

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Asia > Nepal > **Support democracy in Nepal!**  
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# **Support democracy in Nepal! Support the Nepalese people!**

Democratic Socialist Perspective statement

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All supporters of democracy and social justice have reason to be concerned by the recent events in the republic of Nepal.

The military high command, backed by right-wing parties tied to the country's elite, has openly defied the authority of the elected civilian government, led by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M).

In response, the government sought to remove army chief of staff General Katawal, via legal and constitutional means. Katawal refused to accept his removal and the government's decision was illegally overturned by President Ram Baran Yadav from the conservative Nepalese Congress party, whose position under the interim constitution is largely ceremonial.

With their coalition partners in government refusing to support the UCPN-M, Nepal's prime minister and UCPN-M leader Prachanda announced on May 3 that the Maoists had no choice but to resign and leave government.

The removal of the Maoists from government is nothing less than a coup. It reveals the real situation in Nepal — that despite its democratic mandate for change, the Maoist-led government is being prevented by the old elite from implementing such change.

The Maoists are working to mobilise their large base of support among the poor majority for street demonstrations against this coup.

The peace accords signed by various parties in 2006, on the back of a mass pro-democracy uprising, ended a decade-long armed struggle between the monarch's army and the Maoist-led People's Liberation Army. The accords allowed for the April 2008 constituent assembly elections in which — against expectations — the Maoists won the most seats, receiving over 1 million votes more than their nearest competitor.

Seeking the widest possible consensus, the Maoists established a broad coalition government. However, the UCPN-M's proposals for a peaceful and democratic pro-poor transformation of Nepal that were endorsed at the ballot box have been frustrated by opposition within the parliament, the state and even the coalition government.

It is taken for granted all around the world that if the military is above the elected government and can act as it wishes, there is no democracy.

The Nepalese Army is infamous for its human rights abuses, including murder, torture and rape. It has also been responsible for coups against civilian governments, and the top ranks of the army recently admitted to planning a fresh coup against the current elected government!

The Maoists have simply been attempting to implement the peace accords, under which the PLA fighters could be integrated into the army to create a new, unified military. The army chiefs have refused to do this and instead recruited thousands of new, non-Maoist fighters, in violation of the accords. The right-wing elite know that if the peace agreements are implemented, the army may stop being a weapon they can use to prevent social progress.

In recent years, the Nepalese people, among the world's poorest, have achieved giant strides forward. A centuries-old feudal monarchy has been overturned and a republic declared. The Nepalese people have voted for a transformation of their nation to one based on equality and pro-people development that ends poverty.

There is nothing more terrifying to the ruling classes globally than the sight of a people winning power. The right-wing forces in Nepal are counting on the support of foreign powers, especially the United States and India.

Nepal's poor majority need our solidarity. All those who believe in the principles of democracy and social justice, who believe that people should not be condemned to backbreaking poverty simply because the powerful have carved the world up among themselves, need to support the people of Nepal and insist that:

- \* the Nepalese people must be allowed to determine their future, foreign intervention must end;
- \* the peace accords must be upheld; and
- \* democracy must be respected and the people's will implemented.

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**P.S.**

- \* The DSP is a Marxist tendency in the Australia's Socialist Alliance (Australia).

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