

## UN pushes for action in Dalit discrimination cases



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KATHMANDU: The United Nations human rights office in Nepal on Wednesday urged that two landmark verdicts on cases involving caste-based discrimination be implemented at the earliest.

Last January, the District Court in Baitadi decided on a two year imprisonment and fine of Rs. 25,000 to the main perpetrator behind attacks against 12 Dalits at a temple.

In March, the same court found a man guilty of physically assaulting the father of the groom during a wedding ceremony in July 2009 for practicing rituals "reserved for high-caste communities." The perpetrator was sentenced to one year in prison and fined Rs. 5,000.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) and the National Dalit Commission (NDC) said that the local authorities including the Senior Superintendent of Police in Mahakali zone and the Deputy Superintendent of Police in Baitadi had assured that the two verdicts would be implemented at the earliest.

However, in spite of repeated calls by OHCHR, the NDC, Nepal's National Human Rights Commission and others, the court decisions are yet to be implemented.

OHCHR and the NDC both welcomed the assurances they received from local authorities during a four-day joint mission to assess the overall human rights situation of Dalit communities in Nepal's eastern region.

According to Jyoti Sanghera, OHCHR-Nepal's Deputy Representative the mission uncovered many obstacles preventing Dalit communities from enjoying their fundamental human rights, said Jyoti Sanghera, OHCHR-Nepal's Deputy Representative.

"I call on the Government to undertake all necessary steps to address these challenges, and to execute the court orders as soon as possible," she said.

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