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[February 11, 2010](#)

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Nepal urged to investigate 'sacrificial murder' of 8-year-old girl

KANTIPUR REPORT

KATHMANDU, FEB 02 -

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on Tuesday appealed the concerned authorities to properly investigate the case of alleged sacrificial murder of 8-year-old Manisha Harijan of Rupandehi, who was reportedly sacrificed for good omens, and prosecute the perpetrators.

"We are deeply concerned that this case may not receive proper attention from the police, and victim's family be given justice," AHRC said in a statement.

Harijan of Maryadpur in Rupanedhi was found on the morning of Dec. 4 with her throat silted, near a brick kiln.



The circumstances of the crime have lead the villagers and the police officers to suspect that this was a case of human sacrifice, committed in order to bring good omen to the owner of the brick kiln, a local businessman, Birendra Jayasawal.

Following the incident, police arrested Birendra Jayasawal, along with four other suspects. Reports blamed that the police officers first refused to file a First Information Report (FIR) and showed negligence in investigating the case. With the mounting pressure, the case was filed and Chief District Officer pledged that he would make sure that the case would be properly investigated.

The statement further stated that the inquiry must be conducted by an independent and impartial body without delays, all the steps essential to an effective investigation process: prompt questioning of the witnesses; DNA examination of the blood samples found in the brick kiln; divulgation of the investigation results to the family, which includes communication of the DNA analysis and post-mortem examination outcomes.

"If the enquiry concludes that the case was a sacrificial murder, the perpetrators must be prosecuted," stated AHRC, also calling for the protection of the victim's family since, as Dalits, they are vulnerable to pressures, threats and intimidation from the suspects.

The commission has also expressed concerned on the frequent malfunctioning of the country's investigative and legal system, and urged the government to take measures to make sure the police have adequate resources to ensure them to carry out effective inquiries.

Stating that a strong and firm legal actions would act as a deterrent to such crimes, the AHRC has urged the government to draf a law.



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