

## DEATH IN NEPAL - A HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR BLOGS FROM THE FRONTLINES

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“My efforts were thwarted when I came to know that the one who was unconscious among those 8 was no more alive” – Pratik Pande, Jagaran Media Center

Kathmandu, April 24, 2006: A human rights monitor offers a dramatic first-hand account of the current crisis in Nepal, in his blogs to the website of the Advocacy Project.

Pratik Pande is a senior official at the Jagaran Media Center (JMC) and human rights monitor with the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP). In a recent blog, reproduced in part below, he relates how he defied a curfew last Saturday to take eight wounded demonstrators to the Model hospital in Kathmandu. One of the eight died before they arrived. Over 6,000 demonstrators have been injured since the protests began on April 8. 8 have lost eyes and 14 are reported dead.

Meanwhile, opposition leaders are predicting that two million Nepalis will take to the streets Tuesday in an effort to force further concessions from King Gyanendra. The political parties are calling for a referendum on a new constitution and restore parliament.

The blogging by Pande and his colleagues represents the first time that a partner of the Advocacy Project has used the AP site in this way. AP is encouraging all partners to use blogging as a tool in their advocacy.

The following is extracted from Pande’s April 22 2006 blog, unedited:

“When people were first hit with sticks and their head was broken, I ran to police side to ask help for bringing ambulance for the injured, but instead helping me, they tried to hit me with sticks and I had to run back to the protesting side to save myself. I was then wearing the jacket of COCAP and told them that I am Human Rights volunteer. I could not see people dying in front of me at Kalanki.

“At my own risk, without curfew pass, I took the vehicle of INSEC (a human rights organization, located at Kalanki) and carried 8 seriously injured people to the Model Hospital. Despite taking vehicle without curfew pass, kneeling down to security forces all the way; my efforts were thwarted when I came to know that the one who was unconscious among those 8 was no more alive. It was the only vehicle that was seen in road on the way to hospital from Kalanki except that of police, army and armed police. After sometime, some ambulances were seen carrying out injured people in their own risk, as they too were given pass to carry injured people.

“After the huge condemnation of I/National communities, organizations, media, human rights organizations, etc. the next day, i.e. on 21<sup>st</sup> April, government issued 1 curfew pass to 1 private national and international media and 5 passes to UN OHCHR. None of the national human rights organizations except National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) were issued curfew pass.

“The curfew started from 9:00 am until 8:00 pm which was again lengthen until mid-night of 12:00. When we were in the Valley Traffic Office at 8:00 am to ask for curfew pass, they denied us at 10:00 when curfew was already started. After requesting that now we cannot even return back to our shelter, they issued us curfew pass for 15 minutes stating the route from their office to our home. And in my case, I live in place near to Kalanki where the firing took place the last day.

“So, the police authorities denied me to give pass till Kalanki saying that I don’t live there and I want to be there for monitoring and reporting. After convincing them that Kalanki is 500 meters distance from my place, they finally agreed to give me pass but mentioning the place Ravi Bhawan, a place very near to where I live and then I could come back to my home in my bike in due time.

“After I came back to my home, I used inner sub-way to enter to Kalanki to join demonstration as demonstrator but when I entered Kalanki, I could hardly see human rights defenders except that of OHCHR. I knew that OHCHR team is mobile team, so again I had to change my further plan of being demonstrator and I put on my jacket of COCAP to monitor Human Rights violations. But after sometime, I could see some other friends of some other human rights organizations.

“Despite the curfew within ring road and 200 meters outside ring road, there was demonstration of at least 600,000 in the ring road and inner parts of Kathmandu. People were claiming that standing in a same place from the start point to the end of mass named ‘Human Ocean’; it took more than 2 hours to pass. This is again is the first time in history of Kathmandu such a huge mass was seen, not even during the normal time.

“This shows that people are joining the movement every other day. Number of people is increasing everyday. This movement will not stop, until there is declaration of election of constituent assembly. People have advised and threatened the political parties to not negotiate below constituent assembly with King or who so ever. People have already started demonstrating against the King’s proclamation from today morning.”

\* Click here for the reports of COCAP: <http://www.cocap.org.np/>

\* For comprehensive coverage of the crisis in Nepal visit the International Dalit Solidarity Movement: <http://idsn.org/country-information/nepal/>