



**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
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OPEN STATEMENT BY THE BRITAIN NEPAL-ACADEMIC COUNCIL

18th April 2006

We, the undersigned members of the Britain-Nepal Academic Council, express our opposition to the escalation in violence and the use of excessive force by the Nepalese security forces against people demonstrating peacefully for the restoration of democracy in Nepal. We condemn the brutality used by the security forces against peaceful demonstrators, including lawyers, professors, medical professionals, and others, as well as the killing of a score of people demonstrating for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

We are very concerned about the human rights violations by the government which constitute a breach of Nepal's obligations under the international law of human rights and under humanitarian law. We call upon the government to release without delay political leaders, civil society representatives, human rights activists, journalists, and all those held in detention without trial, and to instruct the security forces to allow people to express their demands for democracy without being threatened, harmed, or intimidated.

We appeal to the King and the leaders of all political forces within the country to initiate a dialogue to restore peace and democracy to the country. We also call upon the Communist Party Nepal (Maoist) to declare an immediate ceasefire and to renounce violence as a method of political change. The CPN(M) must abide by the universally accepted norms of democracy and human rights and join the political process so that it is possible to work for peace, democracy, and prosperity in Nepal without the threat of coercion.

Professor Surya Subedi, OBE (Chairman) (University of Leeds)

Dr David Gellner (Secretary) (University of Oxford)

Professor Michael Hutt (Treasurer) (SOAS, London University)

Dr Judith Pettigrew (Exec Cttee member) (University of Central Lancashire)

Professor Anthony Costello (Exec Cttee member) (University College London)

Dr Ian Harper (Exec Cttee member) (University of Edinburgh)

Dr Stefanie Lotter (Exec Cttee member) (University of Witwatersrand Johannesburg, South Africa)