

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE**

24 November 2017

Nepal: Ensure safety and respect human rights during elections

Nepal's authorities must protect the well-being and safety of all people, including voters and candidates, ahead of the country's historic federal and provincial parliamentary elections, Amnesty International said today.

Election campaigners from various political parties have faced incidents of violence in different parts of the country, including the use of improvised explosive devices, raising fears for the safety and well-being of voters as they go to the polls.

"Nepal's authorities must protect people's rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and ensure their safety and security. There should be an independent and effective investigation into incidents of violence, and the suspected perpetrators should be held accountable through fair trials," said Nirajan Thapaliya, Director of Amnesty International Nepal.

"The security forces must abide by international standards when carrying out their duties. Violence must not be an excuse to trample on people's rights through arbitrary arrests or detentions, or the use of unnecessary or excessive force. Law enforcement personnel may only resort to the use of firearms in self-defence or defence of others against an imminent threat of death or serious injury, and must not use them to manage or disrupt public assemblies."

Background

In recent days, dozens of explosions across the country targeted former deputy prime ministers and former ministers from the three main political parties. More than a dozen people sustained injuries. No candidates were hurt.

Last week, Sher Dhan Rai, a former information minister and candidate of the Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist-Leninists, narrowly survived a bomb hurled at his jeep as he was driving to an election rally in eastern Nepal. Similarly, former Finance Minister and a top rung leader of ruling Nepali Congress Ram Sharan Mahat and the party's Vice-President Ram Chandra Poudel were the targets of bomb attacks in Nuwakot and Lamjung on 16 and 18 November respectively.

In response to the violence, the police detained more than 200 protestors belonging to the Communist Party of Nepal, a breakaway faction that is opposed to the elections and campaigning against them.