



राष्ट्रिय मानव अधिकार आयोग

National Human Rights Commission

केन्द्रीय कार्यालय, Central Office

हरिहर भवन, पुल्चोक, ललितपुर, Harihar Bhawan, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal



Special Appeal from the National Human Rights Commission on the Occasion of Local Level Elections



Acknowledging the peaceful and enthusiastic participation of the voters in the first phase of local level election, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) hopes the same in the second phase election too. In this context NHRC Nepal calls upon all stakeholders to ensure that the nearing local elections are completed in a fair, independent, and impartial manner, free of terror, and to respect and protect the civil and political rights of the citizens of Nepal.

The Commission calls to the **Government of Nepal** to allow political parties to carry out campaign activities and for the electorate to exercise their vote, by creating an environment in which peace and security are maintained, social harmony is not disturbed, and there is adequate support to all concerned stakeholders during the election.

The Commission makes the following request to **political parties**: to internalize and to uphold constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and expression, to refrain from undermining any individual, candidate, ethnic community, religion, and to maintain harmonious relations between different groups; not to make statements that undermine other communities or that create an environment in which this takes place, and to respect and protect the dignity of others while exercising freedom of expression. The Commission further requests that political parties host peaceful gatherings and rallies, and not interrupt such events when held by others; to refrain from burning tires, holding torch rallies (*masaljulus*), or hosting rallies in which supporters are bearing or displaying sticks (*laathi*), knives, or other weaponry used in the home. Political parties are called upon not to organize strikes, shutdowns, or other such programs designed to disrupt the elections, and to refrain from coercive requests for funds or transportation, or the use of public and the personal property of others; and not to use or involve children for political purposes or in leading political processions. Parties are asked to behave in accordance with the principles of inclusion enshrined in the Constitution, to follow and respect basic values of human rights, press freedom, and personal liberty, as well as to follow the Election Code of Conduct.

The Commission calls to the **Election Commission of Nepal** to follow and fully execute the Election Code of Conduct and to promptly call attention to and use the legal system to prosecute any party or candidate who violates the Code of Conduct. The NHRC also encourages the Election Commission to rectify the shortcomings identified in the first phase election and to carry out effective voter education, to provide all voters with easily accessible voting centers, and to ensure that persons with disabilities, elderly voters, and pregnant women and ill voters receive appropriate assistance at voting centers. The Commission further calls upon **all organizations engaging in election observations** to make sure that all election-related activities, including investigations, are independent and impartial, and that observation activities and voter education programs occur without party affiliation.

The Commission calls to the **social media users and mass media** not to spread unsubstantiated rumors or suspicions that would undermine any individual, ethnic group, religious group, or the relationships between communities, or that would undermine any such groups. The Commission furthermore calls to the media to follow, and encourage others to follow, the Election Code of Conduct.

Finally, the Commission calls upon **all citizens and voters** to be conscious of their rights, not to give in to any threats, to cast their votes without fear, to thoughtfully exercise their right to vote, and to choose representatives who prioritize human rights, and will be loyal to their constituents.

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Anup Raj Sharma
Chairperson
National Human Rights Commission
Lalitpur, Nepal
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