



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

25th October 2005

As members of a professional body working on Nepal from the United Kingdom, we, the following members of the Britain-Nepal Academic Council, are deeply disappointed and concerned by the seizure under the cover of night of communications equipment from the Kathmandu office of Kantipur FM Station by state officials on 21st October 2005. We deplore this action taken by the government of Nepal against Kantipur FM. The new measures adopted by the government to curb press freedom and freedom of expression go against the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed not only by the Constitution of Nepal but also by the various human rights treaties ratified by Nepal. We are also of the view that any new Ordinance designed to undermine such core freedoms goes against the letter and spirit of Article 72 of the Constitution of Nepal. We call upon the government of Nepal to refrain from undermining press freedom and other basic rights of the people of Nepal and to return the appropriated communications equipment without delay. A free press is crucial not only to finding a political solution for the on-going conflict in Nepal but also for the long-term peace and prosperity of the country.

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)

Ms Stefanie Lotter (Exec Cttee member) (Heidelberg University, Germany)