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OPEN STATEMENT BY THE BRITAIN NEPAL-ACADEMIC COUNCIL

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The Britain-Nepal Academic Council, an organisation of academics in Britain working on Nepal, is deeply concerned by the recent suspension of democracy and fundamental freedoms in Nepal. We believe that peace and prosperity can only return to the country by promoting the rule of law and democracy and allowing the press and the intellectual community to work in a free environment. It is difficult for us, as academics, just as it is for our Nepali colleagues with whom we cooperate, to work in Nepal under present conditions. Accordingly, we call upon the Government of Nepal to release without delay all detained university teachers, human rights workers, and members of the press. We also call upon the King and HMG Nepal to restore the people's fundamental freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of Nepal, as well as under various international human rights treaties ratified by Nepal. We call upon the new government to reaffirm these basic principles of the rule of law and democracy, not just in words but in actions.

Furthermore, we are of the view that, in order to find a peaceful resolution to the on-going internal conflict, the government of Nepal should lift its censorship of the media and guarantee basic human rights for all its citizens, including the rights to liberty, to security, to privacy, and to the freedoms of opinion, expression, association, and assembly. We also call upon the leaders of all involved parties to seek a peaceful resolution of the on-going political problems by means of negotiation and dialogue, and renouncing violence.

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