



न्याय तथा अधिकार संस्था-नेपाल  
Justice and Rights Institute-Nepal

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## Press Statement

Kathmandu, 16 September 2020

### CSOs submit recommendations on new acid violence law

A delegation of six civil society organizations including Amnesty International Nepal; Burn Violence Survivors Nepal; Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD); Justice and Rights Institute Nepal (JuRI-Nepal); Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC) Nepal; and Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC); today submitted a set of recommendations on the drafting of a new legislation on acid violence to Law and Justice Minister, Shivamaya Tumbahangphe, during a meeting at her office.

On September 10, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli had directed the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and other concerned officials, to draft a new law on acid violence within 15 days. In subsequent meetings with survivors of acid violence, PM Oli has pledged that the new legislation, to be passed through an ordinance, would address their grievances and push for stricter punishment of perpetrators.

While welcoming the government initiative to address the loopholes in the current law, the delegation noted, it was important to ensure that the new law adopts a comprehensive approach to dealing with acid violence, one that focuses on all aspects of the crime and its impact on victims and survivors.

"The new law must include both preventive and punitive measures," Nirajan Thapaliya, director of Amnesty International Nepal said. "As much as it is the state's responsibility to punish criminals, it is also equally responsible for preventing such crimes in the first place."

Earlier this year Amnesty International Nepal submitted over 33,000 petitions demanding the government implement a Supreme Court order to regulate the sale and distribution of acids to the Home Ministry.

Pratiksha Giri, Executive Director at Burn Survivors Nepal, said the new law should widen its scope to include incidents of burn violence as well.

"Acid violence and burn violence are both inhumane and heinous crimes. The physical pain, the mental trauma, the impact on self-esteem and self-confidence, suffered by survivors of acid violence and burn violence are similar in nature. Therefore, it is essential that the new law address the issue of burn violence along with acid violence," said Giri.

Anita Neupane Thapalia, Executive Chair of Legal Aid and Consultancy Centre Nepal, echoed similar sentiments.



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"Both acid and burn violence need to be brought under the purview of law. It is crucial that the new law address issues concerning penalization of perpetrators along with survivor's safety, treatment and overall wellbeing," Thapalia said.

Recommendations include calls for strict punishment, free treatment and adequate compensation to survivors, provision of social security allowances, education and employment opportunities, counselling for both victims and perpetrators, regulation of sale and distribution of acids and other toxic substances and creation of awareness programs on impact of acid violence.

Lubha Raj Neupane, Executive Director, WOREC Nepal, said: "Women are especially victimized by acid violence. Acid attack is the result of traditional patriarchal mindset and this is an inhuman attack on women's agency. Hence, the upcoming law should have the provision for strict prosecution against perpetrator and for appropriate longterm socio-economic protection mechanism for survivors."

Mohan Lal Acharya, Executive Director of JuRI-Nepal, said: "The ordinance should come out as a special act, rather than serve as a revision or amendment to provisions in the Criminal Code Act. We're recommending life imprisonment, free treatment, relief and compensation, and regulation of sale and distribution of acids."

Before the submission, the delegation had organized meeting with stakeholders including survivors of acid violence to discuss the recommendations.

Sabin Shrestha, Executive Director, Forum for Women, Law and Development, emphasized the need for the new law to also include provisions concerning present survivors.

"Although it may not be possible to penalize past perpetrators of acid violence, nevertheless, this new law should include provisions for treatment, relief and adequate compensation for acid survivors," Shrestha said.