



## ARTICLE 19

### PRESS RELEASE

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## NEPAL: ARTICLE 19 Condemns China's Pressure against Freedom of Expression

**ARTICLE 19 condemns the steps taken by China to pressurise Nepal to prevent Tibetan protests. The human rights organisation urges both the governments of China and Nepal to respect the right to freedom of expression and opinion.**

On 3 April 2008, the Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin pressurised the Nepalese Government to take stringent measures to prevent peaceful Tibetan demonstration in Nepal. He quashed the ongoing peaceful protest of the Tibetan community, saying it represented 'illegal political' and 'anti-China' activities by 'political organisations'. He also asked the Nepalese Government to restrict the activities of the Dalai Lama's unofficial office in Nepal. Meanwhile, police arrested 71 Tibetan protestors from the Bhatbhateni area in the capital on 2 April. They were arrested while heading toward the Chinese embassy for a demonstration.

The Chinese Ambassador to Nepal said that China hopes "the government of Nepal can uphold justice, safeguard the dignity of law, and take severe measures to prevent these political organisations from organising and implementing illegal political activities". Severe measures have certainly been taken: the Nepalese Police have brutally attacked Tibetan demonstrators and human rights activists on many occasions in the last few weeks and there have been arbitrary arrests and detentions of Tibetans in Kathmandu.

ARTICLE 19 urges both the governments of China and Nepal to respect the right to freedom of expression and opinion, as guaranteed under their Constitutions, and to uphold their obligations under the international human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Freedom of expression and opinion is one of the basic human rights, which any state party is obliged to protect. The Government of Nepal has a duty to respect that right for all individuals, including the people of the Tibetan Community. Organising a protest against the activities of a government is a fundamental right of all citizens.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS:

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression.