want to see the brave, look at those who can forgive -- *The Bhagavad-Gita*
- Amnesty is as good for those who give it as for those who receive it. It has the admirable quality of bestowing mercy on both sides. - MORE Amnesty is as good for those who give it as for those who receive it. It has the admirable quality of bestowing mercy on both sides. -- *Victor Hugo*
- Reconciliation should be accompanied by justice, otherwise it will not last. While we all hope for peace it shouldn't be peace at any cost but peace based on principle, on justice.-- *Corazon Aquino*
- If there is to be reconciliation, first there must be truth.--*Timothy B. Tyson*, an African American scholar
- Healing yourself is connected with healing others.--*Yoko Ono*
- The words of kindness are more healing to a drooping heart than balm or honey. -- *Sarah Fielding*
- A reform is a correction of abuses; a revolution is a transfer of power. -- *Robert Bulwer-Lytton*

# FOREWORD

This publication is designed as a public education material on Nepal’s transitional justice efforts. The book chronicles a sample of ten journalistic narrative stories of people victimized during Nepal’s internal conflict between 1996 and 2006. These first-hand stories highlight the experiences of victims in seeking truth and accessing justice.

The book translates expert knowledge on peacebuilding into the common language of the beneficiaries for a realistic public understanding of the transitional process as well as its context. As a victims’ booklet, it also includes actionable, “utility” information for those seeking support or help. The narratives, historical backgrounds and contexts on the topic are organized around four key themes of transitional justice process: truth-seeking, prosecutions, reparations to victims, and institutional reform.

The book is by no means a comprehensive documentation of the suffering and pain of the thousands of victims of the Nepali conflict. It, nonetheless, is a step towards the healing process by way of recounting the traumatic past of some of the most ordinary victims.

As the victims’ narratives and other materials in the book show, Nepal’s transitional justice process has been slow, and it has so far revolved around interim reparation. The victims’ repeated calls for truth and justice underscore the urgency in setting up the transitional justice mechanisms provided for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006. These mechanisms, among others, include the Commission of Inquiry on Disappearances, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Media Foundation- Nepal and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)- Nepal believe that this publication, written in simple, engaging and straightforward language, not only resonates with the lived experiences of the victims but it also fills a void in literature focused on their practical needs in accessing justice.

Media Foundation- Nepal  
OHCHR- Nepal

Kathmandu  
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# INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Peace Accord agreed by the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on November 21, 2006 declared that the armed war that began in 1996 had come to an end. The document envisaged far-reaching changes in the country, upheld Human Rights, Fundamental Rights and Humanitarian Law, and laid the provision for setting up a mechanism of dispute settlement and implementation. One and a half years later, in April 2008, the CPA's commitment to hold the historic Constituent Assembly elections was fulfilled.

The CA paved the way for a republican order and, in principle, Nepal appeared to be on its way to becoming a more peaceful and a democratic country. However, due to continued political disagreements over the nature of future government and the state, the form of army integration as well as the writing of the new constitution, the peace process remains incomplete.

In particular, progress has been painfully slow in dealing with past human rights atrocities and healing the wounds of war. Remedies for the 16,278 people who lost their lives and the millions who suffered during the conflict remain largely elusive. So far, government's efforts in transitional justice remain confined to interim reparation. The government has issued the draft Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bill (July 2007) and the draft Disappearances (Crime and Punishment) Bill (November 2008). However, these bills are under review and they are yet to be approved by the parliament. It is only when they come into effect that trials can be conducted, and, hopefully, reconciliation, acknowledgement, full reparation and institutional reforms will become possible.

Although some materials in this book highlight the state of the peace process and the institutional efforts in transitional justice, the focus here is on the victims themselves, their traumatic experiences and their perspectives on the justice process. This is one small effort at documenting their voices and compiling useful information in the form of a victims' booklet. The stories are presented in a narrative journalistic format.

Narrative story telling has long been used as a therapeutic means to reframe traumatic experiences of conflict. While regular news reporting and feature stories dictated by deadlines and space constraints highlight facts of war and the plight of victims, narrative techniques help to capture the lived realities of victims and speak directly to the individual human conditions. They involve both recalling the traumatic past by the victims and an empathic listening by the storytellers; in this case the journalists. This process enables to reframe their lives in a more holistic and integrative way.



This book presents ten such narrative stories focused on individuals. Cases were randomly selected in terms of the nature of victimization, such as killed, disappeared, disabled and displaced. They do not reflect the magnitude of the entire conflict; and are at best representative of the wounds suffered by ordinary victims of conflict and the support available to them. These are stories about victims from the most excluded sections of the society rather than the cases already widely publicized. Stories are complemented by factual and contextual materials as well as utility information, summarized and compiled from a variety of credible sources.

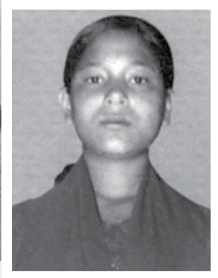
The stories were reported and written by journalists based in various parts of the country. The transitional justice process--truth-seeking, prosecution, reparation and institutional reform--served as the editorial framework of these narratives. As the stories show, a common thread runs across the experiences of the victims: frustration over the lack of acknowledgement, the state of impunity, and above all, economic hardship. An overriding theme is the general state of ignorance among the victims, where to turn to for help or support.

A number of people have contributed to making this book a reality. We would especially like to thank journalists who took time to do field reporting and one-to-one interviews with individual victims. We believe their efforts have added some impetus to narrative journalism in the country.

Dr. Dharma Adhikari offered the overall direction to the research process. He also reviewed the book. Jagadish Pokhrel helped edit the English version. Punita Rimal coordinated the editorial tasks. The Nepali version was edited by Chhabi Adhikari. Prabhat Kiran Koirala offered research assistance and logistical support. Part of the translation task was carried out by Shekhar KC and Bhrikuti Rai. Support for the book came from the UN Peace Building Fund through UN Peace Fund for Nepal and OHCHR Nepal.

We hope this book fills the void in the literature that speaks to the experiences of ordinary victims and their needs. Errors, substantive and typographical, are unavoidable, especially for a time-specific project like this book. We regret any such error. ●

# Search For Justice



Karna Bahadur Rasaili at the District Police Office, Dhulikhel, Kavre. Inset: His daughter Rina Rasaili, 17, killed by government army personnel. File photo.

## ● Bhojraj Timilsina

Supported by walking sticks, physically frail Karna Bahadur and Suntali Rasaili occasionally arrive in Dhulikhel, Kavre, to learn about what has been done to the murderer of their daughter. The elderly couple stops on meeting any human rights activist they know. “What happened to our case?” they ask.

Suntali cannot control her tears while she is telling someone about her case. How can she forget the incident, which is still fresh in memory? It haunts her again and again.

“It was a mid-February day of 2004. My sister and brother-in-law had come to visit us. We were talking till late night. We did not know when we fell asleep. After meal, my husband Karna Bahadur, sister Devi Sunar, brother-in-law Murali Sunar, mother-in-law Purna Maya and daughter Reena slept in separate rooms. At midnight, we heard knocks on the door and we woke up,” Suntali recalled.

“Who is it; why are you here?” we had not even been able to open the door when a group of 10 people barged in. “We are army men from Bhakunde,” one of them said. The armed men in plain clothes held a dog on leash.

A sudden entry of the soldiers caused a panic in that house in Raikar Tol, Dhoke Danda, of Pokhari Chauri VDC-4. They searched for Reena there. They manhandled old Karna Bahadur and Suntali. Soldiers also assaulted their sister and brother-in-law. They went into Reena's bedroom and dragged her out. The parents pulled Reena from one side. The soldiers were on the other side. This went on for a while. Suntali and Karna Bahadur were not letting up. They cried and appealed to the soldiers not to harm their daughter. They knelt before them.

Army officers separately interrogated Reena and her brother-in-law Murali. With tears welling up in her eyes, Reena said she was never involved with the rebel Maoists but was engaged in social work.

She taught informal classes at a facility run by the district education office. She was a social activist working with the Rural Electricity Development Centre. Her pleas did not make any impact on the government soldiers. They ordered Karna Bahadur to give them a rope. He obliged. Then they dragged Reena down to a cowshed near the home. They had warned other family members not to make noise or come out of the home. Karna Bahadur and Sunatli had no alternative but to shut the door and stay inside. As their daughter shrieked in pain outside, the old couple could do nothing but pass the night in silent agony.

The long night gave way to the dawn. Coincidentally, it was the anniversary day of the launching of the Maoists war, February 13. From the upper floor of the house, the couple saw Reena tied by a rope. "Mom, I am freezing; give me a sweater," Reena asked Suntali. As the army men were still guarding the home from outside, Suntali could not come out. She then hurled the sweater from a window. It fell on Reena's hands.

She recalled the condition of Reena and said, "Her body was full of bruises, dresses torn and eyes swollen due to excessive crying."

After she managed to put on the sweater, the army men took Reena a little farther towards a farm. Karna Bahadur and Suntali were peeping through a hole in their house. After 15 minutes, around 5:15 a.m., three gunshots were heard. Suntali fainted on hearing the sounds of firing. Those inside the home could not control their tears. Nor were they in a position to come out

for help. Armymen were on each door, forcing the family members to switch off the lights. Now, with the breaking dawn, the soldiers disappeared from the sight. They left Reena's body covered with her shawl.

In the morning, the family members slowly came out. No soldier was there.

Reena was lying with her head down and legs upside down near a tree. She had bullet marks in her head, eye and chest. Her trouser and panty were torn and blood was flowing from her mouth. Reena's body on the laps, Karna Bahadur and Suntali cried for a long time. The army men had also entered the houses in the neighborhood. The body of a student, Subhadra Chaulagain, was also lying in the yard of her house below Reena's house. The villagers gathered. They informed the district police office in Dhulikhel about the incident. The Chief District Officer was also informed about it. At that time, the police administration seemed helpless about looking into the murder cases committed by the army. Reena's body remained in the incident spot for six days. No one showed the courage to take her body to the graveyard. A team of human rights activists arrived there from Kathmandu. They collected all the information before the body was buried with the help of the villagers.

Father Karna Bahadur tried his best to bring all the culprits to book. He wanted to know who exactly was involved in the killing of his daughter and who had spied against her. He said there was the talk about the Truth Commission, but wondered whether it would also dismiss his case.

Karna Bahadur filed a case in the district police office of Kavre demanding action against the captain and others of the Number 9 battalion of the Nepal Army, Bhakundebensi, on May 25, 2006 (Reg. no 56/2062/063). It took three years after the incident to begin the legal process. A team comprising representatives from the UN High Commission for Human Rights, INSEC, the Advocacy Forum, the Himrights, Nepal Bar Association and the Federation of Nepali Journalists, Kavre, had reached the district police office to register the case. Before them, Deputy Superintendent of Police Sanjay Singh Basnet expressed his helplessness. He recalled that the army men involved in the much-talked about incident of Maina Sunar did not show up in the police office despite the police repeatedly and formally informing them about it.

According to Rasaili family, Reena was raped and killed because her sister Gita had joined the Maoists. Gita was a seventh grader at Jagriti Secondary School.

Seven years have elapsed since the incident. Suntali still faints whenever she sees Geeta, because she reminds her of Reena. In trying to forget the incident, Suntali is on daily medication. The Rasaili family felt insecure at home and stayed in rented rooms in Kathmandu for about two years. They stayed with their eldest son Subba. When he was in his village after the incident, Karna Bahadur, fearing for his life, used to go to sleep in his neighbor's home. Reena's brothers Utsab and Uddhav could not continue their studies in the school that reminded them of their sister. They started studying in Kathmandu in the support of CWIN, a children's rights organization. Out of compulsion, they started selling popcorn for living in Kathmandu.

"I will be in a lot of pain and anguish when I remember them. I cannot stop my tears," Geeta said.

In a meeting held in Jagriti Secondary School on February 15, 2004, 36 guardians of the students issued a press statement condemning the incident. They pleaded no school student be killed the way Reena was. They said her killing was extra-judicial.

Karna Bahadur had five sons and three daughters, including Reena. The National Human Rights Commission, on May 11, 2005, wrote to the government for action against the culprits of the killing. But the government had taken no such action at the time of writing this. The NHRC, in its letter sent to Karna Bahadur, informed about the recommendation it made to the government on June 14, 2005. It said, "As the security personnel killed Reena Rasaili by bullet shots, her human rights were violated. Thus, it decided to recommend to the government it identify and bring the personnel involved in the killing to book and provide the family of the victims a compensation amounting to Rs. 150,000."

In his application submitted to the district police office, Karna Bahadur had mentioned that the Army Act could not punish personnel falling under Clause 61 of the Army Act 2016 for raping or killing a civilian outside its purview.

He demanded that the culprits, therefore, should unsympathetically be penalized as per the Civil Code 13 (3) under the section on attempts on life.

According to information the No. 9 Bhakunde battalion of Nepal Army submitted to the District Police Office, Dhulikhel, on June 28, 2006, a group of 14 soldiers under the command of Captain Saroj Basnet, going against the orders, shot Reena Rasaili. The letter said that army revenue officer of Sher Battalion Kaji Karki shot Reena and he deserted the army from March 18, 2004 and, hence, the army was unable to give more information about Karki. A press statement issued by the Defense Ministry, immediately after the incident, referred to Reena as a Maoist area commander.

A 2005 report by the Amnesty International under its section entitled 'Unlawful killings by security forces', said, "Members of the security forces continued to kill unarmed civilians, often claiming that they had died in an 'encounter' with CPN (Maoist) forces, or while trying to escape from custody.

Two women, 18-year-old Reena Rasaili and 17-year-old Subhadra Chaulagain, were shot dead by plain-clothes security force personnel in Pokhari Chauri village, Kavre District, on February 13. Reena Rasaili was allegedly raped before her death."

Five days after the incident, army men reached Kharelthok searching for Devi Sunar, aunt of Reena Rasaili and a witness to the shooting incident. They arrested her 15-year-old daughter Maina Sunar. In the report, the Amnesty International claimed that Maina was killed on the same day she was arrested.

One of the army men involved in the killing of Reena is now in custody as his case progresses in the court. Nepal Police arrested Kaji Karki from Pokhara, where he was living after deserting the army, and he was brought to Dhulikhel. Nepal Army itself wanted to investigate into the incident but Nepal Police hesitated to hand over Kaji to Nepal Army. On September 17, 2010, the District Court of Kavre ordered the police to detain Kaji Karki for questioning on the charge of killing Reena.

After the peace process began, Geeta convinced her parents to return to the village from Kathmandu. Back in the village, their house was in a dilapidated condition. Their cattle had died. The farm was all under weeds. Father Karna

Bahadur tried his best to bring all the culprits to book. He wanted to know who exactly was involved in the killing of his daughter and who had spied against her. He said that there was the talk about the Truth Commission but wondered whether it would also dismiss his case.

When the district police did not initiate investigation into the incident, Karna Bahadur reached the Supreme Court. In this case, the SC had to issue an order in the name of Kavre police to initiate an investigation. Human rights organizations were also actively involved in this case. The Advocacy Forum, INSEC and others have been supporting the victim's family.

“If one can kill and pay money, we will also pay to kill those involved in this incident. Is that alright?” asked Geeta. She said that during the peace process, the state should provide relief and honor to the victims to meet their financial, physical and mental needs. Like Reena, many other civilians were killed during the armed conflict. She said during the peace process, all causes of conflict should be identified, and the state should be restructured and reformed so that no people would be killed again.

The financial condition of the Rasaili family is in a bad shape. Although the NHRC instructed the government to compensate the victim family, they have not yet received the total compensation. Karna Bahadur, however, received Rs. 100,000 as an interim compensation on December 23, 2009.

This family also lost another member during the armed conflict. Police and Maoist cadres had exchanged fire at the temporary police post of Naubise Bazaar in Khanalthok VDC-7 on the morning of February 5, 2002. In the incident, Maoist activist and Reena's 20 year-old brother Surendra Rasaili aka Arpan was killed. Sixteen policemen were also killed in the incident. Surendra had become a fulltime Maoist activist since March 10, 2001.

Other incidents of the district also show the impact of conflict on the family and the society. There are several examples in which the wives and children of the victims have become helpless and mentally unwell. Many of them committed suicide. Mahili Tamang of Anaikot-9, Kamala Tamang of Jaisithok-5 and Ganga Chaulagain of Patlekheth-4 committed suicide under the trauma of losing their near and dear ones in the conflict. Widows of conflict victims said that, at times, they also felt like committing suicide.

Those living say that they are enduring discrimination, unable to get justice and relief. They also need psycho-social help. Demands for resources have increased with additional burden of responsibilities on the large family heads. Big families find it difficult to feed their members.

An organization--Reena-Arpan Dalit Utthan Manch--set up in the name of Reena and her brother Surendra, has been undertaking some social activities in the district. This organization aims at working in the areas of caste discrimination, conflict victims, women and children. This family has been inspiring other families of victims to unite for transitional justice. ●



# Honor Alone Doesn't Help Life



Teli family. Inset: Deependra. File photo.

## ● Shatrughan Nepal

In Birgunj, on February 2, 2007, during the Madhes movement, the police had killed the only son of Raj Kumari Devi Sah Teli. The villagers did not inform the mother of her son's death, fearing that the news could be too shocking for her to hear. Deependra had succumbed to bullet injuries. Local FM radio stations had confirmed his death. After taking part in the political demonstrations, the villagers returned to their Madhawal village in Jhauwa Guthi VDC in the evening. They told Raj Kumari that Deependra had a bullet injury on his feet and was undergoing treatment in the hospital.

The following day, a large number of villagers went to Birgunj. They told Raj Kumari that they would find out what had happened to Deependra. Raj Kumari and other family members also wanted to go to the hospital to meet Deependra, but the villagers stopped them. They did this as they thought they would not be able to calm the family members when they would see the dead body. As it is customary in villages, it was natural that the villagers acted

like patrons to the Teli family of three women and a child, Tarachandra, Deependra's son.

The villagers suppressed the news until the next day. After the postmortem of the body in the hospital, the demonstrators rallied in Birgunj city carrying the body

of Deependra and chanting slogans. They had planned to place the body at Ghantaghar and intensify their movement. But the villagers did not allow the agitators to display his body that way. After much debate, they brought the body to the village for last rites.

Honor alone is not enough to manage life. If her husband attained martyrdom for the right of the Madhesis, the plight of the martyr's family should be a matter of shame. "Now who would be ready to sacrifice life?"

Recalling the incident, Deependra's mother Raj Kumari said, "He had told me that he was going out on his motorcycle for half an hour. How could I forget the incident that took place on the 17th day of the Madhes movement on February 2, 2007."

On that particular day, the movement had reached its climax. The agitators were planning to launch their city-centered demonstrations. People from the villages of Parsa were preparing to gather in Birgunj. The district administration had imposed curfew in the city, yet thousands of people, including the youth, thronged the city to fight for their rights.

The Madhes movement that erupted following the December 26, 2006 communal clash in Nepalgunj had spread like a wild fire in other districts of Terai. Dozens of people were killed and by February 6, 2007, hundreds of others were injured. The Madhes-based parties, which were not satisfied with some provisions of the interim constitution promulgated on December 16, 2006, launched the movement. They were demanding an amendment to the constitution in order to ensure the rights of the Madhesis. The movement reached its heights with demands for justice to the Madhesis, proportional representation in the Constituent Assembly on the basis of population, regional autonomy, participation of Madhesis in the drafting of the transitional policies, guarantee of citizenship rights, an end to discrimination against the

Madhesis in appointments in civil service and security agencies, control in Maoists extremism and return of the captured land to the rightful owners. Foiling the curfew, a large number of people arrived in the city from villages in order to give a final blow to the government, in fulfilling their demands. Deependra was one of the members of the masses that reached Birgunj. He was hit by a bullet in a police firing near the veterinary services office in Birgunj. Deependra died on the spot while Birbal Mukhiya Bin, a farmer of Chaukiya Bairiya and Mahabir Prasad Sah of Birgunj Sub-Municipality were killed in the incident. Police had fired to disperse the crowd.

Deependra's family was informed about his death only after his body was brought to the village. Upon hearing the news about the death of her only son, Raj Kumari became unconscious. Her pregnant daughter-in-law, Sita, also fainted. "Sita was in her seventh month of pregnancy," said Raj Kumari. "We, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and my old mother, did not fully regain consciousness for 13 days."

The ancestral home of Deependra was Athraha, Sugauli, in Parsa district. His father Siwnath Sah had been living in his in-laws' home in Jhauwa in the request of his mother-in-law. Raj Kumari's mother had hoped that her daughter and son-in-law would perform her last rites as she had no son. But her son-in-law died earlier and her hope to have the grandson perform her last rites was also shattered with the demise of Deependra.

After the death of his father, Deependra was managing his life by running a poultry business. He used to buy chicks from New Dehli and Narkatiyagunj of India and Maniyari of Parsa and supply them to customers in Birgunj, Hetauda and Kathmandu. He had five *katthas* of land belonging to his grandmother and a thatched-roof house in Jhauwa VDC.

After the death of Deependra, the family faced difficulties in feeding family members and bringing up the children. Those who had loaned Deependra to run the business began to ask for payment. Raj Kumari said she was totally helpless as she had a bedridden old mother and pregnant daughter-in-law to take care of. "We felt his absence acutely," she recalled.

With the passing of days, new problems piled up. The due date of Sita arrived. She had no money at home but she had to admit her daughter-in-law in

Dunkan hospital in Raxaul, India. Meanwhile a ray of hope appeared before her as chairman of Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum Upendra Yadav was visiting Birgunj. The villagers advised she meet Yadav for help. Then Raj Kumari met Yadav at Ranisati Guest House of Birgunj. She shared her woes with him. “I frequented the guest house for eight days. The daughter-in-law was waiting for her operation in hospital. I was visiting to see the party chairman,” recalled Raj Kumari. “But I did not get any assurance of help from him.”

“I want to know who shot my son and why,” she said. She said those who assured her that the culprits would be brought to book were in power. They also had claimed that they would seek details from the government. But she feels that they did nothing except making more people martyrs.

She was very angry with the leader for she felt that he did not care much about her plight. Accompanied by her small grandson, she had approached him several times. Raj Kumari said she did not understand why the party chairman behaved like that while others were hailing her as a martyr’s mother.

After several attempts, a Constituent Assembly member representing the Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum and an engineer, Atma Ram Sah, provided her with some support. He also arranged to send her eldest grandson Tarachandra to school. Sunil Khetan, a businessman of Birgunj, has been bearing the expenses for his study. Khetan rented a room for Tarachandra in Birgunj. Khetan also promised to manage expenses for the education of Rajan, Deependra’s youngest son. He assured that he would manage education expenses of both sons of Deependra for up to class ten.

Earlier, Ajay Kumar Chaurasiya, who was elected to the parliament from the same area, had helped the Teli family after seeing their plight. He provided them with a range of essentials from salt to clothes.

Meanwhile, the state declared Deependra as a martyr and his family received compensation worth one million rupees. The money was a big help for them

to pay the loan taken by Deependra for his business and by Raj Kumari for the delivery of her daughter-in-law. The family lent some money for interest and spent the remaining money in agricultural activities. Yet they have not overcome their worries about their future. Sita has still many years to live. Immediately after the death of her husband, leaders gave her big assurances. "They said they would find me a job. They would erect my husband's statue. But they did nothing," Sita said.

She said that she would be satisfied if she was accorded the rights that ordinary persons enjoy. "I will be happy if the state takes the responsibility to educate my sons and offers me employment," she said. A school graduate, Sita obtained a teaching license with the hope of getting a job. She is now appointed as a volunteer in a child development program in the village school. She gets Rs 1,800 a month. But the money is too little to meet even the subsistence of her youngest son. "I am tired of being honored as a martyr's wife. Only heaps of shawls and my problems are piling up," she said.

According to her, honor alone is not enough to manage life. If her husband attained martyrdom for the right of the Madhesis, the plight of the martyr's family should be a matter of shame. "Now who would be ready to sacrifice life?" she wondered.

These days Sita lives with her eldest son in Birgunj. Every day, she sends her son to school and then goes to her village 20 kilometers away from the city. There at the school, she works for the child development program. She spends Rs 40 a day for transportation, that is, Rs. 1,200 a month, in bus fares. Her monthly income is only Rs.1,800. After the Madhes Movement a provision was introduced exempting the bus fares to the family members of martyrs. Later, the bus operators started charging them the fares again.

Sita recalled the time when Deependra was alive: "He used to say we had a poultry business. We had two motorcycles at home." Deependra, she recalled, used to participate in the movement without informing family members. "Later my mother-in-law came to know about this and tried to persuade him not to do that. But he did not listen to her. We knew that he was arrested by the police twice. The villagers freed him from the police. Had he followed his mother's instructions, we would not have faced this condition now."

Their house has three rooms but one of them is not in a usable condition. So they do not have enough space to live. Sita Devi said that after the Madhes Movement, a Madhesi leader was appointed to the post of education minister but no one cared about the martyr's family. She further said that she was hurt more when Renu Devi was the education minister.

Raj Kumari thinks that the culprit who shot her son to death should be brought to book. But she said that the Madhesi leaders were indifferent about it. "I want to know who shot my son and why," she said. She said those who assured her that the culprits would be brought to book were in power. They also had claimed that they would seek details from the government. But she feels that they did nothing except making more people martyrs.

As everybody can raise voices for their right in a democracy, Deependra had not committed any crime by raising voices for the rights of the Madhesi people, says Raj Kumari. She wishes to see Deependra's murderer punished. There are some who claimed that her son was killed for violating the curfew order. But she says, if that is the case, all Madhesis violated the curfew across Terai. The police could have used batons, and fired in the air only to warn the demonstrators, instead of killing them. "But the police opened fire violating the rules," she says. She is ready to file a case if action would be taken against the murderer of her son. ●

# The Massacre Of Kahule



Narumaya Tamang, with a photo of her son Chandraman.  
Photo: Deepak Adhikari

## ● Deepak Adhikari

On November 28, 2002, before the break of dawn, a group of army men entered Buddhi Bahadur's home in Kahule- 4, Nuwakot. "Maoists have been killed in the hills, come along with some spades to bury them," said one of them. Buddhi Bahadur, who had been earning livelihood through his three *ropanis* of land in the slopes, ascended the hills along with the soldiers.

It was only after reaching the massacre site, a small waterway called Walagang, did he realize that his 16-year-old son Chandraman Tamang was among the ones who had been killed. "Babu cried and passed out the moment he saw the scene," said Chandraman's 40-year-old mother Nuramaya Tamang. Rest of the villagers also gathered there. Witnessing the death of five youngsters from the same village left the whole community enveloped in a blanket of grief and anger. Eight years later, talking to this scribe, Nuramaya recalled that unfortunate day: "I came to know about it only after the army left. People took me there only when I was uncontainable after crying," she said.



Names of the five people killed in the previous night were made public later. They were 14-year-old Kanchhaman Tamang, 15-year-old Chokta Tamang, 16-year-old Chandraman Tamang and 17-year-old Jeet Bahadur Tamang and Pariman Tamang.

In the evening of November 27, the *ghewa* of recently deceased Purko Tamang was being observed at Gumba Danda which is 45 minutes from the massacre site. *Ghewa* is a death rite in Tamang community that continues for three days after the thirteenth day of a person's death. Eighty-five years old Purko was grandfather to most of the five youngsters who were killed that night near Walagang. Purko's relatives who lived in the same village, mostly of Tamangs, had gathered there on the final day of *ghewa* with rice, liquor and money to offer at the ceremony.



Chandraman Tamang. File photo.

“Almost five hundred people had gathered there,” deceased Pariman's brother Kaluman Tamang said. “All five of them were leaving the village the next day.” Jeet Bahadur worked as a daily wage laborer in Kathmandu while fifth grade dropout Pariman worked as a helper at a shop in Pokhara. Chandraman, Chokta and Kanchhaman were studying at the nearby Panchalinga lower secondary school in eighth, seventh and sixth grades, respectively. “I had met my brother (Pariman) there. They were still enjoying till 1:00 a.m.,” said Kaluman.

The villagers did not have the faintest memory of soldiers patrolling their village before that day. But on November 28, almost two hundred soldiers patrolled around Danda Gaun and made their way towards Kahule. It was



already late into the night when they reached Kahule. So they postponed their plan to move towards another village, Bhalche, and decided to spend the night at Kahule. According to Kaluman, the soldiers had taken 20 liters of liquor from a house near Walagang and set up tents in a nearby field.

At around 1:00 a.m., a group of fifteen youngsters headed towards their home from the *ghewa*. They were unaware about the patrolling soldiers in their village. With torchlights and *raako*, the group moved ahead leaving those whose houses were on the way. Since some females were also in the group, the youngsters were heading forward only after dropping the women home. Only seven people were left when they reached near a place called Lamarang. Two of them headed towards their home from there. The remaining five descended below the hilly path. Suddenly a gunshot was heard around 1:45 a.m. The next one followed fifteen minutes after the first firing. Chandraman, Chokta and Kanchhman had lost their lives in the first round of firing. Pariman and Jeet Bahadur lost theirs in the second one. Four corpses were found in a row near the drain the next day. The fifth one was found lying in the field. According to Kaluman, Chandra, Pariman, Jeet Bahadur, Kanchhman and Chokta were shot in the chest, leg, stomach, forehead and right leg, in that order.

A village that had never experienced anything like that was left in utter grief after the death of five youngsters. People living nearby, from whom the soldiers had taken liquor, had already fled. The corpses were under army's control till 10:30 in the morning. It was only when the army left, that the relatives were able to see the corpses. Everyone was in mourning. It wasn't before late afternoon when the corpses were taken to the nearby Dongale Danda for the funeral.

"Two to three hundred villagers had gathered," recalls Kaluman. The school was closed, all the teachers and students had come there. The corpses were set alight. But before they could turn to ashes, they received a message from the army asking not to stay there. The army's order forced people at the funeral to leave the corpses half burning, says Kaluman. "The next day we carried firewood from each house and finished what we had left half done," he said.

The massacre at Nuwakot's remote and undeveloped village did get attention, but only after two weeks. On December 11, the *Kantipur* daily carried the news

on its first page with the headline “School boys claimed to have been killed by the army, compensation demanded”. But the announcement released by the Home Ministry on November 29, just a day after the massacre said, “Some people were found involved in suspicious activities around the perimeter of security force’s temporary base in Kahule area. Five suspicious people among them died during an encounter with the patrolling security forces.”

Kaluman says that a soldier who also happened to be his acquaintance accepted the mistake saying, “It wasn’t intentional. It was by chance that your brother became one of the victims.” But the afflicted family didn’t remain silent. On December 11, they filed an application at the District Administration Office, Nuwakot, asking for compensation. Following that, a representative from Informal Sector Services Center (INSEC) had also arrived in the village for investigation, he says. Unlike in other regions of the country, Maoists couldn’t make claims like ‘those innocent youth belonged to our party’, says Kaluman. According to him, the army’s district headquarters had also called a press conference to state that the incident took place by mistake.

Kaluman says that the Maoists tried to interfere after the massacre. “When we tried to go to the headquarters to take compensation, they’d tell us not to receive the money,” he tells. A few Maoists from the village and a few from outside it told them so, he says. “We couldn’t go to Trishuli from here,” Narumaya said. Locals were mostly confined to their village.

Back then, conflict in the country had peaked. In the armed conflict that was started by Maoists on February 13, 1996, nearly 4,400 people had already lost their lives. The so- called ‘People’s War’ that started with a few minor attacks in three districts by an underground party had now engulfed every corner of the country- from Mechi to Mahakali. Only a few districts were left untouched by the flames of the ongoing conflict. The government had already formed a separate Armed Police Force unit to fight the Maoists. King Gyanendra took over the control on October 4, 2002. He appointed Lokendra Bahadur Chand, the Prime Minister during the last days of Panchayat regime, as the new premier.

Sher Bahadur Deuba, the Prime Minister before Chand, was removed from the post. The king said Deuba was ‘incapable’ as he wasn’t able to hold parliamentary elections. It had only been a year since the army had been

mobilized against the Maoists who had waged the armed conflict since the last seven years.

On the other hand, political parties like Nepali Congress and CPN-UML had taken to the streets protesting against the 'royal takeover'. After the royal takeover, the king had sidelined political parties and appointed leaders with Panchayat regime background as ministers. But it was a strange situation in which CPN-UML leaders like Kamal Chaulagain and Radhakrishna Mainali were part of the king-led government. The country was in the throes of a triangular power struggle involving the political parties sidelined at that time, the government led by the king, and the underground Maoist rebels.

Such events of power struggle shouldn't have affected Buddhi Bahadur and Narumaya's family. But the war came unannounced at their doorsteps. Chandraman's mother, who lived closest to the massacre spot, recalls her son as an intelligent boy and a helpful person.

"He was the only one mature enough," she says, "he used to help me with household chores in the morning and evening." Chandraman, a football enthusiast, had returned home from school that day. "After dinner his friends came to take him to the *ghewa*," she said, "I told him not to go, but he left around eight at night." When he didn't return that night, she suspected he might have slept over at his friend's place.

Even though the villagers had filed complaints after the massacre, the environment was still rife with fear for a few days, recalls Kaluman. He also adds that the Maoists had warned them not to accept the compensation. But in the year 2061 B.S., each family received one hundred thousand rupees. "No matter what sum of money we get, our son isn't coming back," Narumaya says. She said that the money they received was all spent in repaying their debts. Furthermore, tuberculosis got hold of her husband Budhi Bahadur. He has been working as an artisan in Kathmandu since last Falgun. "He has become ill because of our son's demise," she says of her husband. Their 20-year-old daughter Chokti Maya is already married and her 16-year-old daughter Jal Maya lives with her at Kahule. Similarly, their 14-year-old son Santa Kumar is studying Buddhism in Himanchal Pradesh, India. "We sent him away because after that incident, it is not safe to stay in the village," she says. Her youngest son Sanjeeb is five years old now. He was born after Chandra's death.

In the only picture that they have of Chandra, the boy can be seen in a Buddhist monk's attire with another young friend, his aunt's son, who is now in Qatar. In the picture, a petite-framed Chandra looks like he is about to smile. Narumaya lives in the tin-roofed, three storied house. Other houses are clustered in the neighborhood. When this scribe reached there to talk to her, all her neighbors gathered around the porch. "I won't go anywhere, caring for the baby and cattle takes up all my time," she said, "there is nobody to help around."

Narumaya only said that action should have been taken against the guilty. But the guilty soldiers haven't been identified yet. Relatives of the deceased cannot even think of forgiving them. According to Kaluman, they need to be behind the bars and impunity should end with both Maoists and army respecting human rights.

The deceased's families haven't yet been officially informed on why their sons were killed and who the culprits were. There might have been discussion about this in the power centers of Kathmandu but those afflicted have no idea about it. Narumaya only said that action should have been taken against the guilty. But the guilty soldiers haven't been identified yet. Relatives of the deceased cannot even think of forgiving them. According to Kaluman, they need to be behind the bars and impunity should end with both Maoists and army respecting human rights.

Kaluman, who lost his brother in the massacre, says that the compensation amount given by the government was just enough for the funeral rites. Relatives of the deceased want to build memorials in the name of the youth. They hope to receive government's assistance. But they say that all they have received are assurances like providing them with one million rupees and sending the afflicted family's members to Korea. "We have worn out in going to Kathmandu and running after political leaders," he says, "our brothers aren't ever going to come back." But he says that after the incident the village remained peaceful because the soldiers didn't come again. "Neither the army nor Maoists could enter the village immediately after that particular

incident,” he says. “They didn’t come to the village for 2 to 3 months after the innocent children had been killed.”

Kaluman feels that it is necessary to improve the country’s judicial system to ensure that such incidents are not repeated. He says that leaders need to safeguard people’s rights in the constitution. They need to make sure that the general public won’t have to lose their lives the way his brother did, he adds.

A dirt road has reached Kahule that is populated by around 3,400 people. In spite of water shortage, green peas farming has brought some earnings since one and a half year ago. However, the grim picture of the village surfaces as more and more men from the village continue to head towards the Gulf countries and young girls continue to get tricked by traffickers into prostitution. Kahule, which is only 100 kilometers away from the capital city, appears to be merely a place for political leaders to secure their seats in Singha Durbar. For instance, this place is key for the political career of Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani and Arjun Narasingh K.C. It falls under their constituency. Maoist leader Post Bahadur Bogati’s house is also not very far from Kahule. His son Prakash was killed in a nearby place called Satdobate in the year 2057 B.S.

The massacre at Kahule drew national and international attention. The Royal Nepal Army had formed a three member committee including Pankaj Karki from its human rights cell. According to *Nepal* newsweekly, the committee had interrogated almost 60 people from the village.

Eight years on, life in Kahule is still the same. Even now the villagers haven’t been able to forget that dreadful night of November 2002 when five innocent youngsters from the village were put to the same death bed. ●

# Goma's Woes

## ● Bimala Dhakal

Leaving behind a 4-year-old son, Bhuvan, a 3-month-old daughter, Usha, and wife Goma, Govinda departed from this physical world on the night of January 23, 2002. It was 10 p.m. at Gopetaar Police Post of Paanchthar when bullets fired by Maoist rebels hit his abdomen and chin. Govinda died on the spot in that dreadful encounter.

Daughter Usha never got to know her father. Tears from Bhuvan's eyes never stopped rolling down. Their tender lips often opened with questions: "Mom, where is our father? When is he coming home? Let's go, meet him."

After bearing, and then nourishing Govinda all these years, and being blessed with a grandson and a granddaughter, Govinda's mother will sadly miss her son in the coming Dashain festival, unlike before. She will never get a chance to shower good wishes on her son while putting the red *tika* on his forehead and *jamara* on his head.

Govinda was one of the five police officers killed in the encounter with Maoist fighters. Four other officers were wounded. Govinda, born on November 23, 1973 in Yuba Village Development Committee (VDC) of Terhathum District, joined Nepal Police



Govinda Thapaliya. File photo.

in the year 2049 B.S. Since then he had been serving in the public security sector.

The police station, in Panchami VDC-1 that lies by the Phidim-Taaplejung road on the Mechi Highway, is situated off the highway on the northern slopes. It is approximately 30 kilometers away from the district headquarters of Phidim. Surrounded by a forest, the police post was quiet and dark that night. The 13 cops on duty were unaware about an impending attack. Neither were they prepared for a counter attack. Hundreds of Maoist rebels, sticking to their established military tactics, created noises away from the police station, tricked the locals and attacked the post. That night, the firing lasted for six hours. Maoists destroyed the police post using hand grenades. By early morning, the rebels had disappeared, leaving two corpses of their comrades behind.

That night, a group of Nepalis was murdered by another group of Nepalis. In the war, waged with the slogan to uplift the working classes, on one side were liberation army personnel and on the other were police personnel mobilized for state security. Both largely came from the poor strata of the society.

From Paanchthar, after a day's journey by bus, this writer reached Jhapa in March 2011 to collect the details about the incident. The displaced Thapaliya family were living in Shanti Chowk of Duwagadi VDC-4.

There as I listened to Goma's story, I became speechless. I thought I was only reviving her pain by asking her to recall the 10-year-old story of her husband's death. This book was going to be published with similar stories of people victimized during the conflict. Perhaps, after reading the book, Goma would find a genuine reason to console herself by seeing that she was not the only victim of the conflict. There were many other Nepalis living her grief. With this in mind, I gathered up to continue the interview with her.

Goma recalled that in the summer of 1995, there was a social function at her house. The family was organizing her brothers' *bratabandha*, a sacred thread-bearing ceremony. Police personnel from the nearby Jorpokhari station were also invited to the event. That is when Goma first met Govinda. Friendship deepened into love. In two years, the affair blossomed into martial relationship. Being in the police force during a hostile situation, Govinda often had to move places. He did not always get to live with his wife.

She held her son's tender hands while he lit the funeral pyre. "That painful moment is beyond description. I wish no child became an orphan; and no young woman a widow," Goma said



He was mobilised in different parts of the country. Right after marriage, he was transferred to Biratnagar. Two years later, he returned to Gopetaar, near Jorpokhari. "In a few days there, he left us forever," Goma said.

The Thapaliya couple had met only 10 days before the attack on Gopetaar Police Station. On the day of Maghe Sankranti, a winter time festival, her mother brought special delicacies, prepared by herself, to their rented place in Jorpokhari. Goma had cooked rice, lentils and vegetable curry of *skush* (gourd) roots. After lunch, Govinda left for duty. The next time Goma saw him was two days after his death.

"With my new-born baby, I took my meal early and went to bed early. I heard big thuds and thought somebody was loading wooden logs on a truck. I came to know later that a shootout had taken place. I went out and saw people shouting in panic over an attack on the police post in the bazaar," Goma said.

"On hearing bomb explosions and gunshots, I could not think of anything other than to pray for my husband's life," she added. She could not sleep the whole night fearing the worst for him. Then she forgot herself and started to worry about her son Bhuvan and daughter Usha. As the destiny had it, Govinda and four other police officers were gunned down by Maoists that night.

Govinda's family was kept in the dark about the real details of the attack. The next day, Goma's father Chhabi Lal Adhikari, who had arrived in Jorpokhari



from Sabhang, tried to enquire about his son-in-law. Police told him all personnel were safe. Only when Adhikari asked a cook at the station, he came to know that, in fact, Govinda had succumbed to bullet injuries in the abdomen.

Now that her husband was gone, Goma was very worried for her children's upbringing and education. She was equally concerned about how to meet her household expenses in the coming days. She was stunned and devastated. Today, she somehow manages her resources for subsistence. One has to bear what life has to offer, after all. She is receiving support and care from her parents and brothers.

Goma's parents moved to Jhapa to live by her side and share her grief. They sold their land, property and shop at their hometown of Jorpokhari, in Panchthar. Usha, her daughter, has been admitted to the local school and her son, Bhuvan, has been sent off to Kathmandu. There the boy is on a half scholarship at Samriddha Higher Secondary School, a private institution. With help from her father and brothers, she received a compensation of Rs. 750 thousand from the state as her entitlement to a martyr's family. In Jhapa, she built a small shelter to live. She spent the medical allowance money to perform the death-rites with a 7-day long Hindu puja (saptaha) after a year from the incident.

She sadly recalled that the Maoists did not allow death rituals to be performed for any police officer killed at that station in Panchthar. Therefore, Govinda's death rites were performed in Jhapa. She held her son's tender hands while he lit the funeral pyre. "That painful moment is beyond description. I wish no child became an orphan; and no young woman a widow," Goma said.

However, the past is now past. She hopes no Nepali will have to see their children dying for no reason. Goma states that the government should make strict laws and implement them effectively. She wants to see peace, well-being, law and order prevail in the nation. She also wants to see a stable government, and an end to dirty politics of the various parties. "The police personnel are also Nepali citizens. They have joined the force to earn their livelihood and support their children and family," Goma said. She asked: "What did the Maoists gain by killing those police officers?"

The national security was deteriorating in Nepal towards the end of 2001. The armed conflict, which was begun under the slogan of liberating the working classes and eliminating capitalism, was gaining its momentum. The attack in Gopetar police station was the first of its kind in the Eastern Development Region. After the attack, Maoists broke the ceasefire declared on November 22, following four months of observing it. A series of brutal attacks started when their peace negotiations with the government failed.

The situation became hostile when former king Gyanendra

declared a state of emergency on November 26. The army was mobilized to wipe out Maoist rebels, declared “terrorists” by the government. Statistics show that within four months, the death toll of Maoists and civilians reached 1077. Maoists alone had killed 405 citizens. More than 3,000 lost their lives since the beginning of the Maoist People’s War. Later, on May 28, 2002, king Gyanendra dissolved the cabinet.

Goma feels proud that the state security forces fulfilled their duty towards the nation with full honesty. They had portrayed their true patriotism by fighting the whole night. They sacrificed their life, but didn’t surrender at any cost.

Goma emphasizes that there should be memorials for the brave soldiers who received martyrdom and they should be honored not only on the Police Day. She insists on having another public holiday to commemorate the late soldiers. Their children should have access to free higher education. The government should guarantee employment for the members of the martyrs’ families. The state should also form a truth commission to bring the culprits

Goma is disgusted with the new government. She questioned: “Did they realize how many women became widows? How many mothers lost their children? How many infants became orphans? The situation never seems to improve. Where is the change in the country? Did they succeed in restoring the peace?” She prays for her husband’s departed soul to rest in peace and her siblings’ future guaranteed by the state.

within the law. “To curb malpractices, strict laws should be implemented. If that is not done, anybody can be a victim, not just me,” Goma said.

She is disgusted with the new government. She questioned: “Did they realize how many women became widows? How many mothers lost their children? How many infants became orphans?” In a frustrated tone, Goma said, “The situation never seems to improve.”

She further asks: “Where is the change in the country. Did they succeed in restoring the peace?” Goma prays for her husband’s departed soul to rest in peace and her siblings’ future guaranteed by the state.

She claims to have not received any substantial support from her husband’s kins. She would have failed to build a small house for shelter without the firm support of her parents. If she had received assistance from the government to educate her children, her daily life would be less burdensome. The monthly cash provided by the government in the name of her deceased husband barely covers half of her son’s school fees. She said that both the state and other organizations should facilitate the victim’s life by coordinating self-employment programs.

Her children immensely miss their father on festivities like Dashain and Tihar. They do daily prayers in front of Govinda’s portrait placed on the wall of their prayer room. “Now my children’s love for their father is limited to the portrait. What can be the most miserable moment for them other than this?” Goma said, with tears in eyes and in a feeble voice. ●

# A Living Widow



Sita Rana Magar. File photo.

## ● Maheshwar Chamling Rai

Sita Rana Magar, 27, wishes she could take a stroll with her husband like many other women do. With him, she wants to share her moments of happiness and sorrow, see movies and go shopping. She wants to take her husband along while visiting her parents during festivals. She also has a wish to mother children and carry them with her. But all these wishes are limited only to her imagination. Sita has spent a decade like a widow. She does not know where her husband, Bishnu Kepchhaki Magar, is.

Sita had tied her nuptial knots with Bishnu when she was only 17. Their marriage was arranged by the consent of their parents. It is natural for a young individual to have many wishes and wants after marriage. Sita also had them; she wanted to explore more about her conjugal life. Sadly for her, she did not get to experience it for long. Her husband Bishnu (official name is Buddhi Bahadur), 31, went missing.

When Sita remembers the incident, she cannot stop crying. She prefers solitude, because, then, she can swim in her world of imagination until she becomes emotional and desperate. Over time, she has also learnt to easily hide her pains with smiles whenever she meets someone. She tries her

best to suppress her anguish in the public. Not because of her wish, but out of compulsion. She still has hopes her husband will return, although 10 years have already elapsed since he went missing. She imagines the day when her husband Bishnu will appear and ask her, “Are you okay, Sita? Here, I am home.”

She married 19-year-old Bishnu of Chisapani, Rauta VDC-5 on January 28, 2000. Before her marriage, she stayed with her parents in Murkuchi in Rauta VDC 9. As the two were too young, they spent the first weeks of their wedding trying to become familiar with each other. Both of them were trying to understand what life actually was. They were students. Bishnu had just passed SLC and Sita was an eighth grader. A year after wedding, Bishnu left for Siraha for further studies in January 2001. He was interested in English and the only community college of the district then--Triyuga Janata Mutiple Campus, Gaighat, had not introduced the optional English course in its Proficiency Certificate Level. Another college was more expensive. So, he went to study in a government campus, Surya Narayan Satya Narayan Yadav Multiple Campus of Siraha. He had a rented room near the campus when he started attending the classes. He met the expenses for his food and accommodation by tutoring the children of the locality. But, all of a sudden, he went missing on February 11, 2001 from his rented room. Neither the landlord nor the campus authorities knew his whereabouts. He did not send any message to the landlord or the family members thereafter.

Sita said that the family knew about his disappearance a month after he left his rented room in Siraha. Sita heard about Bishnu’s disappearance from her in-laws. She was engulfed in sorrow and felt uneasy when she heard the bad news. She did not express her pains. She believed that he had gone somewhere and would return home one day. Bishnu was searched everywhere—in the villages of relatives, friends and acquaintances. But his whereabouts were not known. Later, the family of his landlord informed that he was in contact with the Maoists. Thus, all guessing went on to show Maoists had taken him away.

In 2001, the Maoist conflict had reached its height. People’s war had gripped the villages. The Maoists used to follow persons who they decided were against them. They did not stand gambling and force-fed people with

their cards and with carom boards and dices mixed with salt. They carried out physical punishment, beating people with split bamboos, and saying that they were teaching the ‘immoral and unjust’ a lesson. The conflict was spreading and the Maoists were trying to establish a parallel government in the villages. Many youths fled as the Maoists began to visit villages with their slogan

She still has hopes her husband will return, although 10 years have already elapsed since he went missing. She imagines the day when her husband Bishnu will appear and ask her, “Are you okay, Sita? Here, I am home.”

*‘ki jana deu, ki dhana deu’* (give us either a family member or money). The poor villagers were not in a position to donate to them. Many parents, therefore, were forced to send their children with the Maoists instead of the money. Several others found no option other than to send their children to the Gulf countries for employment. Sita does not know where that storm of the ‘people’s war’ took her husband. She does not know for sure whether he is still alive or not.

Sita and her family asked many persons about Bishnu. No one had clear details about him. They submitted petition to the political parties and drew the government’s attention through the local administration. But none of them could tell anything about Bishnu. They even failed to find out whether he was alive. Sita said that no one gave any official fact or information. “We asked many persons, but they simply ignored our requests saying that they knew nothing about Bishnu,” Sita said.

Neither the state did take any responsibility about Bishnu’s conditions nor did the Maoists tell the facts. “We urged them at least to show his body, if not the man himself, but our appeal fell on deaf ears of the agencies and the parties,” she said. She expressed her disappointment that neither the police nor the top level Maoist leaders provided her with any information. She was not paid a single penny in the form of relief, let alone the compensation.

Sita and other conflict victims formed an organization ‘Society of Conflict Victims for Justice’ to fight for the rights of the conflict victims. She worked as its founder secretary at the local level. But she failed to give herself justice despite working in the responsible post. She realized that ‘access’ was important to accomplish tasks from such organizations. Having worked there for three years, she realized she was unable to get justice. “Source-force is everything. Those who have their ‘men’ in the powerful posts have already received relief and compensation, but I had no one in the powerful posts and did not get anything,” she said. Sita said that though she obtained some experience in social work, she was fed up with doing it.

According to Shobha Dahal, the chairperson of the Society, Sita failed to get the relief due to flaws in documentation. The society and the government got confused when Sita and her father-in-law claimed the same relief money. She said initiatives were made for all required recommendations and work was in progress.

Not only Sita, her father-in-law Bajir Bahadur also submitted an application to the ‘Peace Committee of Udayapur’ claiming that he was eligible to get the relief. The problem got complicated when Sita had no birth certificate. Acting secretary of the peace committee Tulasi Prasad Koirala said that Sita’s letter claiming the relief was registered late when many had already received recommendations for such relief. Coordinator of the committee Bishnu Bahadur Raut informed that they have forwarded applications of four victims’ families, including Sita’s, to Peace Ministry for the needed actions.

Sita said that two single women, Shobha Dahal and Sanu Karki, who were in the Society as founder members, received a relief of Rs. 100,000 each. Their husbands were killed by the Maoists.

According to ICRC, besides Bishnu, six other persons went missing from Udayapur during the time of conflict. But the local peace committee, UCPN-Maoist and district administration office had records of only four persons. According to Koirala, Bishnu of Rauta-5, Lila Raj Acharya of Triyuga Municipality-1, Megh Bahadur Katuwal of Tribeni-5 and Prakash Tamang (Waiba) of Thokshila-5 went missing during the conflict. Assistant

Chief District Officer Jhalak Ram Subedi also confirmed that only four persons went missing during the conflict. CDO Kumar Bahadur Shrestha said that records showed that all four disappeared from the state side.

Slowly, in the absence of husband, Sita has started feeling isolated from her family. Her in-laws often repeat their calls for discipline that she should stay under the control of

family, even without their son around. When they began to suspect and monitor her movement outside home, she often felt uneasy.

With the passing of years, Sita slowly forgot the physical details of her husband. "I do not remember him like I did earlier," Sita said. "I spent so many years in his memory, but now I do not think he will return." Moreover, these days she is busy with other things. She has been associated with half a dozen district-level organizations. She is a treasurer of district level youth association of CPN-UML and Magar Association. A campus student, she also has to attend the classes on a regular basis.

As she was too young during her wedding, she halted her studies for a few years after her husband went missing. But as her schoolmates were continuing their studies, she was encouraged to return to college. Her friends also advised she should keep up with her studies. She recently appeared in the B A. second year exams. "I have committed myself to complete the study to become a conscious citizen," she said. Seeing her involvement in the social activities, her circle of locals has nicknamed her as 'a conscious woman'.

Sita and her family asked many persons about Bishnu. No one had clear details about him. They submitted petition to the political parties and drew the government's attention through the local administration. But none of them could tell anything about Bishnu. They even failed to find out whether he was alive.



But she laments that Bajir Bahadur has not truly accepted her as his daughter-in-law. “Earlier, they liked me and brought me to this house as a bride, now when their son went missing they are trying to avoid me under the pretext that I had no marriage registration.” She said that she knew nothing about marriage registration as she was too young during the time.

She said she spent many years hoping that her husband would come back. But now she laments that she is sad because she doesn’t know the whereabouts of her husband, if he is dead or alive, and she has also been denied relief and compensation. ●



## A Mother's Tears

Sushila Wali with her daughter Deepa. File photo.

### ● Bishnu Kumari Khanal

The Maoists had launched the 'people's war' from the jungles and now they were focusing their efforts to increase the number of their militias and cadres. Claiming to be a party fighting for the emancipation of the people, the CPN-Maoist had publicly called for each family to send at least one of its members to join it and carry guns. Turn by turn, each household had to feed and accommodate their cadres. They took young school students, who knew nothing about politics, en masse, to their programs and compelled them to carry guns in place of pens. They spread terror in the villages. The general people were very angry with these activities of the Maoists, but fearing for their lives, they were unable to speak a word.

During that time, Deepa Wali, the 15-year-old daughter of Sushila and Purna Singh Wali of Chorkule 5, was an eighth grader in local Itaram School. As usual, on August 24, 2001, she left for school in the morning. The Maoists had a mass meeting in her school that day. They delivered emotional, blood-wrenching speeches which were received with a big applause by the people present in the meeting. In the evening, the Maoist activists took a group of school students, including Deepa, by force, to another program scheduled in a nearby Kalyan Gaun. These girls and boys returned home the following day. But Deepa and two other girls did not. The Maoists compelled the three young

girls to go underground by making them their party's activists. When the Maoists took their daughter away from school and made her underground, her parents, Purna Sing and Sushila, were shocked. After their daughter went missing, they searched for her, but in vain. They continued their search for one and a half years.

Later, Nepal Army came to know that Deepa was taken by the Maoists. Its personnel started tormenting the Wali family. "Where is your daughter? Bring her to us right now, otherwise the consequences won't be good," an army man, who had come to them from Bhawanibox Battalion, Chhinchu, warned the family. They vowed to eliminate the Maoists from the soil of Nepal and warned the Wali family to pay heed. Purna and Sushila told the army officers that their daughter, who knew nothing about Maoism, was taken by the Maoists forcefully. The parents told the officers, "In fact, we will be grateful to you if you could free her from the Maoists and bring her back to us."

Even after that, Nepal army men frequented their home. The Maoists also used to stay in their home while they came to the village. The Maoists took Wali family as the spies of Nepal army and the army looked at them as Maoist spies. Thereafter, the army started mentally torturing them further.

During that time, the Wali family had a mill in the village. They had set it up by spending about 500,000 rupees. Sushila said the army dismantled the mill and took the parts to Chhinchu barracks. The army men also ransacked their cloth shop. They tore the cloths and took them to Chhinchu barracks. Worse still, they started taking goats to the barracks. On the other side, the Maoists were also tormenting the family, which had to manage food and accommodation for them when they came there in groups. The Wali family suffered losses from both the security forces and the Maoists, simultaneously. When it was too difficult for them to stay in the village, the family moved to Latikoili VDC 9 of Surkhet.

Meanwhile, Deepa arrived home, all of a sudden, on March 15, 2003. The Wali family were happy to see their daughter after one and a half years. "Mom, my life will be a waste. I don't know when I will be killed. But give good education to my brothers and sisters. I wish for their happy future," Sushila said recalling the words of Deepa. "During her six-day stay, Deepa repeated these words," Sushila added. On March 20, a group of Maoists came and took Deepa away

saying that an underground activist like her should not stay at home. Again, Deepa went underground. In September of the same year, she again came home to celebrate Teej. On her way home, she wanted to buy some clothes in Rang Ghat market. She bought clothes and was taking her light meal in a hotel in the morning. A group of soldiers arrested her from the hotel. Sushila believed that the hotel owner helped the army men to arrest her daughter.

Despite a long search, the whereabouts of Deepa were not known. Sushila even reached the parliament building to lodge her complaints. In Kathmandu, she participated in the sit-ins and rallies organized by one of the associations of conflict victims. Yet she got no clues as to the status of her daughter. Instead, she had to suffer police batons.

The army took her to Chhinchu barracks. They kept Deepa with them for three months to hunt the Maoists. “When the army took her along during the patrolling, my nephew Prakash once met her, but I could never see her,” Sushila said. “Despite my several requests, the army did not allow me to see my daughter.” She said that she and her husband reached the gate of the army barracks insisting on the army to let them see their daughter, but the army did not listen to them.

“My cousin, who was working in the Armed Police Force, was also on patrol with the army. One day Deepa gave a cucumber to the army men. Some of them said they would not eat the cucumber served by a Maoist. My cousin told them that the Maoists were also humans and they should not be mistreated,” Sushila recalled. But Prakash did not know at that time that the girl with them was Deepa because he had only seen her back when she was a small girl. Even Deepa could not recognize her maternal uncle. Later when my cousin came to see me during Tihar and saw Deepa’s photo, he cried. He said had he known Deepa then, he could have saved her, but he could not, Sushila said. He was ready to quit his job to save Deepa, Sushila recalled her cousin’s words.

Deepa's father died of stress while frequenting the army barracks. "He died remembering his daughter," Sushila said.

After the death of her husband, Sushila had the responsibility to feed her four-member family while managing expenses for the education of her three children. She faced the challenge of working as a housemaid and a wage earner. She said, "I have to give education to my children and make them 'big'. I have to do this to realize the wish of my eldest daughter."

Though she was not allowed to see her daughter, Sushila went daily to the gate of the army barracks with Deepa's favorite food. She used to give the food to an army man telling him to hand it to Deepa. One day, when she was in stress for not getting to see her daughter, she received a phone call. The man on the phone said he was an soldier and told her to come to the Rang Ghat bridge if she wanted to see her daughter. He also said she should come alone.

In the hope of getting to see the face of her daughter, she reached the bridge alone in a hurry. But that was a hoax. Her daughter was not there. Nobody was. The bridge was empty. Disappointed, Sushila returned home. A few days later the same person called her and told her to come to the Chhinchu barracks. She immediately reached the barracks with some little hope of seeing her daughter. But again she was disappointed. When the man started mentally torturing her by making frequent calls, she went to the barracks and informed the Major about it. But the Major expressed his ignorance about this. Interestingly, Sushila stopped receiving the mysterious call thereafter.

The day after the festival of Bhaitika in 2002, Sushila, as usual, reached the barracks, taking the food for her daughter. She was not sure whether Deepa was alive, as she had been unable to meet her despite much effort. So she met the Major again and appealed to him that he was free to imprison her daughter for years, but she should not be killed. The Major assured her that they would not kill Deepa. "She is freely moving here," he said. But when she urged the Major to give the food she was carrying for Deepa, he said, "We are not allowed to give her any food brought from outside."

When she heard these words from the Major, Sushila thought that Deepa had been killed. She cried and said to the Major, "You gave my food to her

on other days, why are you not giving it to her now? You must have killed my daughter. This poor mother's tears would curse you. Kill me with your bullets too."

Meanwhile, the Maoists were frequenting Sushila's home. She was afraid that they could take her other children with them. The Maoists convinced her, "We will not take away other children from you. We are now like a single family and we should stay in harmony." They would stay in her home throughout the night, eating what Sushila had bought with the money she earned from working in other people's homes.

Despite a long search, the whereabouts of Deepa were not known. Sushila approached the District Administration Office, District Police Office, Advocacy Forum, and National Human Rights Commission. She even reached the parliament building to lodge her complaints. In Kathmandu, she participated in the sit-ins and rallies organized by one of the associations of conflict victims. Yet she got no clues as to the status of her daughter. Instead, she had to suffer police batons.

The Advocacy Forum, NHRC, Nepal Police and CDO office did not register her case. She said if she could register the case, it would open the door for others to register similar cases.

By now Sushila had received Rs. 100,000 in the form of compensation from the government. *Ki lash chahiyo, ki sash chahiyo*--either give her daughter's remains or produce her alive; that is her demand. She also insists that all victims' families should be provided with compensation, employment and scholarship for their children. Even the Maoists haven't provided any support to Sushila. She said that no one from the Maoists took her care. She had told the Maoists, "If you don't give me anything, you can express your love and condolence to me." But the Maoists got angry to hear that. She did not believe in any political parties. However, she said that she would vote for the Maoists as the party had her daughter's blood.

Sushila, who now lives with her three children, said that she did not get any support from her relatives and her neighbors. "Everyone likes to warm up in the burning fire only," she complains, suggesting that she is now a dead fire with nobody around. Among her three children, her eldest son Rishi and

youngest daughter Raj Kumari took the SLC exams in 2011. A Kathmandu based non-government organization has been managing their educational expenses. Sushila herself has been managing expenses for her fifth grader son Bishal.

Affiliated with the local conflict victims association, Sushila said that she had no free time. “People from Kathmandu and other places frequently come to me and I take them to the victims’ homes and help them to collect the data,” she said. She told that as she had to reach the victims’ homes several times, the victims were fed up with such visitors. These victims, Sushila said, have stopped cooperating with her in these works. The victims have begun to ask: what do we get from the visitors? Does meeting them help us to meet our needs? Sushila herself has a question: “I myself have been working from dawn to dusk without taking any remuneration; what answer can I give them?”

Currently, in the mornings and evenings, Sushila does dish-washing in a hostel at Laltikoili. The earning goes into feeding her children. She is at the office of the conflict victims’ association during the daytime. When she has the time, she also visits the court to gather the hearing dates of other conflict victims.

Her family and relatives have faced more dreadful situations together. Eleven of her family members and relatives lost their lives in the conflict. She could not forget the scenes in which her pregnant niece Bandana was tortured by the army on the bridge of the Chhinchu river and was killed. ●

# Belrani's Sorrows



Belrani with the photo of her missing husband Likharam and their child Anu. Photo: Dinesh Gautam

## ● Dinesh Gautam

Each time a schoolmate asks Anu Tharu if her father returned home, her face darkens and dims. Anu, 12, feels sad and loses interest in studies for the whole day. At home, she asks her mother this same question. She gets no answer. Over the years, she has stopped asking her mother about the father, although she still hopes Likharam will come home some day.

Likharam Tharu, of Mohammadpur of Bardiya, 36 kilometers away from Nepalgunj, went missing from July 12, 2002. He was 19 years. From his home, on a bicycle, it takes an hour to get to the district headquarters of Gulariya. His house has brick walls and tiled roof. In it, his wife Belrani also hopes he will return. Likharam had left home to submit a job application to the Nepal Army. He has not returned since.

Belrani said, "Before he went missing, he used to gaze at the face of his daughter, as if forgetting himself. His eyes filled up with tears. He felt the pain of being illiterate due to the abject poverty. He was anxious thinking about the future of his baby daughter and young wife. Sometimes, he used to scan books and at other times thought of entering government service."



Likharam at that time was restless as he was not sure whether he would get a job. Meanwhile, a local, Hari Prasad Tharu, brought a proposal before him. He said that Mukti Bahadur Swar, an employee of the Land Reform Office Nepalgunj, was in need of a domestic help and that it would be a good opportunity for Likharam. He also told him that Swar would arrange for his higher education. Mukti Bahadur's son Ramesh Bahadur Swar was a captain in the Nepal Army. Likharam was assured that he would be given a job in the Nepal Army. Thus, Likharam, who had passed grade 8 from a school at Kanthapur-8, was ready to go to work at Mukti Bahadur's home.

He had made the decision to work there in hopes of resuming his studies. But his dream was not realized. He could not get a chance to study. His work was never recognized. The Swar family often scolded him saying that he put more salt in dal (lentil) than needed. Ramesh Swar sometimes even beat him. After four months, he could not work at Swar's place any longer and, therefore, returned home.

In the next few months, villagers heard about vacancies announced by the Nepal Army. Likharam reached the No. 4 Battalion of army in Ranjha barracks in Nepalgunj to submit his application. The army barracks, located six kilometers north-east from Nepalgunj, is at a secluded location. Raj Kumar Tharu, a distant nephew of Likharam, of the same village, had accompanied him.

Since that day, July 12, he has gone missing. His family claimed that he disappeared from the Ranjha barracks of Nepal Army. According to Belrani, Ramesh Bahadur Swar of Nepalgunj had a hand behind the disappearance of Likharam.

"The Swar family neither sent him to school nor did they give him any job. Instead, they forced him to disappear," said Belrani.

Raj Kumar Tharu, who went with Likharam to the barracks, returned home. According to him, the army took control of Likharam in the barracks after asking several questions about him.

"Captain Ramesh Bahadur was also among those who grilled me, I was scared," Raj Kumar said.

According to Raj Kumar, the army asked him what type of boy Likharam was. “Has he not joined the Maoists?”- an army officer asked me pointing his fingers at Likharam,” Raj Kumar said. “I said I did not know anything about him as I was living in India, but I told the army officer that Likharam was not a Maoist.”

No sooner had he answered, he received a big slap on the face from an army officer. He told Raj Kumar to give up hope of a job there and better get out.

Raj Kumar came out with his hand on the cheek as the army dragged Likharam inside the barracks.

According to Belrani, the Swar family wanted to keep Likharam as their domestic help for a long time. But when Likharam refused to stay in their home, they got angry.

During that time, the Maoists had launched the ‘people’s war’. It was easy to charge anyone with being a Maoist and to get him or her punished or forced to disappear. “The Swar family, which was angry with Likharam, wanted to take revenge against him by proving him to be a Maoist activist. But when Raj Kumar told the army that Likharam was not a Maoist activist, they beat him up too,” Belrani said.

Raj Kumar had shared everything he saw with Likharam’s family after he returned home from the barracks. Likharam’s father Hariram Tharu was shocked upon hearing the news. He rushed to the army barracks in Ranjha on July 13. He asked the army personnel at the gate of the barracks about his son. But when the army told him that Likharam was taken to another place, Hariram started crying at the potential risk on the life of his poor son.

Hariram also went to the Swar home in Nepalgunj. But, there, he was threatened by Ramesh Bahadur’s youngest brother in these words: “If your son is a Maoist, he won’t return home. If he is not, he will. You get out of here now.”

It was already evening. Fearing that he might also be killed, Hariram did not ask any more questions and returned home with a heavy heart.

Belrani said, “As we have to work as wage earners, we have no time to engage in politics. Yes, sometimes I had participated in the Maoist rallies due to fear and threat from the Maoists. But my husband had never participated in such rallies.”

About one month after his disappearance, Dinesh Chaudhary of Jagatiya, Bardiya, had met Likharam in the Chisapani army barracks. Chaudhary was also kept in the same barracks. Likharam had told everything to Dinesh. He had said that Ramesh Bahadur was responsible for his arrest.

When Dinesh was to be released from the barracks, Likharam requested him to go to his home in Mohammadpur and tell his family to release him from there. However, due to fear and terror, Dinesh did not go to Likharam's home. Instead, an old man from Jagatiya reached Likharam's home on August 12, 2002 with Dinesh's message. The next day, Likharam's mother Sarju Daiya went to see Dinesh in Jagatiya. She asked him whether the army beat her son.

Dinesh told her that Likharam was blindfolded all the time, except while he was eating. He also told Sarju Daiya that he was with Likharam for four days from July 31 to August 3, 2002. He said Likharam had swellings because of the beatings. On the morning of August 14, Sarju Daiya, Belrani and Anu went to Chisapani barracks. The man on duty called his boss in their request. The boss told them that no man with the name Likharam was there. He scolded them. Then, Belrani, carrying her daughter Anu, reached Ranjha barracks, located 42 km west from her home. With no words about her husband, she was further disappointed there. She returned home crying.

The most important thing for Belrani was to know whether her husband was alive. She was disappointed at both the barracks as the army gave her only the rude answers, "No man called Likharam is here."

Despite several attempts, Belrani could know nothing about the conditions of her husband. As a single woman, she could not devote her full time to search for Likharam. She needed to manage her home. Her financial condition was very poor and she had to work to feed herself and her daughter.

Later on, she received a relief of one hundred thousand rupees from the government. She deposited the money in the bank, with the intention of using it when in difficulty. But she did not feel relieved even after she received the relief. Her brother-in-law was planning to go to Malaysia. He asked her for the money. She was in a dilemma because whatever she had was only this money. She was also not sure whether he would later return the

money to her. When her brother-in-law threatened her (he had told her that if she didn't give him the money, he would stop taking care of her) she gave him 70,000 rupees in the form of a loan. He had promised in writing that he would return her money to her. Even so she is always worried about her future and her daughter's education without her husband.

Belrani often meets her husband in her dreams. He always comes in a red shirt and talks with her. "I live in Bharatpur. I cannot bring anything to my daughter," he tell her. Belrani says: "Then I wake up and begin to cry."

The changed attitude of her brother-in-law and sister-in-law has added to her woes. She sheds tears when she is alone, and whenever her sixth grader daughter asks her whether her daddy has died. She collects herself and consoles her daughter that her father would come and both of them burst into tears.

Belrani has a bitter experience that as a single woman she is looked down by her neighbors. She engages in household chores in the day times. She feels light when she gets someone to share her pains. Sometimes she reaches the district headquarters Gulariya as a conflict victim at the invitation of an organization devoted to the upliftment of Tharus. The local society cannot digest the scene in which a single woman frequently comes out of her home. The men take it negatively. And she feels sad.

A Gulariya based NGO Dalit Service Organization gave her daughter Anu a pair of clothes, notebooks and a pen. The organization also gave Belrani three goats. She also received two goats free of cost from the Tharu Women's Empowerment Centre. Similarly, Nepal Red Cross gave her ten thousand rupees and she bought a buffalo with it. She sells three liters of milk a day and her father-in-law keeps that money. Kumbhar Women Community Forest gave her a pig. Now she has five male and four female pigs.

Belrani wants to take some skill-oriented training so that she can be self-reliant. She said that she wanted to participate in training like sewing. She wants to run a sewing shop in the district headquarters of Gulariya.

Belrani is not happy with the state because it did not help her know the whereabouts of her husband. “The government should find him. Why was he made to disappear? Where was he kept? If he was killed, they should show me his bones and if he is alive, he should be sent home,” she said.

Belrani often meets her husband in her dreams. He always comes in a red shirt and talks with her. “I live in Bharatpur. I cannot bring anything to my daughter,” he tells her. Belrani says: “Then I wake up and begin to cry.”

Many families of this district have tales similar to Belrani’s. Indeed, Bardiya tops the tally on the number of forced disappearances in the country during the conflict period.

The Supreme Court issued an order to the government on June 1, 2007 to form a powerful commission on disappeared citizens. However, such a commission has not been formed yet. Neither has the government shown any concern or interest regarding the need to search for disappeared citizens. As a result, many victims have become helpless whereas the culprits are moving freely.

With tears in her eyes, Belrani says, “We have not been able to see him alive, and we also have not gotten his remains.” Hatred has increased against the government for not taking any action against the army officer who forced Likharam to disappear.

The family is equally hurt because the culprit behind the incident was not brought to book even when they mentioned his name. Belrani said she wants to know from the Swars the whereabouts of her husband.

Now, it is learnt that Swar quit his job and left for Afghanistan. Even if the government gave an amnesty to all culprits, Belrani would not excuse the culprit. She demanded that all those who forced people to disappear should be punished by the human rights organizations or from institutions at the international level.

According to a piece of latest news, it was reported that Likharam was killed at Kerali river near Chisapani barracks, but the report was not officially confirmed. ●



## A Wounded Heart

Durgamaya Magar, an injured victim of Bandarmude incident.  
Photo: Ekal Silwal

### ● Ekal Silwal

It was an ordinary Monday morning on June 6, 2005. Durgamaya Magar, 55, was feeling a little too restless that day. It seemed the sun was taking forever to rise up in the horizon, delaying her trip to her *maita*- her maternal home. She was the first in her home to wake up to the balmy sunrays of the morning, that hadn't quite made their way inside the rooms. The excitement was such that she couldn't even freshen up that morning, let alone bring herself to do the household chores. Her husband Santa Bahadur had already milked the two buffaloes and had the milk filled in containers to sell it. The remaining milk was being boiled for the morning tea. But having already made up her mind to have the morning tea at her *maita*, off she went saying she'd return early. That day, only two, among her four children, were sleeping at home.

To get to her destination early, she had to catch the bus that would leave the nearby Devendrapur bazaar at 6 in the morning. Durga's sister was at her *maita* and had called her over. So eager was she to meet her sister that she marched straight to the bus stop, without even wasting a minute. It was almost 6 when she reached Devendrapur. But the bus was nowhere in sight.

Her *maita* was in the nearby Kalyanpur village, an hour's walk from there. She usually went there on foot. But that day, in the hope of reaching there early, she didn't realize she had already waited for the bus for one and a half hour. The bus finally arrived. She got onto a seat, at the third row from the last.

As the sun rose higher in the sky, the number of people waiting to board the bus increased steadily along the highway. The bus moved ahead lifting and cramming in all the passengers. It got more crowded and by the time it was closer to Kalyanpur every inch of the bus had been occupied. Not even the rod on the ceiling had any space for passengers to hold on to it. People from outside could see clusters of people on the hood as well, holding onto every inch of space. Carrying passengers far more than its capacity, the bus moved ahead in its own pace. Durga too was being shoved by the crowd but she knew it wouldn't last long as she was just a few yards away from her stop. Suddenly, she could not see anything. She remembers hearing stifled voices of the people. Right then she felt her eyes and ears shutting completely. She felt nothing after that.

When she regained consciousness, she felt a dampening sensation on her face. She slowly opened her tightly shut eyes. It was all blurry. She touched her face. Her hands got washed in blood. Her back hurt badly. Recalling that dreadful morning, she says, "I asked myself, where am I? What was happening and why is my body in so much pain?" Then she heard someone saying there was a bomb explosion. She could feel needles pricking on her forehead. It was all blank again. On regaining consciousness, she found herself in bed, in Kathmandu's Chhauni hospital.

The over-packed bus, with almost 150 passengers, was targeted by Maoist rebels in an ambush at Madi, Chitwan. Thirty eight people, including three soldiers and 35 civilians, lost their lives that day. A hundred or so people, blown away with the shreds of the bomb, survived. Seventy among them were badly injured. Durgamaya is one of the injured passengers, disabled for life and living now in pain.

Durga's 66-year old husband Santa Bahadur headed towards his brother's house after she had left that day. He heard a loud noise while working on his brother's roof. Asking what had happened, he went back to work on the

roof. After half an hour, some people from Kalyanpur informed him that Durga was in the bus that had just been blown apart. Santa Bahadur was shocked. He jumped from the roof and ran towards Kalyanpur. He looked at the remains of the bus in Kalyanpur's Bandarmude river. Dead bodies were lying scattered around. Injured people had been taken to the nearby Basantapur primary health post. He headed there. He searched for his wife everywhere, but couldn't find her. Some said she had already been taken to Bharatpur. Off he went in an ambulance, hoping to find Durga there. On the way, at Jagatpur, she was about to be flown to Kathmandu for treatment. "I saw her and spoke her name. But how could she speak, she was lying there unconscious," recalls Santa Bahadur.

After seven days' treatment at Chhauni hospital, she was discharged. She couldn't believe those doctors who had told her that she was fine now. She couldn't even stand up, let alone walk. When she tried stepping on the floor, her whole body would fall forward and would hit the wall. It had already been four days since they left the hospital and moved to a rented room. But there was no sign of recovery for Durga. Her back pain didn't subside; it had instead made it even more difficult for Durga to move her body. After that, upon consultation with some well-informed people, Durga was taken to the Kathmandu Nursing Home at Tripureshwor. She asked her husband to obtain some money from the village. The X-Ray report revealed that her spinal cord had broken. She was admitted in the nursing home. They had to pay a thousand rupees for the bed each day. Medicines were required. They had no money. Twenty one thousand rupees got spent in eleven days, way beyond their budget. On her own insistence, she shifted from the hospital

No matter who the culprits are, she wants to see action taken against them. She won't agree to anyone willing to forgive them. The anger suppressed within her bursts out, "Why should they be forgiven? The ones who left us half dead should also be treated that way. If they'd killed us there, we wouldn't have been in such a misery. Neither can we work to make a living, nor can we live normally – why forgive those who left us amidst such a misery?"



to their rented room. It was already a month as she traveled back and forth from their room to the hospital. The treatment cost had already reached a hundred thousand rupees by then.

She stayed at Chitwan's Asha hospital for eleven days after returning from Kathmandu. Even if the doctors' had the expertise to treat her ailment, it seemed meaningless to her since she couldn't afford them. When nobody in their neighborhood was left to borrow money from, her husband Santa Bahadur sold his cattle. They had no other option left then to hope for people's sympathy that would give them some help. Twelve thousand rupees was spent in Asha hospital in no time. She still remembers that day. Although the government did not help her at that time, some non-governmental organizations provided some relief and support which went into her treatment. The injury was severe. She was in no condition to leave the hospital but with no financial resources left she had to stay home for the next five months. They were then able to find 10,000 rupees and in December she was taken to the medical hospital in Bharatpur. It was just enough for six days at the hospital. With no money left, she returned home on the seventh day.

On the condition that if not able to pay back the money, they would hand over their house and remaining land to the lender, the Magar family managed to obtain a loan worth forty thousand rupees. With that money, she was taken to Kathmandu Nursing Home. They came across another startling fact when the doctors there said that her spinal cord had twisted because of her continued faulty postures for months while at home. Even in such a serious condition she couldn't be admitted to the hospital. She again began visiting the hospital from their rented room. The money lasted till May 2006. After that she was back home and never returned to Kathmandu.

She couldn't stand straight, needed others' help to go into and off the bed. Defecating was difficult for her. She had severe back pain, and she would faint. She had no control over urination and her whole body burned in pain, making her body like a home to all sufferings. With others' help she could sit on the wheel chair with an iron belt tied around her waist. Three years passed by with the same routine of visiting hospitals in Chitwan with whatever money they could find. In the fourth year, she managed to at least stand up and take a step.

In the three years while she remained bed-ridden, not a single day went by peacefully. “I had to be carried along with my bed, up to the bazaar, to get to the hospital. The pain was unbearable. The skin on my back was almost dead because of sleeping for so long. During those times, I wished I could die. My family had to go through so much trouble for me. I would cry all day thinking about it,” her eyes moist, she recalled those days.

Her husband and elder daughter used to take care of her. Her daughter Parvati was a seventh grader when she had to discontinue her studies to take care of Durga. In the afternoon, her husband used to leave home to work as a daily wage laborer. The eldest son was working as a porter in India. The youngest son and daughter used to go to school. Her caretaker Parvati used to make time for household work only in the morning and evening. Sleeping on just one side for the whole day used to heat the bed and her body felt like it was burning. There would be no one to help her shift her position on the bed. All her hard attempts to change postures in the bed had twisted her spinal cord.

Six years have gone by since the incident. Durgamaya’s physical and mental sufferings are still the same. Although her broken spinal cord has been fixed, the part from her knees to the heels is perennially in pain. Meeting people in the afternoon helps her forget her pain easily but it is difficult sleeping at night. It is like a needle prickling all over the body. She feels like the body is on fire. The skin feels like it is being ripped off everywhere. She can’t do any work. She can’t walk around anywhere. The back hurts so much that she can’t even take a single step. It is difficult to even bend her body.

Not receiving relief from the government has deepened her wounds, hearing about the culprits walking around freely makes her furious, and the lack of initiative from people to take action against them further heightens her despair. All these have taken a toll on her not just physically but also emotionally. But there is still a fragment of hope alive in her fragile body.

Her day begins at seven in the morning. With all her effort, first she cleans her house. With her body aching, she prepares food for three people every morning and evening. She feeds her goats with the grass that's been cut and brought by somebody else. She stays in the small shop that they've opened at their home. The European Union (EU) had helped her start that shop around two years ago. Customers from the village come there sporadically.

More than for selling items, the shop has become a place for her to forget her pain. "The whole day in the shop goes by just like that but in the night time my body hurts so much that I can't even sleep. I hardly manage to sleep for four hours. Sometimes I lie there crying the whole night," she said. When this scribe had reached her shop, some girls and women had gathered there. She was selling some sweet and sour item, or *chatapat*, to the children.

Before helping her start the shop, the EU had given her a goat with two kids. She kept one. She sold the other and with the money she completed the construction of the foundation for her shop. Later, the EU granted her ten thousand rupees for the shop. Starting with that money, she has already invested around 35 thousand rupees in it. The business isn't really good. Sometimes she is able to sell items worth 50-100 rupees. Sometimes it is one or two hundred and when the business is really good she makes around 4-5 hundred rupees. But most of the villagers buy things on credit. The buying and selling price of most items are the same. However, she isn't bothered about buying and selling at the same price, because this shop serves as the only means for her to forget her pain rather than to make money.

Before being injured, she used to do everything from working in the field to getting fodder for the animals. But now she can't even muster courage to take two steps. She regrets not being able to educate her eldest children. The situation is such that she has to pull her children out from the school. She said sadly, "How to pay for their education? I can't bear further expenses. My youngest daughter is studying in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. I have asked her to drop out. But she doesn't listen. She needs to be enrolled in college after completing the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. She will also require coaching, tutorials. She says she'll continue her studies as long as she passes her exams. She hasn't failed till now." An organization called the Murray Foundation Nepal has made provisions for free education for her youngest son in Bharatpur. But he doesn't want to stay there. Durga is worried how she'll manage the household if he comes back.

All that is left for Durga is their small tin-roofed house and 10 katthas of land. That too is about to be taken over by the *sahu*, the money lenders. Nothing grows in the field. As of now, her total debt is Rs. 300,000. The high interest rate on the borrowed money has further increased her financial burden. She is still under medication and has to pay Rs. 6,000 every month just for the medicines. They have to borrow money for medicines too. That's the same with repaying their previous loans too. When money lenders come to ask for money she has no option but to tell them to distribute her land among themselves in repayment of the money. "If the government had helped in repaying the loans, at least some of the land could be saved for my children. Even that will be gone now," Durga is worried about the dark future that lies ahead.

Her husband Santa Bahadur is now 77-year old. He is worried about taking care of his wife and at the same time bringing up the children. "Nobody is there to understand our plight. Even the government abandoned us. Whatever our hardship and pain, it is contained within us. Such adversity has befallen on my shoulders at this age."

After Durga got injured, there was nobody to care for her. Their eldest daughter had to leave school. Santa Bahadur stopped farming. He managed the household by working as a daily wage laborer. "When I'd return home in the evening, Durga would cry saying I went away even when she was in such a condition. There was no point just crying over it. Was I supposed to work or just take care of her? I was helpless," says Santa Bahadur.

Earlier the produce from the field provided enough. "In just two months after the disaster, everything began falling apart," Santa Bahadur said woefully with teary eyes. Eating full stomach like in the past seems like a dream to him now.

His children are Santa Bahadur's only hope. His youngest son consoles him saying, "Don't worry, we'll do something, when we grow up." He immediately reveals the uncertainty, "I am not sure if we'll live to see him working. By the time he begins work, we'll probably die drowned in debt." Santa Bahadur feels that the government should have provided them some relief. Assistance to just look after Durga's basic needs would have been enough. He has no

faith in the government providing help. “Who is going to hear our woes?” he says in disappointment.

Durga’s treatment bill amounted to almost two hundred fifty thousand rupees. But the government only reimbursed Rs. 19,675. And it took a year for the government to do just that much. Rather some non-governmental organizations had helped them. Just after the incident, some people had given the children stationaries and clothes. But her wound is yet to be healed by the government. Back then, the government had given 150,000 rupees each to the families of those who were killed in the ambush while it had consoled the injured saying the government would bear all the treatment cost. Families of the deceased people did get what the government had promised but the injured passengers received as compensation only a small portion of the immediate cost of treatment. Depending on the level of disability caused, the government has provisions to provide up to Rs. 200,000 as compensation. But Durga feels cheated by the government.

She sometimes ponders over whether it was her own fault that resulted in such adversity. But she finds none. In reality, there was no reason for Maoist activists to target Durga by planting those bombs. She neither supported nor opposed them. Neither had she taken up arms to battle with either side. So, was her getting into the bus to reach her *maita* early her fault? Durga feels the people who set the bomb targeting the bus with innocent people on their way to work are the culprits.

She knows that so many innocent people were targeted because they (rebels) suspected there were some soldiers in the bus. That has raised an unanswered question in her mind, “Couldn’t they have just brought down those people against whom they held their grudges and then vented their anger?” Durga was caught in the animosity of two groups fighting in the conflict and was faced with such adversity. If she ever got hold of the culprits she will ask them, “What was my fault that I was punished so badly?” No matter who the culprits are, she wants to see action taken against them. She won’t agree to anyone willing to forgive them. The anger suppressed within her bursts out, “Why should they be forgiven? The ones who left us half dead should also be treated that way. If they’d kill us there and then we wouldn’t have been in such misery. Now we cannot work for a living. We also cannot live normally— why forgive those who left us in this condition?”

Not receiving relief from the government has deepened her wounds, hearing about the culprits walking around freely makes her furious, and the lack of initiative from people to take action against them further heightens her despair. All these have taken a toll on her not just physically but also emotionally. But there is still a fragment of hope alive in her fragile body. As I was about to leave after talking to her, she said, “People like you come here and if you are able to convey at least something about us, I start becoming hopeful about our problem getting solved. It would be enough even if we just received help to repay the loan taken for my treatment and for the regular medicines. I hope such incident never takes place anywhere.”

Majority of the people killed and injured in Bandarmude incident were from Madi’s Ayodhyapuri and Kalyanpuri village development committees. Although most of the injured people have already recovered, there are nine others whose fate turned their lives around like Durga’s. One of the survivors of the blast was Ganga Bahadur Gurung from Ayodhyapuri- 2. He was left with serious injuries in his brain that showed no signs of improvement even after six months of medication. Tired, he committed suicide six months after the incident. There are many people who didn’t sustain any physical injury in the blast but still suffer from problems like unexplainable fear, constant headaches, body aches, wobbly knees and hands.

Fourteen months following the incident, Maoists had announced code-names of four people who were said to be responsible for the bomb explosion. The names disclosed were Sahash, Sujan, Kishan and Harka. Back then Sunil, a Maoist cadre, had said that since the main culprits Sujan and Sahash had fled immediately after the incident, the supposedly less responsible Kishan and Harka were sent to a labor camp.

No matter who is responsible for the bomb blast at Bandarmude, the victims have not stopped raising voices for enquires in the case so that action can be taken as per the law. Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda had said that the incident at Bandarmude proved to be the biggest blotch in the ten years of people’s war and those culprits would be brought to book. But the relatives of the deceased people and the injured people in the incident have doubts. They say that Maoists helped some culprits flee and placed all the blame on those people who are supposedly on the run. The victims say the Maoists have done so to save the other culprits from the blame. Krishna

Adhikari, one of the injured people in the bomb blast, says, “If fleeing after the crime spares one from punishments and portraying those people guilty by placing all blame on them helps Maoists escape the situation conveniently then one can simply testify that the passengers that day in the bus were guilty for everything. We are ready to go to jail for them.” ●



Laxmi Thapaliya with her daughter Maiya. File photo

## ● Ramkumar Elan

“Five bullets are still in this left arm. Look at these two swollen impressions here,” she said showing her hand. “Three of them are down here. I cannot move this hand. The bullet also hit my right calf and left thigh. They were taken out, but replaced by steel.”

Fifty-four year old Laxmi Thapaliya showed her left arm and her paralyzed palm. “I do not say anything now. What can I get by telling you the story, by showing you my arms? No, I won’t speak with anybody. I will not give any interview to FM [radio stations]. What happened by publishing my photographs everywhere? I could not receive any treatment. No, I do not speak now.”

When this reporter reached Laxmi’s home in Mayurdhap, Churiyamai, Makawanpur, she was living with her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. She is the wife of former VDC vice chairman Min Bahadur Thapaliya. Churiyamai VDC adjoins Makawanpur municipality. Laxmi, in her own words, is living half dead.



Her husband Min Bahadur was shot to death on June 19, 2004. She was injured in the shooting. Her husband died and she was left to live a disabled life. She went to hospital in Kathmandu for four months to remove five bullets out of her left arm. The bullets in her left thigh and right calf were removed through operations.

Only after she returned from Kathmandu, she performed the last rituals for her husband. Her wounds did not heal. She again spent nine months in hospital with the hope of curing her hands. Her youngest son was in Nepal Army. She spent a long time in the Chhauni-based hospital of the army. Yet the bullets in her arms could not be removed. When the Nepal Red Cross Society assured her of help to remove the bullets, Laxmi borrowed some money, and she again reached Kathmandu. But again she returned home disappointed.

Laxmi is now tired. Whenever a Human Rights Activist or a journalist reaches her home, she sighs and asks why she should share the same old story with everyone. However, the visitors do not need to ask anything: she sits on the floor and starts narrating everything while stretching the fingers of her paralyzed hands. Again, she cannot stop saying, "I will not go anywhere, even if they ask me to, and I will not speak with any journalist and human rights activist. I will not let anyone take my picture."

Though she can move a little after the doctors inserted steel in her right calf and left knee, she cannot move her left hand due to the bullet injury. "They tell me to have a therapy, but when I move my thumb, I feel different. When I move other fingers, I feel another difference. When I move my hand, I feel more different than moving fingers. The wounds sometimes hurt. I cannot tolerate the pain. When I suspend my left hand, I feel pain in my neck," she said. She again takes a long sigh. She feels extreme pain that the person, who killed her husband and made her disabled like that, hasn't even been identified, not to mention any action taken against him.

Min Bahadur Thapaliya was elected to the post of VDC vice chairman on behalf of the CPN-UML. His house was at Kukhreni near Churiyamai. He used to sleep in a small room outside of his house.

Laxmi recalls the incident of June 19, 2004. Min Bahadur was unwell that day. He was already asleep. In the night, someone thrust a homemade gun

into the window and shot him. Laxmi heard him cry in pain and rushed towards his room. Her husband was already dead. Seeing the scene, Laxmi also fainted. When she regained her consciousness, she saw some masked attackers. One of them said to her, "Our men killed him, it was a mistake. We will take action against them." Thereafter, they left the scene.

Laxmi has been unable to identify who the man was who told her that they committed a mistake after killing her husband. When she recalls that person's voice, it sounds not unfamiliar to her. She thinks that the man might be a local Maoist leader. The man is still roaming freely in the village but the Maoists in the area told her that they did not kill Min Bahadur. Laxmi said, "How can I tell who killed him? They had their faces wrapped in masks. Do not ask me, let's not talk about it. How much can I cry and how much tear can I shed?"

Laxmi saying with a sigh, "There were some in the village who celebrated after my husband was killed. There are many who shed crocodile tears. He was killed for no fault and I am compelled to live half dead."

Her neighbors said that Laxmi was disappointed when she could not get treatment even after she borrowed some money from lenders and reached Kathmandu in June last year. According to them, she had gone to Kathmandu when the Red Cross assured her of an operation on her wounds. She could not find doctors to operate though she stayed in Kathmandu as a guest of a relative for eighteen days. Living as a guest, she was unable to wait for the doctors. When she wanted to return, someone asked her to sign a paper and gave her three notes of 500 rupees. She put her signature

Fifty-four years old Laxmi Thapaliya showed her left arm and her paralyzed palm. "I do not say anything now. What can I get by telling you the story, by showing you my arms? No, I won't speak with anybody. I will not give any interview to FM [radio stations]. What happened by publishing my photographs everywhere? I could not receive any treatment. No, I do not speak now."

on the paper but did not accept the money when her daughter signaled her not to take it.

The records of District Administration Office of Makawanpur showed that relief was distributed to the families of those whose members were killed and those wounded during the conflict. Laxmi, who could not move her hands, was recognized as fifteen percent injured by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction. As a fully wounded person was eligible to get Rs. 200,000, the 15 percent wounded Laxmi received Rs. 30,000. "What kinds of eyes do they have; how is it that they see a person like me as perfect?" she pours her anger.

Not only that, the District Education Office Makawanpur three years ago in a hot summer day of 2009 rushed to take photographs of her children saying that they would provide them with scholarship. Though they said that her grandchildren Kripa, Smit and Smirti would be provided the scholarship, they did not get it. She had to suffer more pain. When Peace and Reconstruction Ministry decided to give relief of Rs. 25,000 to the widow of the victims' family, Laxmi got the money through District Development Committee Makawanpur. The 55,000 rupees she received in all was not sufficient to meet her expenses. She is frail due to anxiety and no one is there to heal her pain. Laxmi gets occasionally angry. Again she gets tired and tries to cry. She said, "I will not let them sell my pictures. I will not talk on FM [stations]. I will not ask UML for help. Who has done anything for me?" Her terrible physical condition and her sad expressions represent the pains of those who were killed and injured during the conflict. She has become an example of a victim who has to suffer further in the process of receiving relief.

Laxmi is sad for not getting the facts related to the incident to this day. Tej Prasad Chaulagain, the chairman of Conflict Victims Concerned Group, Makawanpur, said that Min Bahadur was killed by the Maoist rebels. According to him, the Maoists were not accepting the crime fearing that the killing of an innocent person would tarnish their image. Chaulagain himself was wounded in the conflict. He was attacked by Maoists on February 28, 2002. He has a steel plate fixed in his right leg. So far, he has been unable to get justice.

Chaulagain said that the categorization process of conflict victims by Peace and Reconstruction Ministry for the purpose of relief is faulty. He said that

many injured were unable to get justice when the relief and rehabilitation task force recorded types and names of the victims without proper observation. Laxmi Thapaliya of Churiyamai was put under the category of 15 percent injured due to the negligence of the task force. He said the activities of the District Level Peace Committees have not been to the desired level. Though there is the provision to recommend for the treatment of the injured, no such recommendations have been made so far. "The state claims that it will provide relief, but it is only throwing some tiny grains around," he said.

"Not only that, the murderer of my husband has not been identified. Although the Maoists were said to have their hands in the killing, they did not accept it. The state did not take any action against them. How could we reunite without uniting everyone's hearts? How could the wounds be healed?"

For a while, the Peace Ministry was once again under the leadership of the Maoists. Chaulagain said that there are such victims of conflict among the Maoists also. The feeling of the conflict victims was hurt when some got full relief and others only part of the relief. He said that it is time to re-evaluate whether the classification of the injured is, in fact, unfair. The conflict victims have felt injustice when the District Level Peace Committees have been unable to perform even the regular administrative works.

Conflict victims have been active in the form of a social organization in Makawanpur. Besides demanding relief and skill-oriented training for victims, the group has been creating pressure to search for the disappeared, and helping the family members of disappeared for their access to income and justice. Likewise, many of the families whose members went missing in the conflict have not contacted the administration. Peace Secretary Deependra Dhakal said that the District Peace Committee recently received application claiming that three persons of Bhimphedi, Gogane and Shikharpur were disappeared by the state. The Conflict Victim concerned group said that still the numbers of those who went missing and who were injured in the conflict are on rise.

However, the role of this group is limited to being a member of general civil society. It has advocated for the justice to the victims and their families but in the absence of donors and resources, it is unable to run its own activities. Though the wounds of the conflict seem to have healed, many are compelled to live without treatment and medicines.

The injured demand that the relief provided by the state should be distributed proportionately and fairly. They want to live in the village as ordinary citizens. Although the economic status has changed from the time they were injured, the life of the victims is still painful. No international and national agencies have brought a program for the conflict victims of the district. "The pain would be less if we were busy in work, but there is no work and there's hopelessness everywhere," Laxmi Thapaliya said.

They demanded that apart from providing medical treatment to the victims, the state should help in the education and health of their children. Most of the children of the conflict victims face difficulty in their education. According to the latest data, a total of 176 were killed and 76 were injured in the district during the conflict period. District Peace Committee has been receiving new complaints. If one talks only about the injured, many families and their members are directly affected by the situation.

The victims want to see the peace process concluded at the earliest. But they express their discontent over the fact that they had to suffer pain for no fault of their own and that those who destroyed human lives have not been prosecuted. Almost all victims are unaware about the relief facilities provided by the government. Laxmi Thapaliya asked, "I do not know. I received Rs.230,000; how much of it is mine and how much of it is my husband's. Everybody consoles me as an injured and invites me to Kathmandu for treatment. They are tormenting not only me but also the children and there's injustice in the distribution of relief."

She further said, "Not only that, the murderer of my husband has not been identified. Although the Maoists were said to have their hands in the killing, they did not accept it. The state did not take any action against them. How could we reunite without uniting everyone's hearts? How could the wounds be healed?" ●

# 'Let Such War Not Repeat'



Gaumati Gharti.  
Photo: Khem Bahadur Budha

## ● Khem Bahadur Buda

The night of August 24, 1996 proved to be the darkest for Gaumati Gharti, 46, of Lunchang in Uwa-8, Rolpa. She never forgets the night when an armed group had come and murdered her husband Kali Bahadur Gharti. The cruel moment still lives in her eyes.

A moment ago, her husband was busy talking with her. Five or six people barged into their home and shot him. Blood oozed out her husband's body. She recalls the incident with her eyes welling up with tears.

"I saw the murder of my husband," she said. "I cannot forget what I saw with my own eyes. The memory of the black night on which my dear hubby left this world does not go away." The sight, Gaumati said, always haunted her. It hurt her heart and drained her tears.

"I feel deeply hurt," she said.

After the incident, although she struggled to gather herself up, she feels she lost everything in her life. To her, family life without her husband has turned boring, difficult and painful.

The Maoists launched their ‘people’s war’ from Rolpa on February 13, 1996. The cat and mouse game of the Police and the Maoists had continued since then. Maoists began their killing spree, which they claimed was against cheats and wicked villagers. Kali Bahadur lost life during the spree. He was just 32 years old when Maoists killed him. He was an active village level cadre of the Nepali Congress. Maoists had been asking him to quit the Nepali Congress party since a long time back. When he did not pay heed, he was killed.

Kali Bahadur used to tell his wife of the threats he occasionally received from Maoists. But he had not thought that they would go to the extent of killing him. He was confident that an individual was free to follow any political ideology. “I do not worry much about it,” Gaumati recalled the words of her husband. “Nothing will happen just because I have a political ideology,” he had told her once.

“When the threats were more frequent, he started hiding himself during the night,” she said of the last days of her husband. “But then he also believed they would do no harm to him.” He started living at home when Maoists spread rumors urging all people to stay back in the village in harmony. But now she realizes that the rumors were a conspiracy against her husband.

“Three sons and a daughter had been to the cowshed. Only he, an eight-month-old daughter and I were at home. I was cooking as he held the baby and played with it. A group of masked persons entered the home. Each held a home-made gun. I could not identify them. They asked my husband to come out. He refused and asked what his fault was. One kicked me with his leg; I fell on the ground, and lost consciousness. It was around eight in the evening. The group put out the burning oil-fed lamp. My husband was standing with the small daughter on his chest. Then, I heard the sound of firing. I could not sense anything in the dark. In a while, I heard him crying in pain. When I lit up the lamp, he was lying in a pool of blood,” Gaumati narrated the dreadful incident.

She said the attackers had already fled the scene. Kali Bahadur’s body was belching blood. Her small daughter was lying on the floor with marks of burns on her leg. Kali Bahadur asked her to take him to hospital soon. Poor Gaumati and her daughter could do nothing. They kept on crying. No one came to help. Kali Bahadur moaned in pain lying on the ground throughout the night. He breathed his last at 11 the next morning.

Gaumati cannot forget her husband moaning. No one was there to sympathize with her even when she had lost her life partner. Her wish to live together with the man had turned into a mere dream. “None of the neighbors came. My husband could have lived had he been taken to hospital in time,” Gaumati said. “He died of bleeding when no one came to rescue him.” No one came even to take his body to the graveyard. No villager came out of their homes due to

“I did not like to see the place where my husband was killed,” she said.

“Neither have we got any justice, nor any relief. We did not like to live in the village, so we left it,” she added.

the reigning fear and terror. Gaumati suspected that they feared being killed if they showed sympathy with her. Only on the next day, some villagers dared to come and help perform the last rites of Kali Bahadur.

Kali Bahadur was a farmer by profession. He used to rear cows, buffalos, sheep and goats and grew crops to feed his family. Farming was the only means to meet his everyday need. As the chief of the family, he was responsible for feeding them all. But after his killing, his family lost their bread earner. No one was left to grow crops now. No one was there to manage foods for the festivals. “I found it difficult to manage the family,” Gaumati said. Gaumati faced the double difficulty to engage in household chores, while mourning the demise of her hubby.

The Gharti family started having their neighbors plough their farms. In return, Gaumati helped them. But it was not easy to depend on others to grow crops. Her eldest son Mulman started tilling the field at the tender age of 11. The family felt a bit easy when Mulman was at home with the hoe and plough. But Gaumati was sad that her son had to quit school. “I could not send my children to school due to household problems,” Gaumati said.

Conflict engulfed the entire country and it further deepened in the village. Her days worsened. She was compelled to get involved in the campaign launched by Maoists and even donate to them. Still she was managing her family. Slowly, she realized that she could not live in the village. Thus, she fled the ancestral village and came down to Ghorahi, Dang, on February 22, 2000 with her six-member family and started living as internally displaced.



The displaced life was more difficult. She had left all parental property in her village in Ruwa. Meeting the everyday need of a big family was a big challenge to her. "I was in a bigger problem as I had to pay the rent and feed five children," she said. Recalling her days in Ghorahi, she said that she started hunting for work and finally got a job of a porter to carry stones. She managed her life with the money she got for carrying the stone load. Yet, she failed to get the proper wages for her job. She was cheated several times. Life in Ghorahi is expensive. She started thinking about returning to her village if the situation improved. After two months in Ghorahi, she returned to Sulichaur, Rolpa with her family. Returning to her home village was riskier and she started living in a small rented room close to the Police Post of Sulichaur. She had no alternative but to work as a laborer. Along with her small children, she started working as a daily wage earner.

Further pain was added in Gaumati's pain. One sunny midday of May, Gaumati's eldest son set out for a swim in the Lungri river near Sulichaur. At that time, she was taking a brief rest from the hard job at midday. She was shocked to hear that her son Mulman, who helped her during those difficult days, had died while swimming. No one was there to look after the younger brothers and sisters. When she heard the bad news, she had rushed to the river bank. She fainted when she saw one of her son's friends bringing her son's body to the river bank. Death of her son added further salt in the wound caused by her husband's death. She cried for a long time. But no one was there to help her. Now it was difficult to feed the family with the earning of a mother alone. Seeing such a plight, her neighbors started advising her to marry off her daughter.

They arranged the marriage of her 14-year-old daughter Sun Kumari with Balu Gharti Magar, a cook at Sulichaur Police Post. Balu was also from Uwa-6. When Sun Kumari did not give birth to a child even four years after her marriage, Balu started beating and mistreating her. Sun Kumari could not live with Gharti any longer. She filed a case in Rolpa District Court seeking divorce from him. After divorce, she started living with her mother Gaumati. Gaumati's hope that her son-in-law would help her turned out to be futile. Gaumati felt guilty that in a way she herself was responsible because she had failed to find a suitable husband for her daughter. She could not afford to treat the wounds of her youngest daughter Sarita which she received during the

killing of her father. Despite doctors urging, she also could not ease the mental trauma Sarita suffered.

Whenever she looks at her disabled daughter Sarita, she recalls the cruel night. She would rather prefer to stay alone, stressed, crying and yelling.

The Sulichaur Police Post was shifted to district headquarters in Libang in 2060 BS. Gaumati felt unsafe to stay in Sulichaur. She was also displaced to Libang. Again she started having difficult days. She had to struggle hard to feed her family. She started working in a quarry, carrying loads of bricks, stones and cement.

Fourteen years have elapsed since Kali Bahadur was killed but Gaumati and other family members still do not know the reason behind the killing. “Why was he killed? What was his fault? No one has told us even as the peace process is underway,” she asked. “We should be informed why Kali Bahadur was killed.” An investigation must be carried out and the culprits must be brought to book. But nothing like this has happened until now, she said.

Although she lost her husband and son, she did not ask the government for any help as she was unaware about the procedures she had to follow to get such support. She continued to toil as a laborer. When she came to Libang, her second son Dhan Prasad and youngest son Man Prasad were sent to a children’s home in Kapilvastu, at the initiation of local organizations and the Nepali Congress party, to provide shelter and education.

“I felt happy when I knew that both sons got the opportunity to study,” Gaumati said. “But the pain of separation was unbearable.” Dhan Prasad, who began his study from the children’s home as a grade four student, passed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam in 2008, while Man Prasad is now a grade 10 student. Both Dhan and Man Prasad, who lost their father in their childhood, said though they got an opportunity to attend school, they were sad for losing their father. Dhan Prasad, who managed to enroll in a 10

+2 school of Kapilvastu by working as a teacher in a private boarding school, has returned to Libang. He had an opportunity to work as an office assistant in the branch office of IME, a finance company. He feeds his family with the salary. He is now studying in grade 12 in local Balkalyan Higher Secondary School. Sarita is studying in grade 2 in a school for the disabled at Dharapani.

Now Gaumati spends her days in a small and dark rented room of Khadhya Tole in Libang 6. A hearth is in a corner of the room and the kitchen gadgets are scattered everywhere. In another corner is her bed. Gaumati is poorly dressed and the color of her clothes looks faded just like her face.

She gets worried every morning and evening as to what she should eat and feed. Though the peace process began in the country, she is yet to realize it in her heart. She returned to her home in the village in the initiation of a district-based human rights awareness center, and HUREC, in the year 2063 B.S. But she was unable to live in her village for long. She stayed there only for three days and returned to Libang.

“I did not like to see the place where my husband was killed,” she said. “We have not got any justice, nor any relief. We did not like to live in the village, so we left it,” she added. These days, life for her has been a routine and daily struggle. She has been working as a laborer since she arrived in Libang. She could be seen crushing stones for a building under construction at Libang, or carrying heavy loads of cement.

No one has been there to look after her farm since she fled the village. Earlier, the Maoists occupied her land but after the peace process began, they abandoned it. Since then, her farm has remained barren. Though a distant brother-in-law is cultivating a portion of her farm, the remaining land is empty. Her stone-roofed house is on the verge of collapse. When she saw her falling house and barren farmland, her eyes filled with tears. She was in pain and said she was not in a condition to return to her village permanently.

Though she heard that the government was offering relief to those whose family members were killed, she did not know how and from where she could get such relief. An illiterate woman, she relied on knowledgeable people to collect her relief funds worth Rs. 50,000, twice during the conflict. But most of the relief money went into the pockets of those who helped her to get it.

“Not a penny was left for me although I got such a big amount of money,” she said.

She had heard that the family of each martyr was offered 1 million rupees, but she did not get the money.

Fourteen years have elapsed since Kali Bahadur was killed but Gaumati and other family members still do not know the reason behind the killing.

“Why was he killed? What was his fault? No one has told us even when the peace process is underway,” she asked. “We should be informed why Kali Bahadur was killed.” An investigation must be carried out and the culprits must be brought to book. But nothing like this has happened until now, she said.

“Those who shot my husband to death are now walking freely and openly,” she said. The Maoists were after Kali Bahadur in the village accusing him of being a police informant and spying against them. Gaumati suspects their hand in the killing.

“The murderers were wearing black masks, I could not identify them,” she said. “It is the duty of the government to find the culprits and bring them to book, but the government has not done that.”

She said that her husband would not come alive even if she was given millions of rupees. “My heart will feel a kind of solace if the culprits are brought to book and punished,” she said.

Fourteen years have elapsed since Kali Bahadur was killed but Gaumati and other family members still do not know the reason behind the killing. “Why was he killed? What was his fault? No one has told us even as the peace process is underway,” she asked. “We should be informed why Kali Bahadur was killed.” An investigation must be carried out and the culprits must be brought to book. But nothing like this has happened until now, she said.

Dhan Prasad said that he was unable to construct any *chautari*, a public resting-place, in memory of his father due to lack of money. “We will derive satisfaction if the government constructs a chautari or other monuments in memory of the martyrs,” he said.

Gaumati wanted no repetition of such war in the future and wished no woman had to wipe out the vermillion powder from her head like she had to. She stressed on the need to end the culture of impunity. However, Gaumati, who was disappointed by the killing of her husband, had now developed the confidence to struggle for a better future for her children.

According to the Gharti family, it might be easier to return to the village these days, but it would be difficult to manage life by cultivating the barren land and living in the run-down home. They said they would find it easier to maintain their life if they received enough relief from the government. They are sad because of the disability of the youngest daughter and the difficulty in conjugal life of the eldest daughter.

Gaumati has been crushing stones only to feed the family. They even find it much difficult to pay the rent of the small and dark room. They cannot meet the monthly need for food by spending five to six thousand rupees. They need Rs. 650 a month for rent. Though the peace process has its roots in the blood of her husband, the family of Gaumati still feels that they are yet to get justice. She does not know about the government’s effort to form the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to provide justice to the victims. Gaumati said, “The murderers of my husband should be brought to book and the government should give us justice in practice, not only in policy.” ●

## FACTS & CONTEXT

## Transitional Justice

Transitional justice is defined and determined according to the circumstances and needs of individual countries. The justice system and its process should be based on extensive consultations with victims' groups and other broad sections of the society. For transitional justice system to be successful, all parties to the conflict should get involved in this process politically and institutionally. They all should possess the feeling of ownership of the peace process. The transitional justice mechanisms should be allowed to operate completely independent of government and political parties.

Countries in the transitional stage cannot fully address the widespread incidents of past human rights abuses via existing judicial and non-judicial structures. They also cannot forget the past. In such a situation, many countries use the mechanisms of transitional justice to seek the truth, pursue accountability, provide reparations to victims, serve justice, and take steps towards national reconciliation

### What is transitional justice?

Transitional justice is a way to address past human rights violations so that nations and their people can move forward towards sustainable peace and reconciliation. It is a process in which countries move from autocratic rule to democracy or from armed conflict to peace, transitional justice. Transitional justice involves the following four specific areas of judicial and non-judicial activities:

#### Truth-seeking

There is the tradition of establishing truth commissions in post-conflict countries. These commissions are officially sanctioned, temporary, nonjudicial bodies. These are created to establish the truth about large-scale violations, including the responsibility of individuals and institutions and the root causes of the violations. They help to assist in understanding, acknowledging, and addressing the suffering of victims; pave the way for prosecutions; and support the processes of reconciliation. Truth commissions have been established in more than 30 countries, including East Timor, Liberia, Morocco, Peru, Sierra Leone and South Africa. Commissions of inquiry are similar to truth commissions but have a narrower mandate, usually limited to a specific incident, time period or category of violations. They are focused on establishing the responsibility of individuals, rather than the broader causes of a conflict; and have a shorter life-span.

#### Prosecutions

Domestic courts have primary responsibility for carrying out trials for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of human rights.

Only if domestic courts are unable or unwilling to conduct effective investigations or prosecutions, international or “hybrid” courts (using national and international judges) should be considered. The International Criminal Court established in The Hague (Netherlands) in 1998 conducts trials for persons implicated in genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. International or hybrid courts have also been established for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, East Timor, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Perpetrators of serious crimes under international law should not benefit from amnesties and other clemency measures, even when they are part of a peace agreement.

### **Reparations to victims**

International laws do not only give victims the right to investigations and prosecutions. They also offer victims of human rights violations the right to remedies and reparations. Reparations do not have to be exclusively monetary, or even material; they can be symbolic acts such as apologies and recognition of the plight of victims through construction of memorials and other symbolic acts. State verification of the facts and recognition of the truth are also important reparation measures. The UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Remedy and Reparation identify and provide guidance on different forms of reparations. The high number of victims in many post-conflict societies makes it necessary to consider collective reparations for the hardest hit communities or constituencies. Comprehensive and integrated reparations programs should therefore comprise both collective and individual measures, as well as both material and symbolic reparations.

### **Institutional Reform**

Various reforms need to be made in a post-conflict state in transition. In particular, reforms are required in the transformation of public institutions that contributed to conflict or supported an authoritarian regime. The institutional reform process should transform such institutions into efficient and fair institutions that respect human rights, maintain peace, and preserve the rule of law.

The following can be done for Institutional reform:

- Create oversight, complaint and disciplinary procedures;
- Reform or establish new legal frameworks;
- Develop or revise ethical guidelines and codes of conduct;
- Create a provision of adequate salaries, equipment and infrastructure;
- Reform an institution by screening and removing personnel who are unsuitable for public employment from, for example, the security forces, the police or the judiciary, a process known as vetting.

*Based on OHCHR-Nepal publication, April 2007. ●*



## Victims in Numbers

The number of casualties and the extent of damage caused in any conflict can be difficult to determine. It takes time to collect information and to verify it with new numbers and statistics continuing to come in. The numbers by different agencies vary depending on their definitions of victims and their methods of data collection. Nepal's decade-long conflict is no different.

**Deaths:** Media reports often cite 13,000 deaths. Some put the figures at around 14,000. According to Informal Sector Serve Center (INSEC), during the conflict, between 13 February 1996 and 31 August 2006, there were 13,265 fatalities.

In 2009, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction updated the records, putting the total at 16,278. On March 29, 2011, citing figures compiled by an official taskforce responsible for ascertaining the loss of life and property during Moist conflict, the government said the conflict has left 17,265 people dead.

**Disappeared:** For both 2003 and 2004, Nepal had the highest number of disappeared people in the world, according to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. As of August 30, 2010, some 3,397 complaints on the disappeared persons during the armed conflict were registered at the National Human Rights Commission – Nepal. In March 2011 the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction said the conflict had left 1,302 people missing in the country.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimated in April 2011 that there were more than 1,300 people missing in Nepal due to conflict-related causes. Some local NGOs or family groups put the number of missing much higher. For example, the Society of the Families of the Disappeared (SOFD) has said that there are about 5,700 cases of conflict-related disappearances in Nepal.

**Displaced:** The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) at the end of 2002 was estimated in the range of 100,000-150,000. According to the March 2011 data from MoPR, the number of internally displaced people owing to conflict was 78,675. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) estimate of July 2010 put the figures at 50,000. These numbers do not include thousands of people forced to leave the country due to conflict.

**Disabled:** The March 2011 data from the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction says there are 4,305 disabled people as a result of the conflict. Some other sources put the number as high as 5,800.

**Orphaned:** More than 8,000 children were orphaned, according to a September 2006 report released by Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN). The March 2011 data from the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction puts the number of orphans at 121. Other estimates put the number of orphaned children as high as 25,000.

**Widowed:** As of April 2011, the government's Emergency Support Project (ESP) recorded 419 widows who were compensated for their loss during the conflict. Other estimates run up to 9,000 widows as a result of the conflict.

**Loss of property:** A total number of 12,657 private properties were lost or damaged (Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, March 2011). In addition, several government offices, schools, bridges and police posts were damaged. The ministry estimated in 2007 that the total destruction of government property was worth about 5 billion rupees. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) estimated that US \$ 246.6 million worth of physical infrastructures was destroyed.

**Other effects:** The conflict directly affected the life of the family members of those killed, disappeared, or displaced. The number of such family members is estimated to be around 400,000 to 500,000. Many of these victims suffer from mental and psychological trauma of the war and having lost one or more of their bread winners in conflict, some continue to face economic hardship. ●

## Recording the War

It is necessary to record any conflict extensively in order to identify the victims accurately, and in the hope that the conflict does not repeat, and lessons can be learnt from it. The recording of a conflict continues long after the war since new facts keep adding up as time passes by. Nepal's decade-long conflict has not yet been recorded in a comprehensive manner. However, some efforts have been made in this regard.

For example, INSEC maintains one of the most comprehensive online databases consisting of conflict victims' profile. Information on individual victims by type of victimization, place of incident, gender, address, political affiliation, ethnicity, education, profession, language, age, economic and marital status, etc. can be retrieved from its Website here: <http://www.insec.org.np/victim/>

The official website of Emergency Peace Support Program (EPSP) under the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction also maintains a database of deceased people and single women or widows with their names, addresses and reparation details: <http://www.epsp.gov.np/>

A notable project in documenting the victims of conflict and the effects of the decade-long war on the people is the pictorial trilogy by nepa~laya. The first book in the trilogy, *A People War: Images of the Nepal Conflict 1996-2006* (December 2006) is a collection of 172 photographs of ordinary people affected by the war. *Never Again* (2008) compiles comments by the visitors of the traveling photographic exhibitions based on the first book. The third book in the trilogy, *People After War* (2009) revisits 55 of the individuals profiled in the first book to see where they were three years after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2006. These books are published in Nepali also. These materials are not available free of cost, however, information about these works are available online at <http://www.apeoplewar.com> ●

# Conflict Victims' Voices

Victims know better than anyone else about their suffering and concerns. A genuine transitional justice process ensures participation conflict victims in articulating their experiences, asserting their rights, and assessing their needs. To document the voices of these victims, a number of leading humanitarian and rights organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Amnesty International, International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Advocacy Forum and INSEC have carried out interviews, surveys and focus groups across the country. The following are highlights from two such major surveys:

## Perceptions of Victims

In October 2007 Advocacy Forum and the International Center for Transitional Justice completed a survey in 17 conflict-affected districts with 811 conflict victims (involving disappearance, extrajudicial killing, torture, and rape). In addition, 10 focus-group discussions (FGD) were conducted in the different districts and regional centers. Here is the summary of the victims' perceptions:

- Exclusion and structural inequality like “untouchability” were universally identified as major causes of the conflict
- The most common type of violation reported was torture (51 percent), followed by disappearance (23 percent), and extrajudicial killing (20 percent).
- There was consensus on the need to institute a truth and reconciliation commission and commission to establish the whereabouts of those who have disappeared. However, only 0.3 percent of respondents believed that a TRC would end the culture of impunity.
- The overwhelming majority of the respondents (90 percent) wanted trials and punishment of those found responsible for past human-rights violations.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents filing complaints with police said that no action was taken, they were harassed, or their complaint was refused and not registered. More than 80 percent felt the army would be not helpful. Respondents, however, said that institutions like the Nepal Bar Association, human-rights organizations, and the National Human Rights Commission had been helpful in addressing their complaints.
- Approximately 80 percent of respondents had neither read nor heard about the district peace committees, and 75 percent were unaware that victims had to register their cases with the CDOs.

- Respondents had the lowest amount of trust in the police and army, with about two-thirds of respondents stating they did not trust them at all. Around 40 percent of respondents said they had no trust at all in political parties, the Maoists, and Parliament. Respondents displayed the greatest amount of trust in the courts, with four-fifths saying they trusted them fully or to some extent, followed by NGOs and the UN.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents believed they knew the meaning of the term “amnesty”. Among them, three-quarters said human-rights violators and perpetrators should not receive amnesty for their crimes.
- More than 99 percent of respondents said victims should receive reparations.
- Eighty percent defined reconciliation as living in peace and harmony with everyone. Only a very small number equated reconciliation with forgetting the past or granting amnesty to perpetrators.
- The majority of respondents identified immediate needs as basic requirements such as health, education, housing, clothing, and employment. They identified compensation, education, peace, security etc with their future needs.
- Focus groups showed that women were forced to radically change their normal roles to deal with the social, economic, legal, and political consequences of the human-rights violations suffered by their spouses and male family members. Sexual violence and rape were significant factors in the conflict but only a few women in the survey (a little over 1 percent) reported rape, perhaps because of social stigma attached to victims of sexual violence and rape.
- Because children were involved in conflict and they were victims of the conflict, participants often reported continuing fear of war and psychological effect of conflict on family units.
- During the conflict, large numbers of Dalits and Janajatis, especially Tharus, were direct victims of human-rights violations. Participants cited exclusion of Dalits and indigenous groups from social opportunities and benefits as one of the major causes of the conflict.

Source: *Nepali Voices: Victims’ perceptions of justice, truth, reparations, reconciliation, and the transition in Nepal* (Advocacy Forum and the International Center for Transitional Justice, 2008)

## Needs of Missing Persons' Families

While the families of the dead can mourn and find closure to their suffering, families of the missing continue to live with pain and misery, hoping to know about their lost loved ones. In 2008, the ICRC undertook a study of the disappeared with the objective to give voice to the families of people who went missing during the 1996-2006 armed conflict in Nepal, and to assess their needs.

Through interviews, focus groups and participation observation, ICRC collected the perceptions of 86 families of victims from 10 of Nepal's 75 districts that were worst affected.

- Most families agreed on their priorities: they want an answer regarding the fate of the missing and they want economic support in the absence of breadwinners. Only a minority of families, notably the urban and the educated ones, mention justice as a priority.
- Families were reluctant to believe that their loved one is dead. For most families the only conceivable proof of death is the body itself; 83 per cent of them require the dead person's body to perform death rituals.
- A majority of those met reported symptoms consistent with the impact of trauma, and a small minority were disabled by mental illness. A number of wives of missing persons face extreme stigmatization in their homes that has led to their being ejected by their in-laws, leaving voluntarily or continuing to live there in terrible conditions. In their communities the problems of missing persons' families are poorly understood; wives of the missing are often stigmatized for refusing to behave as widows are expected to.
- A minority of households face challenges in feeding their families, and a small number of households with no economically active member have no alternative but to beg for food.
- A minority of families are facing difficulty with transfer of land or property, owing to the ambiguity of the fate of a head of household. To resolve such issues, they seek for a legal status of "missing".
- Families want those responsible for disappearances to be prosecuted. They also hold informers, those who gave the orders and those at the political level responsible. Most reject amnesty outright. They believe trials should be accessible to victims and should ideally be held in their local area.

- The attitude of families to reparations is dominated by the need for economic support and for acknowledgement. For most, this results in an urgent demand for interim relief, while reparations and compensation must await the truth.
- Families also want to see the missing acknowledged as martyrs, if and when the truth of their fate is known, and to see memorials built in tribute to them.
- Whilst most state victims believe that the CPN-M-led government will address the missing persons' issue, hardly any victims of the CPN-M share this view.
- Around half of all families would be ready to join a protest movement if the authorities do not address the missing persons' issue, and 15 per cent of them said they could envisage to start a new insurgency over the issue.

Source: *Families of Missing Persons in Nepal: A Study Of Their Needs* (International Committee of the Red Cross, Kathmandu, April 2009) ●

## Reparation and Rehabilitation Efforts

The government's works in rehabilitation and reparation are carried out through the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction. In February 2007, the government created the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NTPF) to implement the provisions of the historic Comprehensive Peace Accords (CPA), which was signed by the Government of Nepal (GoN) and the Nepal Communist Party Maoist (CPN-M) on 21 November, 2006. There is also the Emergency Peace Support project that supports the government in fulfilling the commitments made under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including support to the families of those killed in the conflict.

Progress on Reparation and Rehabilitation					
	Cases	Total	Made Reparation	Target for Mid-July 2011	Remaining
1	Deceased	17265	13538	2283	1444
2	Abduction	1438	221	998	219
3	Disappearance	1302	1197	105	--
4	Disabled	4305	1297	2500	508
5	Loss of private property	12657	14631	1350	9844
6	Displaced	78675	28000	00	50675
7	Orphaned	121	--	121	--

Source: *Peace & Reconstruction Ministry, Nepal (March 2011)*

As of March 2011, the government had compensated 13,538 kin of those killed during the conflict. Of the 5560 physical infrastructure destroyed during the conflict, 1968 had been reconstructed by that time. The government planned to compensate 2,283 more kin of deceased by mid-July 2011.

So far the government has spent Rs. 3.7 billion and has allocated Rs. 2.44 billion in the current budget for compensation and construction. It has formed peace committees in 900 villages in 72 districts.

The Emergency Peace Support Project website provides updated records on reparation to the families of individual deceased and widows.

Useful links online:

Emergency Peace Support Project <http://www.epsp.gov.np>

Nepal Peace Trust Fund <http://www.nptf.gov.np> ●



## Deaths in Wars and Conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

There were many conflicts during the twentieth century, most notably the two World Wars. It was a century of immense human suffering. Exact figures are not available on how many people lost their lives due to those wars and conflicts. Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served as national security advisor to former US president Jimmy Carter, estimated that between 167 and 175 million people were killed in the twentieth century wars and conflicts, until 1990. Other experts and researcher have estimated that between 187 and 258 million were killed in those wars and conflicts.

There are many sources of data on the past and ongoing conflicts around the world. The following was compiled by Dr. Milton Leitenberg for the Peace Studies Program of Cornell University in America. This was updated most recently in 2006. Dr. Leitenberg calculates that between 1945 and 2000 around 41 million people lost their lives in wars and conflicts. His table includes fatalities for the Nepali conflict also, however, the data is based on calculations done in 2000. Recent official estimates of casualties for the entire conflict period between 1996 and 2006 put the figures at 17,265.

### Deaths in Wars and Conflicts (1945 to 2000)

Region	Conflict	Civilian Death	Military Death	Total
<b>Latin America</b>				
Argentina				
1955	armed forces vs. Person	2,000	2,000	4,000
1976-79	“disappearances”	15000-30,000	-	15000-30,000
1982	Falklands/Malvinas	0	1000	1000
Bolivia				
1952	revolution vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
1955-67	guerrilla insurgency	-	-	200,000
Brazil				
1980	rightist terrorism	-	-	1,000
Chile				
1973	military coup vs. Allende government	-	-	5,000
1974	executions by military junta	20,000	0	20,000
Colombia				
1948	conservatives vs. government	-	-	1,000
1949-62	liberals vs. conservatives	200,000	100,000	300,000
1980-89	government vs. left opposition	8,000	0	8,000
Costa Rica				
1948	National Union vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
Cuba				
1958-59	Cuban revolution	2,000	3,000	5,000

Dominican Republic				
1965	civil war/U.S. intervention	1,000	2,000	3,000
El Salvador				
1979-89	FMLN vs. government	50,000	23,000	73,000
Guatemala				
1954	conservatives vs. government/ U.S. intervention	¼	¼	1,000
1966-89	government vs. URNG vs. military opposition	200,000	17,500	212,500
1990-95	slaughter of indigenous peoples	10,000	¼	10,000
Honduras				
1969	Soccer War with El Salvador	3,000	2,000	5,000
Jamaica				
1980	election violence	1,000	0	1,000
Nicaragua				
1978-79	civil war vs. Somoza government	25,000	10,000	35,000
Peru				
1980-92	Sendero Luminoso vs. government	62,000	7,000	69,000
<b>Middle East</b>				
Cyprus				
1974	National Guard/Turkish invasion	3,000	2,000	5,000
Egypt				
1955	Suez invasion/France, Israel, UK	1,000	3,000	4,000
1967-70	Six-Day War; War of Attrition	50,000	25,000	75,000
Iran				
1979-89	Government vs. opposition (esp. Kurds)	¼	0	17,000
1980-88	Iran-Iraq war	0	1,000,000	1,000,000
Iraq				
1959	Shammar tribe vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
1961-74	Kurds vs. government	¼	-	200,000
1980-88	Iran-Iraq War	¼	800,000	800,000
1988	"Anfal" killings of Kurds	100,000	0	100,000
1980-89	government vs. Kurds (KDP, PUK)	-	-	67,000
1991	Gulf War b	-	-	75,000
1991-95	Shia/South	50,000	-	50,000
1982-2002	additional political killings by Iraq govt	350,000	-	350,000
Israel				
1948	Arab League vs. Israel	0	8,000	8,000
1973	Yom Kippur War vs. Egypt, Syria	0	16,000	16,000
1987-2000	Intifada	13,000		13,000
Jordan				
1970	Palestinians/Syrians vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
Lebanon				

1958	civil war	1,000	1,000	2,000
1975-89	civil war/Syrian and Israeli interventions	-	-	131,000
Syria				
1981	government massacre of Muslim	10,000	0	10,000
Turkey				
1984-2000	government vs. Kurdish Workers'	30,000	0	30,000
Republic of Yemen				
1948	Yahya family vs. government	2,000	2,000	4,000
1962-69	civil war, including Egyptian intervention			10,000
1994	Border war vs government of Yemen PDR	¼	4,000	4,000
Yemen, (former) People's Democratic Republic of				
1986	civil war			10,000
<b>South Asia</b>				
Afghanistan				
1978-89 b	civil war/Soviet intervention	-	-	1,000,000
1990-2000	civil war			1,000,000
Bangladesh				
1971	civil war/Indian intervention	1,000,000	500,000	1,500,000
1975-89	autonomy struggle in Chittagong			1,000
India				
1946-48	partition-related strife	800,000	0	800,000
1947-49	India vs. Pakistan over Kashmir	1,000	2,000	3,000
1948	India vs. Hyderabad	1,000	1,000	2,000
1962	Sino-Indian war	1,000	1,000	2,000
1965	India vs. Pakistan/Rann of Kutch war	13,000	7,000	20,000
1971	India vs. Pakistan (associated with	0	11,000	11,000
Pakistani civil war)				
1983	Assam election violence	3,000		3,000
1983-2000	Sikh autonomy campaign			25,200
1990-2000	Kashmir	9,000	20,000	29,000
Nepal				
1996-	Maoist insurgency vs. government	¼	-	5,000
Pakistan				
1973-77	Baluchis vs. government/Afghan	6,000	3,000	9,000
Sri Lanka				
1971	Maoists vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
1983-89	Government vs. Tamil Elam separatists/ Indian intervention/Singhalese People's Liberation Front intervention	¼	¼	15,000

1990-2002	Government vs Tamil Elam (LTTE)	¼	¼	50,000
<b>Far East</b>				
<b>Burma</b>				
1948-51	Karens vs. government/Chinese intervention	¼	¼	8,000
1980	Burma Communist Party vs. government	¼	¼	5,000
1981-93	Government vs. opposition (mostly Karen)	0	9,000	9,000
<b>Cambodia</b>				
1970-75	Civil war/Indochina conflict	¼	¼	156,000
1975-78	Pot government vs. civilians	1,770,000	¼	1,770,000
1990-94	government vs Khmer Rouge	¼	¼	25,000
<b>China</b>				
1946-50	Civil war	5,000,000	1,200,000	6,200,000
1950-51	takeover of Tibet	0	1,000	1,000
1951-53	Chinese PLA mortality in Korean			
1956-59	Tibetan revolt	¼	¼	200,000
1983-84	government executions	5,000	0	5,000
1989	Tiananmen Square	1,000	0	1,000
<b>Indonesia</b>				
1945-46	independence struggle	4,000	1,000	5,000
1950	Moluccans vs. government	-	-	5,000
1953	Darul Islam vs. government	-	-	1,000
1956-60	Communists vs. government	¼		30,000
1965-66	massacres following attempted coup	500,000	0	500,000
1975-89	annexation of East Timor	120,000	11,000	131,000
2000	post-Timor plebiscite	2-3,000	¼	2-3,000
2000	Aceh province insurgency	2,000	¼	2,000
<b>Korea (North and South)</b>				
1948	Yosu Rebellion	0	1,000	1,000
1950-53	Korean War (includes Chinese U.S. and UN mortality)	PLA, 2,828,000	1,672,00	4,500,000
<b>Laos</b>				
1960-73	civil war/Indochina conflict	12,000	12,000	24,000
1975-87	government/Vietnam vs. National Liberation Front	30,000	10,000	40,000
<b>Malaya (now Malaysia)</b>				
1950-60	UK intervention in civil war	-	-	13,000

Philippines				
1950-52	Hukbalahop vs. government	5,000	4,000	9,000
1972-2000	Muslims (MNLF, MILF), & New People's Army vs. government; Muslims (MNLF, MILF), and New People's Army vs. government	100,000	20,000	120,000
Taiwan (China)				
1954-55	civil strife	-	-	5,000
Vietnam				
1945-54	independence struggle vs. France	300,000	300,000	600,000
1960-75	N. Vietnam vs. S. Vietnam/United States <sup>b</sup>	1,200,000	1,158,00	2,358,000
1979	China vs. Vietnam	0	56,000	56,000
1979	Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia	¼	25,300	25,300
1980-88	China vs. Vietnam/border	0	1,000	1,000
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>				
Angola				
1961-75	Independence struggle vs. Portugal	300,000	300,000	600,000
1980-95	Civil war/Cuban-South African intervention	¼	¼	1,000,000
1995-2000	Civil War continued	¼	¼	100,000
Burundi				
1972	Hutus vs. government/massacre	80,000	20,000	100,000
1988 / 1993 <sup>b</sup>	civil strife	200,000	0	200,000
	civil strife	200,000	0	200,000
Cameroon				
1955-60	independence struggle vs. France	¼	¼	32,000
Chad				
1965-89	government vs. opposition/Libyan	¼	¼	28,000
Ethiopia				
1978	Somalian invasion	¼	¼	150,000
1962-89	Eritrean and other opposition vs. government	-	-	1,000,000
1998	Ethiopia-Eritrea War	-	-	100,000
Ghana				
1981	Konkomba vs. Nanumba	-		1000
Guinea-Bissau				
1962-74	independence struggle vs. Portugal	5000	10000	150000
Kenya				
1952-63	independence struggle vs. UK	¼	¼	100,000-300,000
Liberia				
1990-95	civil war	100,000	¼	100,000

Madagascar				
1947-48	independence struggle vs. France	3,000	2,000	5,000
Mozambique				
1965-75	independence struggle vs. Portugal	¼	¼	30,000
1981-88	civil war	¼	-	900,000
Namibia				
1967-89	SWAPO independence vs. South Africa	¼	¼	13,000
Nigeria				
1967-70	civil war	1,000,000	1,000,00	2,000,000
1980-81	fundamentalist Muslims vs. government	¼	¼	5,000
1984	fundamentalist Muslims vs. government	-	-	1,000
1999-	regional civil unrest	10,000	-	10,000
Rwanda				
1956-65b	Tutsis vs. government/massacre	102,000	3,000	105,000
1990-95	civil strife and genocide	-	-	1,000,000
Sierra Leone				
1991-2000	government vs. insurgents	50,000	¼	50,000
Somalia				
1980-90b	civil strife	5,000	5,000	10,000
1990-93	civil strife	-	-	300,000
South Africa				
1985-89	African National Congress vs. Inkatha	5000	-	5,000
Sudan				
1955-72	civil war	-	-	750000
1983-90	civil war	500,000	10,000	510,000
1990-95	civil war	-	-	500,000
1995-2000	civil war	-	-	1,000,000
Uganda				
1966	Bungandans vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
1971-78	Idi Amin massacres	300,000	0	300,000
1978-79	Tanzanian invasion	¼	3,000	3,000
1981-85	Obote government massacres	300,000	0	300,000
1981-88	National Resistance Army vs. government/ NRA vs. opposition	100,000	6,000	106,000
1990	Lord's Resistance Army vs. government	50,000	¼	50,000
1975-89	Polisario vs. Morocco	4,000	8,000	12,000
West Sahara				
1975-89	Polisario Vs Morocco	4000	8000	12000
Zaire/Congo				
1960-65	civil war	-	-	100,000
1996-97	Hutu refugees in Zaire	200,000	0	200,000

1998-2000	civil war	-	-	1,500,000
Zambia				
1964	civil strife	-	-	1,000
Zimbabwe				
1972-79	struggle for majority rule			12,000
1979-87	government vs. ZAPU, MNR	2,000	0	2,000
<b>Northern Africa</b>				
Algeria				
1954-62	independence struggle vs. France	¼	¼	1,000,000
1962-63	rebel leaders vs. government	1,000	1,000	2,000
1990-95	government vs Muslim extremists	-	-	30,000
1993-2000	government vs Muslim extremists			100,000
Morocco				
1953-56	independence struggle vs. France	3,000	0	3,000
Tunisia				
1952-54	independence struggle vs. France	3,000	0	3,000
<b>Russia, Balkan and CIS States</b>				
Armenia/Azerbaijan				
1992-94	war over Nagorno-Karabakh	¼	10,000	10,000
Chechnya				
1994-96	Russia vs. Chechen insurgents	¼	¼	(Chechens) 80,000
		¼	15,000	(Russians) 15,000
1999-2000	Russia vs. Chechen insurgents	¼	¼	(Chechens) 15,000
		¼	3,500	(Russians) 3,500
“Former Yugoslavia” (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina)				
1991-96	civil war			300,000
Georgia			2,500	2,500
1994	Civil War vs. Abkhazia	¼		
Kosovo				
1998-99	Serbia vs Kosovo insurgents	10,000	-	10,000
Tajikistan				
1992-96	civil war			100,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>approximately 40,968,000, rounded to 41 million</b>

“Deaths in Wars and Conflicts in the 20th Century”, Cornell University, Peace Studies Program, *Occasional Paper* (2006). Online link available at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations: <http://bit.ly/llvp1h>

# List of Post-Conflict Countries

There are several countries around the world that have experienced internal conflicts like in Nepal. The following table gives the name of countries, dates of conflict and their current status. This table was prepared by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2008. This list includes only armed intra-state conflicts that ended, or significantly diminished, after the end of the Cold War in 1990.

S. No.	Country	Major conflict episode(s)	Current Status
1	Afghanistan	1978–1991, 1991–2002, 2005	Ongoing insurgency
2	Angola	(2001) 1975–1994, 1997–2002	Peace
3	Azerbaijan	1991–1994	Peace
4	Bosnia & Herzegovina	(1990) 1992–1995	Peace
5	Burundi	1991–2002	Peace, implementation challenges
6	Cambodia	1970–1975, 1978–1991	Peace
7	Chad	1965–1988, 1990, 2006–2007	Revived insurgency
8	Congo (Democratic Republic)	1996–1997, 1998–2001	Ongoing insurgency
9	Congo, Republic of	1993–1997, 1998–1999	Peace
10	Côte d'Ivoire	2002–2004	
11	Croatia	1991–1993	Peace
12	El Salvador	(1980-1991) 1979–1991	Peace
13	Eritrea	1974–1991	Peace, unresolved border disputes
14	Ethiopia	1974–1991	Peace, unresolved border disputes
15	Georgia	1991–1994	Peace, unresolved territorial claims
16	Guatemala	1965–1995	Peace
17	Guinea-Bissau	1998–1999	Peace
18	Haiti	1991–1995	Continuing instability
19	Indonesia (Aceh)	1990–2006	Peace
20	Kosovo	1998–1999	Peace, unresolved status
21	Lebanon	1975–1990	comprehensive settlement
22	Mozambique	1976–1992	Peace
23	Namibia	1973–1989	Peace
24	Liberia	1989–1990, 1992–1997, 1999–2003	Peace
25	Nepal	1996–2006	Peace (elections held in April 2008)
26	Nicaragua	(1981-1989) 1978–1979, 1979–1990	Peace
27	Papua New Guinea	1989–1996	Peace
28	Rwanda	1990–1993, 1994, 1998–1999, 2001	Peace
29	Sierra Leone	1991–1996, 1997–2001	Peace
30	Solomon Islands	1998–2003	Peace
31	Somaliland region	1988–1991	Unresolved territorial status
32	Sri Lanka	1983–2002, 2005	Ongoing insurgency
33	Sudan (North/South)	1983–2002	Peace
34	Tajikistan	1992–1997	Peace
35	Timor-Leste	1975–1999	Peace
36	Uganda	1979–1991	Peace

Source: *Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, UNDP (2008), p.7. <http://bit.ly/mQayqw>



## Truth Commissions

In fulfillment of the commitment expressed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2006) between the government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the government of Nepal issued draft Truth and Reconciliation bill in July 2007. In November 2008 the Government issued the draft Disappearances (Crime and Punishment) Bill. Both of these bills, which have not yet been approved, seek to establish effective mechanisms to document the truth about crimes committed during the conflict as well as to ensure justice and full reparation to the victims and their family members.

Truth commissions have been a worldwide phenomenon since the 1970s. At least 32 truth commissions were established in 28 countries between 1974 and 2007:

- Argentina (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, 1983)
- Bolivia (National Commission of Inquiry into Disappearances, 1982)
- Chad (Commission of Inquiry on the Crimes and Misappropriations Committed by the ex-President Habré, his Accomplices and/or Accessories, 1991)
- Chile (National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, 1990; National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, 2003),
- Democratic Republic of Congo (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003)
- Ecuador (Truth and Justice Commission, 1996; Truth Commission, 2007)
- El Salvador (Commission of Truth, 1992)
- Germany (Commission of Inquiry for the Assessment of History and Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in Germany, 1992)
- Ghana (National Reconciliation Commission, 2002)
- Grenada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2001)
- Guatemala (Commission for the Historical Clarification of Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence which Caused Suffering to the Guatemalan People, 1997)
- Haiti (National Commission for Truth and Justice, 1995)
- Indonesia (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2004)
- Liberia (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2005)
- Morocco (Equity and Reconciliation Commission, 2004)
- Nepal (Commission of Inquiry to Locate the Persons Disappeared during the Panchayat Period, 1990)
- Nigeria (Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission, 1999)
- Panama (Truth Commission, 2001)
- Paraguay (Truth and Justice Commission, 2003)
- Peru (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2000)
- Sierra Leone (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2002)

- South Africa (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1995)
- South Korea (Presidential Truth Commission on Suspicious Deaths, 2000)
- Sri Lanka (Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal and Disappearances of Persons in Western, Southern and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal and Disappearances of Persons in the Central, North Western, North Central and Uva Provinces and Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal and Disappearances of Persons in the Northern & Eastern Provinces, 1994)
- Timor-Leste (Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, 2002)
- Uganda (Commission of Inquiry into the Disappearance of people in Uganda, 1974 and Commission of inquiry into Violations of Human Rights, 1986)
- Uruguay (Investigative Commission on the Situation of Disappeared People and its Causes, 1985 and Peace Commission, 2000)
- Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2001)

Source: Amnesty International: <http://bit.ly/jjP1y4> ●



## UTILITY INFORMATION

## Government Relief Efforts

Nepal government has brought out a Citizens Relief, Compensation and Economic Assistance Procedure, 2066 for implementation since December 16, 2009 with the objective of making its relief, compensation and economic assistance for citizens transparent and just.

Nepal government has taken the period between February 13, 1996 and November 21, 2006 (the day the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed) as the conflict period. The government has made arrangements to provide relief to victims of incidents involving human rights violation from the then government and CPN-Maoist sides during the conflict period.

‘Conflict victims’ are regarded as those who depended on individuals killed in conflict, those who lost their body parts during conflict, those who were displaced, those who disappeared and their families, those abducted by the conflicting parties and those suffering damage to lives and property.

Two units have been established at the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction for providing relief.

**1. The taskforce for collection of details on conflict affected individuals, families and infrastructure:** The taskforce set up in 2007 collects the details of the disappeared, abducted, orphaned, injured and killed, displaced individuals and families, and damaged individual property and destroyed physical infrastructure.

**2. The relief and rehabilitation unit:** This unit arranges relief to victims in line with the directives prepared by the government. The term of the unit lasts until mid-July 2011.

## Types of relief

### 1. Economic assistance for claimants of those killed due to conflict

Claimants of those killed due to the conflict can obtain Rs. 100,000 from related district administration offices. The following documents should be included in the application for relief:

1. Nepali citizenship certificate (in case of children, their birth registration certificates and their patron’s citizenship certificate)
2. A letter in proof of relationship
3. Documents from the concerned village development committee or municipality with details in proof as a patron to the child (when the patron registers application on behalf of the child)

4. Two recent photographs (in case of children, 2 photographs each for the child and its patron)
5. The death registration certificate of the individual killed (if it is available)

Along with the application, the applicant should submit proofs showing the cause of death before the district administration office. Some examples of proofs that the district administration office recognizes in practice are:

- Police enquiry documents
- The letter of certification of the incident issued by the then rebel side CPN-Maoist
- The recommendation letter regarding the incident by the local peace committee or political parties
- Information published in newspapers after the incident

**Individuals killed due to conflict are individuals who meet the following conditions:**

1. Individuals killed by bullets fired from the conflicting sides
2. Individuals killed by landmines and ambushes and so on laid down in the course of conflict
3. Individuals killed in bomb explosions in the course of conflict
4. Individuals confirmed killed after abduction by conflicting sides during the conflict
5. Individuals shot or beaten to death or killed by other weapons by conflicting sides during the conflict
6. Individuals killed in post conflict period in explosions of stray bombs, landmines or ambushes left behind during the conflict period
7. Individuals confirmed killed after disappearing in the course of conflict
8. Security personnel and government officials killed in the line of duty during the conflict

*2. Interim relief for widows of those killed in conflict*

A widow of an individual who died due to conflict is entitled to receive Rs. 25 thousand from the concerned district development office. The widow will get the relief only in case she is not re-married. If there are more than one wives of the individual, they will get an equal share of the money. The wife of an individual receiving pay and perk from the government coffers will not be entitled to this economic assistance.

*3. Economic assistance to be received by the nearest relative of the individual forced to disappear due to conflict*

The claimant in this situation will be entitled to receive Rs. 100,000 from the concerned district administration office. For this, the district administration office will need to ascertain the nearest claimant or patron in case of a child. After ascertaining this, the DAO sends the details to the details collection taskforce of the Peace and Reconstruction Ministry and recommends the economic assistance

*4. Interim relief to be received by individuals abducted or made to disappear for more than 30 days at the hands of conflicting parties during the conflict or their nearest claimants*

In this situation, a victim will be entitled to receive Rs. 25,000 from the concerned district administration office. To secure the relief, an individual needs to have been abducted or made to disappear at the hands of conflicting parties for more than 30 days during the conflict period and freed from the situation. The concerned individual or the nearest claimant should file an application at the district administration office demanding compensation for being abducted or made to disappear by the conflicting parties during the conflict. In such cases, the local level recommendation committee should ascertain that the individual was abducted or made to disappear. After ascertaining, the committee sends the details to the details collection taskforce of the Peace and Reconstruction Ministry.

*5. Provision for reimbursement of medical expenses incurred in treatment of those injured due to conflict*

This relief is provided by the district administration office based on bills and invoices. Individuals injured due to conflict during the conflict period or after the peace agreement in explosions involving landmines and other explosives planted during the conflict period are entitled to this relief. Those injured due to conflict during that period should file an application with the district administration office for economic assistance by including all documents showing expenses incurred in the treatment.

When the injured comes in contact with the district administration office, the office ascertains whether or not the individual was injured due to conflict. In case of applications by those injured in explosions involving landmines or other explosives following the peace agreement, the chief district officer attests to the incident and its causes and writes a letter to the concerned local level hospital with recommendation to arrange for the treatment.

There is a provision for reimbursement of expenses as per the hospital bills charged during treatment at the government or community hospitals and of travel expenses incurred for the patient and one attendant to him or her. It also includes the expenses incurred in buying medicines recommended by doctors and a Rs. 75 daily relief for an attendant to the patient during the period of hospitalization.

Expenses incurred during treatment at private hospitals, except not-for-profit community and government hospitals, will not be reimbursed. No reimbursement will be made for expenses incurred in treatment in any kind of hospital in any other country outside Nepal. No reimbursement will be made without bills and invoices from not-for-profit and government hospitals for the expenses incurred.

## *6. Provision for medical treatment of those injured due to conflict*

There is a provision to provide treatment locally from the concerned district health office at the recommendation of the district administration office. At the central level, this relief will be provided from the central level hospital, if needed. For those under treatment till now for their injuries in bomb explosions during conflict or after the peace agreement was made, the local medical committee will recommend and arrange for local level treatment. If local level treatment does not help, the committee makes a recommendation to the Health and Population Ministry which will arrange for central level treatment.

The district administration office ascertains whether the injured individual who comes in contact with it was injured due to conflict or not. And, it writes to the local level hospital with recommendation to arrange for treatment.

The injured or his/her close relative needs to apply at the district administration office demanding expenses incurred in local level medical treatment and in gaining access to the local level treatment. The following documents should be included with the application: medical prescription from the doctor, medicines purchase bills from the pharmacy (the bills should be attested at their other sides by the concerned hospital), hospital bills of expenses incurred during treatment, related documents in case of a hospitalization, documents related with expenses incurred in reaching from the site of incident or home to hospital.

Once the district administration office receives a duly made application, it sends a recommendation letter to the Health and Population Ministry by including necessary documents demanding release of funds. The funds are made available by the Finance Ministry to the Health and Population Ministry. And, the Health and Population Ministry dispatches the released funds to the district administration office to be paid to the concerned individual.

In case local level treatment is not possible, the district administration office writes a letter to the Ministry of Health and Population with these details and a recommendation for arrangement of central level treatment.

The injured or his/her relative will need to file the application, along with the recommendation, with the Ministry of Health and Population. On the basis of the letter, the Ministry will write a letter to the hospital for arranging treatment. In case the injured needs a treatment again, the Ministry asks for a recommendation from the doctor.

In most cases involving central level treatment, the hospital gets reimbursed from the Ministry for its expenses incurred. The injured or his/her relative will have to



apply on their own with the Ministry if they have purchased medicines. Application should be supported by the doctor's prescription, medical store bills (attested by the hospital), air tickets for 2 people for the travel to the hospital or a proof of having bought a bus ticket, estimated amount of money needed for 2 people for overland travel, and for expenses on the attendant, hospital admission and discharge details.

The victim will be paid by check after a secretary level meeting at the Ministry of Health and Population decides on the application on the basis of documents it has received. The amount is paid by the Ministry of Health and Population to the victim through the district health office in case the victim has returned to his or her district.

The victim is reimbursed for expenses such as those incurred in treatment at the government or community hospital as per the hospital bill, return travel tickets for two, the patient and his/her attendant, prescription medicines bought as recommended by doctor, and the daily relief of Rs. 75 for one attendant during the period the patient is hospitalized.

### *7. Economic assistance for individuals disabled due to conflict*

This relief can be received from the concerned district administration office depending on the nature of disability (Rs. 200,000 in case of complete disability and a proportion of Rs. 200,000 for other disabilities as ascertained in percentage terms). Those disabled during the conflict period due to the conflict can avail of this relief. To receive the money, an application should be filed at the district administration office with evidences (the VDC recommendation, police enquiry report, bills and invoices if treatment was carried out).

The medical treatment committee of the district administration office looks into the application after receiving it. The committee doctors decide on the nature of disability and clearly note it. The district administration office sends the decision with recommendation to the details collection taskforce at the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction.

The taskforce ascertains the percentage of disability with the help of its team of three central level doctors and recommends making available the economic assistance to the Peace and Reconstruction Ministry. Based on the report, the Ministry advises the relief and rehabilitation unit to release or clear the amount as per the victim's details and ascertained percentage. The unit provides the concerned district administration office with the details about the approved victims and authorization letters for spending the funds.

The relief fund to be received for complete disability is Rs. 200,000. It is ascertained in percentage terms on a proportionate basis for other disabilities. For example, for

5% disability, Rs. 10,000, for 10% Rs. 20,000, for 15% Rs. 30,000, for 20% Rs. 40,000, for 25% Rs. 50,000, for 30% Rs. 60,000, for 35% Rs. 70,000, for 40% Rs. 80,000, for 45% Rs.90,000, for 50% Rs.100,000, for 55% Rs.110,000, for 60% Rs.120,000, for 65% Rs. 130,000, for 70% Rs. 140,000, for 75% Rs. 150,000, for 80% Rs. 160,000, for 85% Rs. 170,000, for 90% Rs. 180,000, for 95% Rs. 190,000 and for 100% Rs.200,000.

### *8. Scholarship for children of conflict victims or children victimized during conflict*

This scholarship is distributed by the district education office where the concerned children are studying.

The scholarship funds are: Rs.10,000 for grades 1 to 5, Rs. 12,000 for grades 6 to 8, Rs. 14,000 for grades 8 to 10, Rs. 16,000 for grades 11 to 12 or for the proficiency certificate level.

This type of scholarship is provided for up to 3 children of an individual who lost life or disappeared and any child rendered disabled (the percentage being more than 50) in the course of conflict.

The application needs to be filed by the claimants themselves at the district education office of the district where the concerned children are studying or by their mother/ father or patron by including the following documents: 1. Proof of relationship of the victim to the children, 2. Children's birth registration or Nepali citizenship certificate, and 3. Recommendation from the school where they are studying.

The family of an individual who lost life in the course of conflict, the disappeared individual or his/her family or disabled individuals (the percentage being more than 50) will get the scholarship. This fund is given to students up to the age of 18 years and for up to three children of an individual. The claimant should be studying at a school, and receiving formal education from the school or university.

The facility is not given to more than 3 children of an individual. Scholarship will not be given to students repeating grades, studying in any school abroad, or receiving training or instruction except for formal education. In case a student is receiving scholarship from a government or non-government organization, no recommendation can be made or scholarship given to the same student.

### *9. Compensation for damage caused to a house rented by a government office or for damage by other reasons during the conflict period*

This compensation is received from the district administration office of the concerned district. Funds equal to the damage ascertained after evaluation can be obtained in this case. The individual or his/her claimant will need to apply at the district administration office seeking economic assistance for the damage by including

photos of the house from all sides, if possible; the rental decision and its contract paper, and by mentioning the year in which the house was built and the year in which it was damaged.

If a house rented by a government or security agency has been damaged by conflicting parties, funds will be received for the damage after its assessment. If the house is very old and the damage assessment made by technicians after deducting its depreciation and remaining cost comes to be below 15% of the damage figure, in case it is insured, the insurance cost money and if uninsured, 15% of the damage figure will be fixed as the net damage.

The repair and maintenance cost of the house and the cost of remains will not be provided. An annual depreciation of 5% will be deducted from the sum. In case the house is insured, compensation will not be provided for the damage.

In case of damage to personal property (movable property), money can be received from the district administration office of the concerned district equivalent to the damage. For this, the individual whose property is damaged or his or her claimant should make an application for compensation along with the details of property and evidences.

*10. Provision for compensation in case of damage to individual property (movable property)*

The following standards have been set for relief to be provided by the government to conflict victims under this provision:

a. Standards for evaluation of property objects

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Damaged property</b>	<b>Standard compensation (Maximum, in Rs.)</b>
1.	Gold and gold ornaments	80 thousand
2.	Silver and silver ornaments	25 thousand
3.	Cash	10 thousand
4.	Stored foodgrains (paddy, wheat, maize etc)	70 thousand
5.	Clothings (cover, sheet, clothes etc)	25 thousand
6.	Furniture (wooden table, chair, sofa and others)	50 thousand
7.	Pets (animals: cow, buffalo, sheep, mountain goat; birds: chicken, duck, etc)	25 thousand
8.	Other metals (iron, copper, brass)	25 thousand
9.	Electronic goods (computer, fridge, radio, stereo, deck, solar panel etc)	50 thousand

10. Decorative items (various types)	10 thousand
11. Utensils (plates, cups, cooking pots etc)	20 thousand
12. Machinery equipment	20 thousand
13. Miscellaneous, based on recommended figure	40% (to be fixed)

Note: subjects for which damage cannot be ascertained

1. Land documents like receipts, contract papers, registration certificates etc
2. Books
3. Precious objects, diamond, pearl, gems etc
4. Images and worship wares
5. Land income papers

### **Stored for business purposes by not certified by any authorized unit**

b. Standards to be adopted for total funds

1. Total money to be made available to individuals whose damage was up to Rs. 10 thousand
2. 50% to be made available from the amount after making available Rs. 10 thousand in case the damage occurred between Rs. 10 thousand and Rs. 25 thousand.
3. 40% to be made available from the amount after making available Rs. 15 thousand in case the damage is between Rs. 25 thousand and Rs. 50 thousand
4. 30% to be made available from the amount after making available Rs. 20 thousand in case the damage is between Rs. Rs. 50 thousand and Rs. 100 thousand.
5. 25% to be made available for individual whose damage ran between Rs. 100 thousand to Rs. 5 million.
6. 20% to be made available for individuals whose damage ran between Rs. 5 million to Rs. 10 million.
7. 15% to be made available for any damage beyond Rs. 10 million
8. In calculating the amounts as per the standards of S. No. 1 to 7 above, the later percentage is used only in case the amount crosses the ceiling in the upper S. No.

### ***11. Provision relating to compensation for the loss caused by not being able to engage in agricultural activities in the course of security management***

In case the central office of the concerned security unit has been used by the joint security forces, compensation for this will be made by the central organization leading the joint security forces. In this case, compensation can be obtained equivalent to the amount of damage. For this, the application should be filed at the district administration office. This compensation can be received for the loss caused in not

being able to carry out agricultural activities in the security area maintained by the security units for security management during the conflict period.

***12. Provision of compensation for vehicles for hire used by security unit during the conflict period***

This amount is equivalent to the damage can be obtained from the concerned district administration office. The application should be filed seeking compensation for the damage to vehicles for rent used by the security unit during the conflict.

**Which amounts are paid for?**

- The amount ascertained for the damage caused by conflicting parties to the vehicles for rent used by security units in the course of maintaining security during the conflict period.
- In case of very old vehicles, and if they are insured, their net damage figure will be ascertained at the value of insurance if the damage comes to be below 15% of the figure arrived at by technicians after deducting the depreciation and the value of their remaining parts, and, if uninsured, at 15% of the figure fixed by technicians.

**Which amounts are not paid for?**

- Expenses for repair and maintenance of vehicles
- The value of remaining parts of the vehicles
- Depreciation will be deducted at 5% per year by ascertaining the model's year of make on the basis of the blue book
- If insured, the compensation for the damage won't be given

***13. Provision for compensation for the damage to vehicles caused during the time of closures and blockades during the conflict period***

Compensation amount equivalent to the damage can be obtained from the concerned district administration office. The damage must have occurred while operating vehicles at the call of the government during a closure enforced by conflicting parties. Application for this compensation should be filed at the concerned district administration office seeking compensation for the damage caused to vehicles.

**Which amounts are paid for?**

- Compensation is provided for 90% of the damage in case the chassis and engine of a vehicle are rendered useless after their total damage
- Compensation is provided for 75% of the net damage in case the chassis and engine are not damaged but the body is in ruins
- Compensation is provided for 50% of the net damage on the basis of evaluation by technicians in case of minor and partial damage to the vehicles. In this case, it is not necessary to know whether the vehicle is insured or not.

Which amounts are not paid for?

- Expenses for repair and maintenance of vehicles
- The value of remaining parts of the vehicles
- Depreciation will be deducted at 5% per year by ascertaining the model's year of make on the basis of the blue book
- If insured, the compensation for the damage won't be given

*14. Provision for compensation for damage of vehicles in other situations of the conflict period*

Amount equivalent to the damage can be obtained from the concerned district administration office. The damage must have been caused to the vehicle by conflicting parties in situations other than during closures and blockades called by the conflicting parties. The application should be filed at the district administration office seeking compensation.

**Which amounts are paid for?**

- Compensation is provided for 90% of the damage in case the chassis and engine of a vehicle are rendered useless after their total damage
- Compensation is provided for 75% of the net damage in case the chassis and engine are not damaged but the body is in ruins
- Compensation is provided for 50% of the net damage on the basis of evaluation by technicians in case of minor and partial damage to the vehicles. In this case, it is not necessary to know whether the vehicle is insured or not.

**Which amounts are not paid for?**

- Expenses for repair and maintenance of vehicles
- The value of remaining parts of the vehicles
- Depreciation will be deducted at 5% per year by ascertaining the model's year of make on the basis of the blue book
- If insured, the compensation for the damage won't be given

*15. Provision for compensation in case security agencies used someone's vehicle in the course of maintaining security during the conflict period without providing rental*

This kind of compensation of between Rs. 15 thousand and Rs. 40 thousand can be obtained from the concerned district administration office. The damage must have been caused to the vehicle by conflicting parties in situations other than closures and blockades called by the conflicting parties during the conflict period. The application should be filed at the district administration office seeking compensation for a vehicle used by security agency without providing rental during the conflict period.

### How much is paid for?

- a. A sum of Rs. 15 thousand for six months
- b. A sum of Rs. 30 thousand for a period between six months and one year
- c. A sum of Rs. 40 thousand for a period of more than one year

### *16. Provision for individuals, victimized during the conflict period, to start employment or self-employment services*

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction distributes this relief through service provider organizations. In this, facilities of training, training expenses and employment services to at least 50% trainees are provided.

This relief relates to those killed, disappeared, disabled, and internally displaced in the course of the armed conflict or their dependents (for example, widows). For this, their records should be found in the report of the details collection taskforce constituted by the government. The above mentioned group may include children and orphans below 18 years of age, but they should not have been barred by the existing labor law for them to work.

These are the areas of training: making of traditional rice mills, stools, brooms, paper items; garden designing, repair and maintenance of stoves, gas stoves, dhaka cloths, bamboo frames, metal grill, shutter, mobile repair, sewing and cutting, woolen shawls, peltric set fixing, tea estate and management, off-season vegetable production, shuttering, carpenter, plumbing, furniture maker, computer service technician, solar PV technicians, cycle and rickshaw mechanic, auto mechanic, hair and beauty culture, photography, junior barber, hand embroidery, Nepali hand paper making, tailor master, pump set repair, bee keeping, shoe maker, fabric painter, motor cycle repair, leather goods production, mason, driver (heavy and light), food processing (jam, jelly, squash etc.), herbs processing, cook, waiter, barman, housekeeper, tourist guide and poultry farming, etc. Depending on the demand and feasibility, the subject of training can be added.

Other facilities to be provided during the training period:

1. A sum of Rs. 1,000 for travel to and from the training venue. The amount is provided only after the completion of the training.
2. Rs. 4,600 per month for food and accommodation during the training
3. Rs. 1,500 per month for daily travel to and from the training organization (only for those coming to the organization from at least two kilometers away)
4. In cases where months are not completed, the actual proportion calculated from the monthly allowance and daily travel expenses will be provided

### **Processes of giving and receiving training**

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction selects the service providers offering a range of services from technical and vocational training, employment consultancy services, to small business/industry services run by government, non-government and private organizations. The selection of the service providers is made on the basis of their training and plan for providing jobs for the trainees after their training. Organizations which can provide jobs to at least 50% of the trainees are selected.

Conflict victims should apply for receiving the training. The coordination and monitoring committee selects the applicants. Normally, the training period will be between 3 and 6 months. Such training will normally comprise 20% class work and 80% practical work. The service provider can arrange to take the trainees to a nearby district in case there is no appropriate organization to train them in the district or in case there are fewer trainees than expected. The Ministry will monitor the training. At the local level, the coordination and monitoring committee makes the evaluation. A third party may also be involved in this.

An individual not satisfied with decisions made by various units in the course of providing their services can lodge complaints with the secretary of the Ministry within 35 days of the decision. The Ministry decides on the complaint in 15 days after that.

For more details and related forms, you can look up the Citizens' Relief, Compensation, and Economic Assistance Procedures, 2066. This can also be downloaded in Nepali from the internet at URL: <http://bit.ly/g5eQJM> ●



## Local Peace Committees

The government has formed Local Peace Committees with members representing various political parties and the civil society. These communities work to follow-up on the implementation of past peace agreements, including the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006, address the grievances and concerns of victims and their families, eliminate the effects of conflict at the local level, and to create a conducive environment for peace and justice in the transitional period.

According to the official data from March 2011, that there 900 such peace committees at the village level across 73 districts. The following are the contact details for the district level Peace Committees.

### Contact Numbers of Secretaries for Local Peace Committees

S. No.	Name	Address	Contact No.	District office	Fax No.
1	Shiva Dayal Yadav	Siraha	984273616	Siraha	...
2	Eita Maya Chemjong	Dhankuta	9842364292	Sunsari	...
3	Shashi Kala Khatiwada	Terhathum	9742002360	Terhathum	026460133
4	Raj Kumar Chaudhary	Udaypur	9842827848	Udaypur	035420284
5	Uttam Khadka	Bhojpur	9742037573	Bhojpur	029-420517 & 503
6	Rajendra Subba	Morang	9841380550	Panchthar	024-520501
7	Archana Khatiwada	Dhankuta	9842094543	Dhankuta	...
8	Aita Bir Bomjan	Ilam	9741141462	Ilam	027520988/521779
9	Krishna Kumar Rai	Dhankuta	9743034227	Khotang	036420555
10	Tika Ram Shrestha	Sangkuwasabha	9842078353	Sangkuwasabha	029-560533
11	Chuda Mani Aamagain	Morang	9842097600	Morang	...
12	Sapana Pradhan	Dhankuta	9842116387	Taplejung	024-460566
13	Chandradeep Rai	Bhojpur	9841077179	Okhaldhunga	...
14	Bijay Timilsina	Jhapa	9842637223	Jhapa	023-542908
15	Prakriti Bhattra	Morang	9842090706	Saptari	031-522131
16	Khagendra B. Tamang	Bhojpur	9842311051	Solukhumbu	038-520208
17	Nagendra P. Rijal	Lalitpur	9841306007	Kathmandu	4357851
18	Adik Badal	Kavrepalanchok	9841377247	Kavrepalanchok	...
19	Dinesh Lamighate	Sindupalchok	9851000495	Sindupalchok	011-620380
20	Dipendra Dakal	Makawanpur	9845125266	Makawanpur	...
21	Bikash Giri	Kavre	9841366329	Bhaktapur	6619296
22	Mina Sharma	Chitwan	9841762657	Ramechhap	...
23	Kusum Dhakal	Rasuwa	9849199119	Rasuwa	...

24	Mina Sharma		9841762657	Chitwan	056-533831
25	Sikindra Baitha	Rautahat	9845256109	Bara	...
26	Uma Adhikari	Makawanpur	9845147200	Parsa	...
27	Ramesh Shrestha		9841431826	Dolakha	049-421339
28	Radeshm Maharjan	Lalitpur	9851097203	Lalitpur	5000190
29	Ushakiran Timalina	Nuwakot	9851130845	Nuwakot	010560277
30	Bhadraraj Bhandari		9845037775	Sinduli	047-520591
31	Chandreswor Yadav	Sarlahi	9802349606	Sarlahi	046-520174
32	Nilamkumari Singh	Parsa	9841576709	Mahotari	...
33	Kalpana Acharya	Dhanusha	9841198461	Dhanusha	041-520450
34	Damodhar Ghimire	Rupandehi	9841583783	Palpa	075-520169
35	Sushila Bhusal	Rupandehi	9747037734	Rupandehi	071-524366
36	Kapil Neupane	Tansen, Palpa	9847029092	Baglung	...
37	Sabitri Ghising	Nuwakot	9741148924	Dhading	010-520277
38	Santosh Bhattarai	Rautahat	9841509859	Rautahat	...
39	Ranju Sharma Kafle	Bardiya	9841806025	Tanahu	065-561940
40	Krishna Bahadur B. K.	Gulmi	9847049684	Gulmi	...
41	Samita Thakali	Mustang	9841586351	Mustang	069-440188
42	Rudra Bahadur Nepali	Kaski	9846081993	Kaski	061-463310
43	Dil Kumari Sharma	Parbat	9847626165	Parbat	067-421172
44	Kabindra Raj Poudel	Kaski	9846080760	Mustang	...
45	Kopila Giri	Syanja	9846134600	Syanja	063-420211
46	Umesh Adhikari	Rupandehi	9847252070	Nawalparasi	078-521052
47	Prem Nath Gyawali	Rupandehi	9857023624	Argakhanchi	...
48	Kamal Jyoto Koirala	Kaski	9846286571	Myagdi	077-420731
49	Pushpa Raj Acharya	Kalikot	9848051984	Kalikot	087-440211
50	Tirtha Raj GC	Dailekh	9748020579	Dailekh	089-420405
51	Ganesh Bahadur Oli	Dang	9847824919	Dang	...
52	Gubhan KC	Salyan	9847839784	Rolpa	086-440133
53	Nawa Raj Upadhyaya	Humla	9848304871	Humla	...
54	Pustak Chanda	Rukum	9841570034	Rukum	088-530197
55	Bhairav Bahadur Dharaula	Dolpa	9841038766	Dolpa	087-550033
56	Sushil Gyawali	Bardiya	9841696993	Bardiya	...
57	Ram Babu BC	Surkhet	9848039599	Surkhet	...
58	Saroj Kumar Pokhere	Argakhanchi	9841437221	Banke	081-527886
59	Dhan Bahadur Mahat	Jumla	9849205518	Jumla	087-520310

60	Lokendra Bahadur Karki	Mugu	9848185493	Mugu	...
61	Bijay Prakash Chanda	Jajarkot	9848136377	Jajarkot	089-430130
62	Sundar Mani Pokhrel	Pyuthan	9841696626	Pyuthan	086-420224
63	Yubaraj Wali	Salyan	9847830087	Salyan	088-520197
64	...	Kanchanpur	...	Kanchanpur	...
65	Nirmala Kumari Bam	Baitadi	9741081170	Baitadi	095-520309
66	Dambar Bahadur Thapa	Dadeldhura	9848765040	Dadeldhura	096-420701
67	Sharada Joshi	Doti	9848431790	Doti	...
68	Khageshwori Ojha	Doti	9849002326	Kailali	...
69	Gokul Bahadur Singh	Bajhang	9741200934	Bajhang	092-421224
70	Lila Raj KC Dhami	Achham	9749004043	Achham	...
71	Binod Singh Rawat	Darchula	9849566071	Darchula	093-420449
72	Naina Bahadur Bohora	Bajura	9848471632	Bajura	...
73	Shiva Hari Timilsina	Gorkha	9841721771	Gorkha	064-420236
74	Yamuna Marasini	Rupandehi	9847034188	Kapilvastu	...
75	...	Lamjung	9847634542	...	066-520134

Source: *Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction* ●

## Conflict Victims and Trauma

Many people, who suffered, experienced or witnessed violence and brutalities of conflict show symptoms of anxiety, depression and psychosomatic pains.

In particular, women and children who survived the conflict are in urgent need of trauma healing. War widows, rape victims of conflict, women who lost their children in war suffer social isolation, exclusion, humiliation, economic hardship. Children who lost their parents, endured as child soldiers, or witnessed violence lack the emotional development to overcome trauma. Similarly, dalits or marginalized communities, who were often targets of violence during the conflict, suffer further social isolation, humiliation and mental or psychosocial problems.

People displaced from their homes and families also suffer from trauma. A study of 290 internally displaced people (IDPs) conducted in 2003 by Suraj Bahadur Thapa and Edvard Hauff found that almost everyone reported trauma and 53.4 percent had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Around 81 percent showed symptoms of anxiety and 80 percent that of depression

Since there are too many such victims in most conflicts or wars, counseling services are often not available to most of them. This is the case in Nepal today although conflict has traumatized a large part of the population.

Some work in victims' support, however, has been carried out by humanitarian organizations and NGOs. For example, in 2010, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in partnership with local institutions, began a counseling program in nine districts (including Bardiya) with high concentrations of families with missing relatives. Another such organization that offers psychological counseling to victims is the Center for Victims of Torture (CVICT).

Trauma healing has received increased attention since the 1990s, following the conflicts in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo. It has been practiced in the form of intergroup forgiveness in East Timore and Angola, forgiveness by means of bearing witness about trauma in South Africa, expressive arts (drawing, song, dance, story-telling, drama) in Angola, etc.

Since persons suffering from trauma lose their ability to relate to friends, family and society, they stand as a challenge to rebuilding efforts after the conflict. Moreover, if they are left to themselves and ignored, they are at risk of resorting to revenge and retributive violence.

## Coping with Trauma

Trauma victims usually experience strong feelings and sensations that negatively influence their mental well-being. Their former ways of making sense are damaged or destroyed. They feel lost, disoriented and powerless. If these symptoms persist beyond a few days or week after an incident, the victims may be diagnosed with anxiety disorder or PTSD, a condition that may require therapy or medication.

In the book *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide* (2001) reconciliation experts Hugo van der Merwe and Tracy Vienings explain conflict-related trauma in terms of man-made violence (such as war, concentration camp experience, torture, another forms of victimization). They write that traumatic events may include:

- A threat to one's life or physical integrity.
- A person's response of intense fear, helplessness, or horror
- Serious threat or harm to one's children, spouse, or other close relatives or friends
- Sudden destruction of one's home or community
- Seeing another person who has recently been or is being, seriously injured or killed as the result of an accident or physical violence

Merwe and Vienings identify three main phases in the process of trauma:

**1. The impact phase:** This phase is usually momentary or it may last up to two or three days following the traumatic incident. Victims look emotionally numb; he or she is in a state of shock, and may not be fully conscious of the reality of the event or situation. The person may show a lot emotion; may cry or scream, or he or she may remain completely calm as if nothing had happened.

Such a trauma victim needs "parental" help, reassurance, and direction. He or she needs to be kept in a safe environment. Help find his or her relatives, give medical attention. Encourage the person to tell their story, but do not force them to do so. Tell them that their reaction to trauma is a normal reaction under such circumstance.

**2. The Recoil Phase:** At this phase, the traumatized person begins to realize the shocking nature of their experience, and also begins to express emotions like anger or sadness or guilt. Traumatic stress syndrome may begin to develop. The victim wants to talk about the experience. Encourage him or her to do so and tell them it is a normal reaction to an abnormal event. Advise the person to go for professional counseling. If counseling services are not available, opt for traditional ways of healing, like sharing their stories with other victims and members of the society through symbolic ceremonies. These help to remember their stories and reframe and release trauma.

Merwe and Vienings write that this phase involves the following:

- Getting the person to talk about what happened to them, to tell their story, in detail – renders it less fearsome and less out of control
- Reframing the victim’s perceptions of his or her role in the event—to realize they did the best under the circumstances, and that it was out of their control
- Developing and sustaining coping mechanisms—victims feels powerless in their daily tasks, need your help to reestablish their coping mechanism, not by doing things for them but by getting them to develop ways that they can possibly deal with things

**3. The Integration Phase:** At this phase, the person begins to live with the trauma as a memory that is not overwhelming. In most cases, they return to their previous level of normality. But trauma changes the person life and may leave an emotional scar. Some people emerge mature and stronger after having coped with the trauma. The person’s trust in other people gradually starts to get rebuilt. He or she increasingly shows the ability to relate emotionally to people and engage with life activities. The person needs support and encouragement in this stage.

There could also be several other social, psychological and personal reasons for trauma. It is not enough only to deal with the traumatized individual. Efforts also have to be made to restore faith in the state institutions of safety, security, and justice.

*Peacebuilding: A Field Guide* (Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2001), pp. 343-351. ●

# Selected List of Relevant Organizations

*The following is a list of selected organizations working in the area of peace and conflict in Nepal and abroad:*

## **Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction**

Government of Nepal  
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal.  
Tel: +977 1 4211189, 4211090, 4211176,  
4211092  
Fax: +977 1 4211186 and 4211173  
Email: info@peace.gov.np  
Website: <http://www.peace.gov.np/>

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## **Nepal Peace Trust Fund**

Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Phone: +977 1 4211552, 4211097,  
4200056  
Fax: 00977-1-4211186  
Email: info@peace.gov.np  
Website: <http://www.nptf.gov.np/>

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## **Emergency Peace Support Project (EPSP)**

Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction  
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Phone:  
Email:  
Website: <http://www.epsp.gov.np/>

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## **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) - Nepal**

### **Headquarters- Kathmandu**

HariharBhawan, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal  
G.P.O.Box:9182, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel.:00977-1-5010015 (Hunting Line)  
Fax: 00977-1-5547973  
E-mail:nhrc@nhrcnepal.org  
Website: <http://www.nhrcnepal.org>  
Email: complaints@nhrcnepal.org  
Support: itu@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Eastern Regional Office, Biratnagar**

G.P.O. Box: 187, Bargachhi, Biratnagar,  
Morang  
Tel: 00977-(0)21-461931, 461093  
Fax: 00977-(0)21-461100  
Email: nhrcbrt@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Central Regional Office, Janakpurdharm**

Post Box: 50, Janakpurdharm, Dhanusha  
Tel: 00977-(0)41-527811, 527812  
Fax: 00977-(0)41-527250  
Email: nhrcjnk@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Western Regional Office, Pokhara**

Janapriya Marga- 8, Pokhara, Nepal  
P.O. Box -72, Pokhara  
Tel: 00977-(0)61-462811, 463822  
Fax: 00977-(0)61-465042  
Email: nhrcpkr@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Mid-Western Regional Office, Nepalgunj**

Shantinagar, Nepalgunj, Baka, Nepal  
Tel: 00977-(0)81-526707, 526708  
Fax: 00977-(0)81-526706  
Email: nhrcnpj@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Far-Western Regional Office, Dhangadi**

Uttar Behadi, Ratopul, Dhangadi, Kailali  
Tel: 00977-(0)91-525621, 525622  
Fax: 00977-(0)91-525623  
E-mail: nhrcdhn@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Sub Regional Offices**

Khotang, Diktel, Tel: 00977-36-420284  
Email: nhrckht@nhrcnepal.org

Jumla, Khalanga  
Tel: 00977-87-520222

Rupendehi, Butwal, Post Box: 83  
Tel: 00977-(0)71-546911  
Email: nhrcbti@nhrcnepal.org

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### **Office of National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Women and Children (ONRT)**

Harihar Bhawan, Pulchowk,  
Lalitpur, Nepal  
Tel: 00977-1-5010015 Ext: 138, 164 Fax:  
00977-(0)1-5547974  
Email: nhrc@nhrcnepal.org  
Website: <http://www.nhrcnepal.org>

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**Office of United Nations high Commissioner  
for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal**

**Head Office Kathmandu**

Address Museum Road, Chhauni, G.P.O. Box  
24555, Kathmandu

Telephone +977 1 4280164, 4280326,  
4280542

Fax +977 1 4670712, 4670713, 4671256  
(security)

Email [registry.np@ohchr.org](mailto:registry.np@ohchr.org) [Map Click Here](#)

Public Information Officer (Chun Bahadur

Gurung): [cgurung@ohchr.org](mailto:cgurung@ohchr.org).

Phone +977 1 4280164

Website: <http://nepal.ohchr.org/>

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**Amnesty International Nepal**

P.O. Box 135, Amnesty Marga

Basanta Nagar, Balaju

Kathmandu, Nepal

Telephone: (977-1) 4364706 / (977-1)  
4365431

Fax at: (977-1) 4354987

Email: [info@amnestynepal.org](mailto:info@amnestynepal.org)

website: <http://www.amnestynepal.org>

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**Nepal Red Cross Society**

Red Cross Marg, Kalimati

Post Box No. 217, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: +977-1-4272761 (hunting)

Fax: +977-1-4271915, 4273285

E-mail: [nrcs@nrcs.org](mailto:nrcs@nrcs.org), [info@nrcs.org](mailto:info@nrcs.org)

Web Link: <http://www.nrcs.org>

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**International Center for Transitional Justice  
(ICTJ)**

Nepal Office

GPO 8975

EPC 2125

Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur, Nepal

Tel: +977 9803548473

Web: [http://www.ictj.org/en/where/  
region3/1684.html](http://www.ictj.org/en/where/<br/>region3/1684.html)

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**Advocacy Forum, Nepal Central Office**

Shantiniketan Marg 94/14,

Gairidhara, Kathmandu Nepal

Phone:-01-4004007/8

Fax No-01-4426698

Email: [info@advocacyforum.org.np](mailto:info@advocacyforum.org.np)

Website: <http://www.advocacyforum.org>

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**Nepal Bar Association**

Ramshahpath,

G.P.O. Box 5502, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: 4254647

Fax: 4254647

Email: [neba@wlink.com.np](mailto:neba@wlink.com.np)

Web: <http://www.nepalbar.org>

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**Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC)**

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**Women's Rehabilitation Center (WRC) in  
Nepal**

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Balkumari, Lalitpur.

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Web: <http://www.worecnepal.org/>

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**Dalit Welfare Organisation (DWO)**

Khadka Gaun, Kalanki,

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Phone: 977-1-4279013

Fax: 977-1-4279013

Mobile: 9851103187, 9851019227,

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Email: [infodwo@dwo.org.np](mailto:infodwo@dwo.org.np), [dwo@wlink.com.np](mailto:dwo@wlink.com.np)

Website: <http://www.dwo.org.np>

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**Centre For Victims of Torture, Nepal**

71 Reyukai Marg, Kathmandu Metropolitan  
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**Forum for Protection of People's Rights,  
Nepal**

(PPR Nepal)

Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal

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P.O. Box 24926

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Website: <http://www.pprnepal.org>

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**Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP)**

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**Ban Landmines Campaign Nepal (NCBL)**

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**Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre  
(CWIN)**

Ravi Bhawan, Kathmandu, Nepal  
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**Samata Foundation**

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Web: <http://www.samatafoundation.org/>

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A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

This booklet compiles journalistic narrative profiles of ten victims of political conflict that took place in Nepal between 1996 and 2006. These victims represent one of the most excluded sections of Nepali society. In addition, as a victims' booklet, this publication includes factual and actionable, "utility" information for those seeking support or help.