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NEPAL CSW deeply concerned over escalating crisis

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) today expressed deep concern about the escalating political crisis in Nepal, which seriously threatens the new constitution due to be promulgated in less than one month from now.

There are fears of a violent confrontation between the ruling coalition and vigilante forces affiliated with the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which despite being the largest political party has been excluded from the ruling coalition. The Maoist Students' Union has enforced the closure of 8,000 independent schools and announced a May Day rally and an indefinite general strike, to begin on 2 May. Meanwhile, the prominent and controversial ex-army leader, Rukmangad Katawal, has stated provocatively that "the Nepal Army will not remain silent" if the 28 May deadline for finalising a new constitution is not met.

Dr K.B. Rokaya, a National Human Rights Commissioner in Nepal, said: "The international community has to be serious about the deteriorating political situation and play an active role to ensure the timely drafting and promulgation of the new constitution, failing which the country may be plunged into another civil war".

Mervyn Thomas, CSW-UK Chief Executive Officer, said, "The rising tensions are a source of grave concern to all observers of Nepal, and seriously threaten the prospect of a peaceful and just future for the nation. We urge the international community to continue and intensify efforts to bring leaders of all major political parties in Nepal around the same table, where they must recommit themselves to concluding the peace process according to the requirements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and to negotiating a new constitution in an atmosphere of cooperation".

Notes to Editors

1. CSW recently published a briefing on Nepal, arguing the case for strong protections of religious freedom to be enshrined in the new constitution (see the press release, 'New Nepal Constitution should not enshrine anti-conversion proposals, warns CSW', 4 March 2010). To download the briefing, click [here](#).