

OTTAWA TREATY Universalisation in South Asia

Nepal fact sheet

Background

In 1996 the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) declared a “people’s war” against the Nepali state to establish a communist republic in place of the constitutional Hindu monarchy. There was a brief cease-fire period which started in January 2003 but fighting resumed only eight months later, in August 2003.

Nepal’s landmine policy and the Ottawa Treaty

The Kingdom of Nepal has often given mixed signals about its support for a ban on anti-personnel mines. While some of its senior officials have expressed their support for it, government forces have used anti-personnel mines in increasing numbers since 1999 as the war with the Maoists rebels intensified.

Production, stockpiling and transfer of APMs

- In 2003 a Nepali Army official confirmed that Nepal possessed both locally produced and imported antipersonnel mines.
- While the composition and size of the anti-personnel mine stock held by the Nepali state is unknown, it has been reported that Nepal imported mines from India, Russia and China in the 1980s.
- It has also been reported that the government has two small factories producing antipersonnel mines, grenades and ammunition.
- The Maoists also produce significant amounts of improvised explosive devices largely using explosives looted from the government stocks.

Recent use of anti-personnel mines

- Since 1999, there has been widespread use of the antipersonnel mines by the Nepali security forces as well as increased use of the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by the Maoist rebel group.
- Although both sides stopped laying mines and IEDs in the brief cease-fire period, in the wake of renewed fighting in August 2003 they both resumed their mine and IED laying operations.

The extent of the landmine problem and casualties

- There is no official information on the number of landmine casualties. The Nepali Campaign to Ban Landmines have reported that there were at least 731 (196 people killed and 535 injured) new anti-personnel mine and IED casualties in 2003.
- There are no humanitarian demining programmes in Nepal and casualties continue to be reported today.

CALL FOR ACTION

If you are concerned about Nepal not being a member of the Ottawa Treaty, why not send a letter to the Nepali Ambassador to the UK stating your concern?