

Nepal: Maoists prepare for new upsurge

Friday 16 October 2009, by [PETERSON Ben](#) (Date first published: 10 October 2009).

The government formed in the aftermath of an elite-backed de facto coup against the Maoist-led government in May continues in power — although without moral or popular support.

The Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), with mass support among the poor majority and the largest number of seats in parliament, are insisting the government resign.

UCPN-M head and former prime minister Prachanda has given the government until the Nepali festival of Tihar in mid-October to stand aside and allow a new pro-people government led by the UCPN-M to be formed again. He said if not, the Maoists would launch a new people's movement to restore democracy.

The UCPN-M has been preparing for an upsurge by strengthening its organisation, links and dialogue with the poor communities.

The current government, a coalition of diverse parties united only by their opposition to the Maoists, came to power after the elected government led by the UCPN-M resigned.

The Maoist-led government had sacked the head of the military, General Katawal, after he refused to accept the government's authority. However, the president, from the right-wing Nepali Congress (NC), ordered Katawal's reinstatement.

Abandoned over the Katawal issue by its coalition partners, which it needed to form a majority government, the UCPN-M resigned from the government rather than accept military supremacy.

Nepal was shaken by ongoing demonstrations across the country in support of the Maoists, but the right-wing forces held on and a new coalition government, minus the Maoists, was cobbled together.

At stake in the battle to sack Katawal was the peace process that ended a decade of civil war between the Maoist-led People's Liberation Army and the feudal monarchy. Katawal, a royalist, refused to implement key parts of the peace agreement that ended the monarchy and allowed Nepal to become a republic last year.

In the lead up to this soft coup, the Indian and US embassies played key roles in bringing together opposition forces against the legitimate government. Along with the Nepali elite, the US and India viewed the Maoists' pro-poor policies as a threat to their interests.

As well as organising street protests, the UCPN-M disrupted sittings of the constituent assembly demanding that civilian supremacy over the military and foreign powers be restored. The NC and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified-Marxist-Leninist, which heads the new government, refused to even discuss the topic in the assembly.

Since then, a series of by-elections have increased the Maoist vote. The UCPN-M has used the time

to open broad discussions among its activists on how to go forward in its struggle to build a “New Nepal”.

The UCPN-M has sent more activists into rural areas to strengthen its rural support networks. The party plans to use these discussions as the basis of a party congress early next year.

Other progressive mass organisations are also using this period for discussion. National peasant, women, youth and student conferences are all expected in the coming months.

To spearhead the campaign to restore civilian supremacy, the UCPN-M has launched the United National People’s Movement, led by Maoist leader and ex-finance minister Baburam Bahttarai, to coordinate the democratic and anti-imperialist movement.

In the absence of a legitimate government, the Maoist-led Revolutionary Joint Front has been setting up local administrations to help meet the needs of communities.

The UCPN-M has set up regional departments as the basis of an alternative government. These are providing services and development works where resources allow.

Prateek, a UCPN-M activist working in western districts of Nepal and Kathmandu, told Green Left Weekly: “At the moment we are spreading our message to the masses. The current government has to fall to protect civilian supremacy and the people.

“If not we will have a new massive Janan Andolan (“Peoples Movement”) and take control ourselves!”

P.S.

* From: International News, Green Left Weekly issue #813 14 October 2009.