

Call for an immediate solution to the political crisis in Nepal

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SAAPE CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN NEPAL

The thematic group on Just and Democratic Governance of South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) observes with great anxiety the recent political crisis in Nepal brought about by the resignation of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' after President Ram Baran Yadav decided to reject a resolution of the Maoist-led cabinet dismissing the Nepal's Army Chief, Mr. Rookmangud Katawal, for insubordination.

The nascent Nepalese democracy established through a long political process that ended a decade-long conflict and abolished the country's hated monarchy was also the result of series of agreements reached between all major political parties including the CPN-Maoist. It is regrettable that a section of the people from within the coalition partners, and other political parties in their opposition to the Maoists, have applauded Mr. Yadav for his action, which has introduced a dangerous dynamic into civil-military relations in Nepal's fledgling democracy and the new constitution making process. Unless the standoff is ended, the peace process could crumble. The thematic group on Just and Democratic Governance of SAAPE call upon all parties, including the Maoists, to act soberly and responsibly to re-establish a working arrangement that allows a government of national consensus leading to logically complete Nepal's peace process through successfully building an inclusive and democratic constitution..

The first outcome of the latest developments, if not resolved swiftly and amicably, is likely to be a delay in the proposed rehabilitation and integration of around 19,000 ex-Maoist combatants who are living in various UN-monitored cantonments across the country and delay in the preparation of new constitution, pushing the peace process in jeopardy. There is a high possibility of Nepal descending into chaos, with political infighting and instability, preventing the smooth functioning of democracy, as had been hailed after the elections of Constituent Assembly last year. Though, the prospect of a return to full-scale violent conflict is still remote, as the Maoists have repeatedly said in the past that they will agree to play by the rules as outlined in the country's interim constitution, the situation is indeed grave and has bearings on the democratisation of Nepal.

We call upon all Nepalese citizens to preserve and work for the consolidation of the hard-earned democracy at all costs.

The President's order to overrule the cabinet decision and unconstitutionally issue a stay order to the Chief of the Army Staff must be annulled immediately. We also urge them to prevail upon their leaders to defend democracy and strengthen democratic practices above partisan interests. All political parties must act responsibly and continue the mandate of people for cooperation and consensus among themselves for the state governance. They must not discontinue the process of drafting the constitution in any pretext and complete it within the given time frame We urge all South Asians to stand by the side of the people of Nepal in their hour of crisis and also demand their governments not to intervene in a manner that has unconstructive fallouts. We have no doubts that the Nepalese people are capable of tackling their issues and sovereign to manage their country

themselves. We must respect the sovereign rights of the people of Nepal and stand by their side in their hour of need. It must not be forgotten for a moment that in a democracy, the people are sovereign and supreme and all political parties must uphold this in order to deepen further the democratic process. The peace process must not be derailed and the promises made in the past for peace, democracy and human rights must be honoured in their entirety. The burning needs of the people must be responded to sans compromise.