



Press Release



**British Embassy
Kathmandu**
(Local EU Presidency)

P.O.Box: 106
Lainchaur, Kathmandu, Nepal
Telephone: 4414588, 4410583
Facsimile: 977-1-4411789 & 4416723
E-Mail: BEKathmandu@fco.gov.uk

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This is the fourth visit to Nepal by an EU Troika. The visit comes at an extremely important juncture in Nepal's peace process and the Troika is pleased to offer continued EU support to the people of Nepal. The people of Nepal deserve a better future and it is the people of Nepal who should own and lead this peace process.

The Troika has had a busy and interesting programme including meetings with the Prime Minister, the Speaker and the Foreign, Home, and Peace Ministers. It also met representatives from various political parties; marginalised groups; civil society; human rights defenders; and the international community.

The November elections to Nepal's Constituent Assembly have been cancelled, denying the people the opportunity to express their views. Since then the peace process has lost its momentum. The EU, a long-term friend of Nepal, wants to see the peace process get back on track. **Early elections** and a mandate from the people are an essential component of the peace process. Repeated postponement of the elections erodes the credibility, and affects the process, of democratic transformation and legitimisation in Nepal.

The EU urges the Government and the political parties to honour the agreements and commitments already made. This should enable the people of Nepal to choose, without further delay, their own future and the manner of their governance through a free and fair process. The EU is ready to send an EU election observation mission to Nepal in order to support this process.

The Troika sees the need to rebuild confidence in the process. There is a need to have a clear commitment to elections and the peace process. The priority for all must be to rebuild confidence and work together towards credible elections. The Troika was given assurances from all the parties, including the Maoists, that they are committed to peaceful elections, open to all and without intimidation.

Credible elections also require forward momentum on the key building blocks of the peace process. Throughout its meetings the Troika has heard about the **deteriorating security situation**. Lawlessness, notably in the Terai, is increasing; there has been severe violence between communities; many people live in fear and are prevented from going about their daily lives. There is a need to rebuild public confidence in the police and to give the police the support to tackle these problems.

The Troika urges all parties to uphold the rule of law and to tackle **impunity** whether by State or non-State actors. Failing this, violence will continue and the peace

process will be undermined. Impunity should not be left until later - it has to be tackled now if the peace process is to move forward. The EU encourages the Government to act on recent Supreme Court rulings concerning human rights abuses.

The Troika recognises the importance of addressing the **future of former combatants**. The current situation cannot continue indefinitely. In this content, discussion needs to begin, with a sense of urgency, on the future of Nepal's security forces. A managed process will be important to help build trust between the negotiating parties.

It is important that the Government implements agreements that it has made with **marginalised groups**. We encourage this. If the threat of violence is to be reduced and credible elections held, the concerns of marginalised groups need to be addressed. A new Nepal needs to be an inclusive Nepal.

The peace process goes hand in hand with **development**. The Nepali people need to see a tangible improvement in their lives through better delivery of basic services. If their desire for change goes unfulfilled this will pose a serious threat to the long-term stability of Nepal. The EU, as Nepal's largest development partner, urges the Government to make development a priority now and into the future.

The EU supports the work of **UNMIN** in assisting the parties to hold credible elections and encourages the parties to make better use of UNMIN's expertise. The EU would support a Nepalese request for an extension of UNMIN's mandate.

The EU urges the political parties to remove the obstacles to early elections. Now is the time to show leadership, to restore trust in the political process. The interests of the Nepali people must come first; the EU stands ready to assist.

Kathmandu