## **AMNESTY**INTERNATIONAL



## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FLASH

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## Nepal: Police restraint urged as at least 20 more shot amid Constitution-related protests

Security forces in Nepal must refrain from using excessive force against protestors, Amnesty International said after at least twenty protesters were shot when security forces opened fire on several demonstrations against the country's new constitution.

Force and the use of live ammunition by security forces to contain often violent protests have already claimed more than 40 lives in Nepal since August, most of them protesters.

Investigations by Nepal's National Human Rights Commission and civil society, including Amnesty International, have found that in many of the protest-related deaths, the force used by security forces was excessive, disproportionate or unnecessary, contrary to international legal standards.

"More than 40 people, the majority of them protesters, have been killed in recent weeks. We continue to urge the Nepali authorities to rein in their security forces and prevent them from using excessive force," said David Griffiths, Research Director for South Asia at Amnesty International.

Today's clashes took place in the southern cities of Biratnagar, Birgunj and Malangawa where tensions have been high for weeks because of controversial federal boundaries drawn up in the new constitution, which split up the homelands of ethnic groups from Nepal's southern plains.

The constitution, which took more than seven years to complete, defines Nepal as a secular republic divided into seven federal provinces. It has been fiercely opposed by ethnic minority groups who argue that it does not afford them sufficient representation, as well as Hindu activists who believe the constitution should have restored Nepal as a Hindu nation.

"The new constitution has a number of major human rights shortcomings which also need to be urgently addressed. In particular, the rights of women and marginalized communities are not clearly and sufficiently protected," said David Griffiths.

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