



राष्ट्रिय मानव अधिकार आयोग

National Human Rights Commission, Nepal

केन्द्रिय कार्यालय Central Office

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Press Release

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Respect the right to freedom of opinion and expression The Commission concerns over the Media Council Bill

National Human Rights Commission draws its attention towards the Bill to amend and integrate the Media Council related laws tabled at the Federal Parliament by the Government of Nepal on May 10, 2019.

The Commission conducted a consultation meeting with the representatives of the Federation of Nepali Journalists. During this, they drew attention to the provisions in the bill that the formation process of the media council may have possibly adverse effect in its independency, especially, the provision to allow the Media Council to examine, fix the fine and penalty on the violation of code of conduct is against the international norms and values and is also against the principle that penalty and fine can be imposed only by the judicial and quasi-judicial entities.

Press freedom, human rights and the rule of law are integral parts of democracy. The Constitution has ensured full freedom to the press in its preamble. Article 19 of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights and the Article 17 (2)a of the Constitution of Nepal also guarantees the freedom of expression and opinion to every individual. Independence, accountable and dignified journalism contributes importantly for the creation of accountability and protection and promotion of human rights. Effective protection and promotion of human rights can strengthen the democracy. Monitoring could be necessary but an attempt to control in the name of monitoring cannot be in a line with norms of human rights.

If the proposed Council to regulate and monitor the free freedom is independent and proficient, the respect of democracy can be preserved and the human rights culture can be strengthened. The Commission concludes that to revise the provisions of the existing Press Council Act 1992 without any reason and trying to control its autonomy is against the fundamental norms of human rights as well as freedom of expression.

Thus, the Commission draws attention of the concerned all not to curtail the citizens' freedom of opinion and expression revising the provisions of the proposed media council bill as per the norms and values of human rights and democracy after the consultation with the stakeholders to make the bill.

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Bed Bhattarai
Secretary/Spokesperson