



9th November 2015

Statement on the current political crisis in Nepal

The Britain-Nepal Academic Council (BNAC) wishes to express its deep concern about the current political situation in Nepal.

At a time when at least 12 districts of the country are struggling to come to terms with the effects of the devastating earthquakes in April and May, and following the promulgation of the Constitution in September, Nepal finds itself in a deep political crisis. In this context we unequivocally condemn:

1. The undue and incommensurate violence with which the Nepalese state has confronted the Madheshi and Tharu movements;
2. The violence on the part of a minority of Madheshi and Tharu movement supporters;
3. The unofficial blockade by the Indian state, which has caused considerable hardship for the people of Nepal and severe damage to the economy;
4. The rise and potential spread of communalism or racism between different groups, but especially between Hill people and Plains (Madheshi and Tharu) people;
5. The complacent and narrowly self-interested attitudes of the majority of senior Nepali politicians, who, rather than acting urgently to defuse the situation through negotiations, have concentrated instead on consolidating power and appear in some cases to have a callous disregard for the suffering of ordinary people.

We therefore call upon the Government of Nepal to engage in a meaningful dialogue to address the demands of the Madheshi and Tharu people, to refrain from using violence against peaceful demonstrators, and to be prepared to make appropriate amendments to the newly promulgated Constitution. We also call on the government to set up and empower the National Reconstruction Authority to ensure that the international pledges of \$4.4 billion for post- earthquake reconstruction can be turned into reality.

We call upon Madheshi and Tharu political leaders and activists to continue to insist that all protests should be peaceful, to respond positively to calls for dialogue, and to create an environment for talks, and thereby to play a part in averting the looming humanitarian crisis in Nepal.

We urge the Government of India to ensure that the rights of Nepal as a land-locked country under international law are respected, that the vulnerability of Nepal is recognised, and that the smooth flow of goods, including essential supplies, across the Indo-Nepal border remains unimpeded.



Finally, we call upon the British government, as a major bilateral donor to the development efforts of Nepal, to encourage an end to Page 2 of 2 alemate.

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