



Promises on Paper, Stagnation on the Ground: An Analysis of Nepal's Fourth UPR Cycle

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary -----	3
Background of Nepal's social and political situation -----	3
Background on Nepal's last UPR cycle -----	6
Exhaustive Summary of Nepal's Fourth UPR cycle -----	6
Interactive Dialogue -----	6
Delegation of Nepal: Remarks -----	19
Analysis -----	22
Continuities Across the Third and Fourth Cycles -----	22
Key Contrasts and New Developments -----	22
Global South vs Global North -----	23
Conclusion -----	24
GICJ position -----	24
Sources -----	25

Executive Summary

On 21 January 2026, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council conducted its fourth periodic review of the human rights situation in Nepal. The State submitted its report on 17 July 2025. Considering the recommendations made by Special Rapporteurs and treaty body experts, the Human Rights Council and other relevant stakeholders delivered reports compiled on different human rights issues in Nepal.

After briefly reviewing Nepal's current domestic political situation and its participation in the 37th UPR session of the Working Group, this report notes the recommendations made by 101 countries during this 51st UPR session, where Nepal is currently partaking in its fourth review.

This report provides a brief analysis of the recommendations made during the current UPR cycle in comparison with Nepal's previous review. The recommendations from various countries reflected distinct geopolitical priorities, economic conditions, and national areas of expertise. For example, countries in the Global North focused more heavily on the rule of law, transitional justice, and individual liberties. Conversely, countries of the Global South prioritised poverty alleviation, food security, and the rights of labourers.

Regarding national areas of expertise, countries known for their progressive marriage laws (Iceland, the Netherlands, and Uruguay) recommended that Nepal redefine marriage in gender-neutral terms and ban conversion therapy. Nations with strong domestic protections for reproductive autonomy, such as France and Iceland, pushed for the decriminalisation and legalisation of abortion in all circumstances.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) remains concerned by the persistent gap between formal commitments and their effective implementation. Despite Nepal's consistent acceptance of recommendations across successive UPR cycles, progress on the ground has remained limited. The lack of enforcement mechanisms and delayed reforms risks reducing compliance to a performative exercise rather than a genuine effort toward structural change.

Background on Nepal's current social and political situation

Nepal is home to beautiful temples, a rich religious heritage - namely being the birthplace of the Buddha - and not to mention, housing Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain. Recently, this landlocked country has been spotlighted in the news due to Gen-Z protests that managed to topple Nepal's government and to elect their new interim leader through the messaging platform Discord.



Protests against the government were sparked over a social-media ban in September of 2025, which finally culminated in the prime minister's resignation from office.

The protests, which lasted less than a month, led to the deaths of 74 people and 2,113 injured [1]. The social-media ban was the government's attempt to silence criticisms by "properly managing and monitoring" those platforms, which also means censoring citizens' freedom of expression [2].

As well as being used by the Nepali to express their discontent with the state and political institutions, these applications, including the very popular messaging app WhatsApp, are used every day by Nepali to keep in touch with their loved ones overseas. A very large part of the Nepali population works abroad, and the country is heavily dependent on the remittances they send back, representing over 30% of Nepal's GDP, which is only \$1,400 per capita, making it one of the poorest nations in Asia. This also means that the financial opportunities within the domestic economy are heavily limited.

Although the social media ban is what sparked these protests, they were, in fact, long overdue. After the fall of the monarchy in 2008, Nepal has been consistently struggling with systems of governance. Furthermore, while the richest 10 % hold a disproportionately large share of income and wealth compared to other groups, about one-fifth of the population still lives below the national poverty line.

Furthermore, Nepal's demographics clearly show an age distribution leaning towards a youth population, a demographic group which research shows is more likely to protest due to unemployment, lack of trust in political institutions, and the amplification effect of communication technologies [3] - [5].

In 2024, Nepal's youth unemployment rate was of 20.82%, which is regularly considered to be extremely high [6]-[8]. Long before the 2025 protests, Nepal's politicians have been known to evade their duties as public servants, and instead use their positions in the government to enrich themselves through bribes, embezzlement, and fraud [9], [10]. In fact, no leaders have been able to complete their five-year term. However, this is also due to Nepal's frequent government changes - 14 governments since 2008 - characterised by numerous frequent collapses of ruling coalitions, votes of no confidence, partisan factionalism, and reshuffling of alliances [11], [12].

Since the protest, Sushila Karki - interim prime minister - has been busy. Upon being sworn in, she has vowed to end corruption and bring peace, and distributed financial compensation to those injured during the protests. Most recently, she has been overseeing three additional ministries after the resignation of their ministers.



In anticipation of the March 2026 parliamentary election, Sushila Karki is focusing on restoring stability and installing anti-corruption measures. As of 2026, it seems like the intense political unrest has simmered down, and the local populations are eager for the upcoming election.

Background on Nepal's last UPR cycle

During its third UPR cycle, Nepal received 233 recommendations, of which it accepted 196 [13]. In Nepal's UPR national report for the fourth cycle, they claimed that “most of the recommendations made by the member states during the third cycle have been achieved” [14]. However, it is worth noting that accepting recommendations and implementing them are two very different things. Sources claim that Nepal fully implemented less than 10% of these recommendations, which one report estimates to be as low as 3% [15]. Former Chief Secretary of Nepal Eaknarayan Aryal noted that “Of the 196 commitments made by Nepal from that report, only 16 have been fully implemented. Ten others are partially implemented, and 111 are at different stages of implementation, while 10 are not implemented. Nepal had taken 37 points only into notice” [16], [17].

Recommendations ranged from the suggested implementation of the Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability (CBDU) Act, the suggested implementation of constitutional provisions meant for the most marginalised and vulnerable groups, the implementation of rights related to women and children, and the issue of housing rights to marginalised and low income group [18].

Although Nepal has been consistent in accepting recommendations from its previous UPR cycles, they seldom translate into implementation. While numerous legislative measures have been adopted on paper, critics often note the stagnation of progress, highlighting a gap between legislation and implementation [19]-[21]. Notably, there seems to be a lack of enforcement, particularly regarding transitional justice. Thus, Nepal is often criticised for “performative” compliance rather than full realisation of reforms.

Exhaustive Summary of Nepal's fourth UPR cycle

Interactive Dialogue

The representative of Czechia recommended that Nepal adopt the Nelson Mandela rules (The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners), guarantee an independent transitional justice system, and abolish caste-based discrimination.

The representative of Djibouti recommended that Nepal eliminate inequality between men and women.

The representative of the Dominican Republic recommended that Nepal strengthen resources for the National Human Rights Commission, respect its citizens' freedoms of expression and

peaceful association, strengthen access to justice and abolish impunity, and ensure effective implementation of the rights to free and compulsory education, particularly for children in vulnerable situations.

The representative of Egypt recommended that Nepal pursue its efforts to fight violence and discrimination against women and to strengthen support for its social solidarity programs.



The representative of El Salvador recommended that Nepal strengthen its efforts to combat human trafficking, continue to enhance health and safety at work programs, and promote efforts on public health services by coming up with measures to adequately protect early childhood and childhood.

The representative of Eritrea recommended that Nepal finalise its national food planning, enhance access to health care, and improve gender equality in education by reducing drop-out rates at the secondary level.

The representative of Estonia recommended that Nepal revise all media-related laws to comply with international standards, enhance child-friendly education, and ensure the protection of children against online risks.

The representative of Ethiopia recommended that Nepal continue to strengthen measures to reduce poverty and inequality by expanding social protection and increasing employment opportunities, and continue enhancing community-based crime data measures.

The representative of Finland recommended that Nepal safeguard constitutional rights to peaceful assembly and public gathering, and eliminate untouchability and violence against Dalit women and girls and people with disabilities.

The representative of France recommended that Nepal ratify the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, ensure its citizens' rights for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, decriminalise abortion, and decriminalise gay marriage.

The representative of the Gambia recommended that Nepal strengthen its efforts to abolish child marriage and ensure climate change resilience targets.

The representative of Georgia recommended that Nepal make education free at the secondary level, ensure that primary and secondary education is compulsory for 9 years, and strengthen its efforts to combat transboundary trafficking of women and girls.

The representative of Germany recommended that Nepal expand its definition of serious human rights violations, implement constitutional and legal standards for protecting Dalits, implement components of maternity care, and eliminate GBV.

The representative of Guyana recommended that Nepal address domestic violence in its constitution, collaborate with the World Health Organisation to help women and girls access affordable menstrual products, and ensure access to clean water.

The representative of Iceland recommended that Nepal decriminalise and legalise abortions in all circumstances, ensure access to sexual education in and out of the school system, ensure adequate access to reproductive health services, eliminate GBV, and ban conversion therapy.

The representative of Peru recommended that Nepal ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW), adopt the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopt the Refugee Convention, adopt the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, criminalize all form of human trafficking, and reduce poverty by increase employment opportunities.

The representative of Indonesia recommended that Nepal continue to strengthen access to justice in rural and remote areas, improve equitable access to quality education, and continue efforts to reduce maternal mortality by increasing access to pre- and postnatal healthcare.

The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran recommended that Nepal continue its mission to make education accessible, strengthen efforts to combat poverty, and enforce protection for women, girls and children against violence.

The representative of Iraq recommended that Nepal continue efforts to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, ensure their participation in public life, encourage the empowerment of women and girls, and promote rights to education, particularly for the marginalised community.



The representative of Ireland recommended that Nepal continue its efforts to eradicate child marriage, amend the 2018 Act Relating to Children, and ensure that legislation to prevent torture is strengthened.

The representative of Italy recommended that Nepal enact a law to prohibit discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, and religion, and recommended that accessible infrastructure be guaranteed to ensure people with disabilities can be independent.

The representative of Japan recommended that Nepal make further efforts to combat human trafficking, strengthen endeavours to protect victims of trafficking, and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

The representative of Jordan recommended that Nepal continue to support and strengthen national human rights and strengthen efforts to prevent human trafficking by developing further mechanisms.

The representative of Kiribati recommended that Nepal eliminate caste-based discrimination, continue to strengthen climate change adaptation measures, and continue to strengthen its public health system, especially rural and remote healthcare services.

The representative of Kuwait recommended that Nepal strengthen its judicial system and rule of law, and continue to strengthen and improve basic health services to make them accessible to the most vulnerable categories.

The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic recommended that Nepal enhance efforts to develop more services and care programs for people with disabilities by improving employment and education opportunities, and expand healthcare services for all citizens.

The representative of Latvia recommended that Nepal ratify the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, fully align itself with the Paris Principles (Pluralism, Independence, and Effectiveness), and eliminate GBV.

The representative of Libya recommended that Nepal renew and redouble efforts to ensure empowerment of women and participation in society, and pursue implementation of their human rights programs.

The representative of Lithuania recommended that Nepal enhance human rights training for security forces, particularly with regard to the management of peaceful protests.

The representative of Luxembourg recommended that Nepal strengthen the protection of women against all forms of GBV, ratify the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, and ensure that the freedoms of expression, association, and public gatherings are respected.

The representative of Malawi recommended that Nepal continue taking protective measures to eliminate GBV and ensure healthy and clean environments.

The representative of Malaysia recommended that Nepal continue its efforts to promote transparency for anti-corruption measures.

The representative of the Republic of Maldives recommended that Nepal ensure meaningful representation of women and girls and the implementation of environmental policies, and that it strengthen its investment in education for children and marginalised communities.

The representative of Malta recommended that Nepal ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ensure that the rights of LGBTQ+ persons are respected.



The representative of the Marshall Islands recommended that Nepal adopt a human rights-based and gender-based approach in environmental-based reduction policies, and recommended that it ratify the Ottawa Convention.

The representative of Mauritius recommended that Nepal adopt an anti-discrimination law to guarantee the rights of minorities, and that it ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The representative of Mexico recommended that Nepal amend section 67 of the civil code, ban conversion therapy, and decriminalise sexual relations of teenagers under the age of 16.

The representative of Mongolia recommended that Nepal consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and improve its health care services.

The representative of Montenegro recommended that Nepal extend the application of its 2015 Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act.

The representative of Morocco recommended that Nepal consider establishing a National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up, taking inspiration from the Marrakech Framework for Action.

The representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands recommended that Nepal amend its national civil code to redefine marriage in gender-neutral terms and adopt and implement measures to protect lawyers.

The representative of New Zealand recommended that Nepal enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation for everyone, criminalise all forms of GBV, eradicate selective abortion, and set the legal age of marriage for both boys and girls at 18.

The representative of Niger recommended that Nepal strengthen its mandate of the National Women Commission and ensure the protection of all migrant workers and their families.

The representative of Nigeria recommended that Nepal expand safe migration channels and enhance the protection of migrant workers, particularly women.

The representative of Norway recommended that Nepal strengthen sexual and reproductive rights by increasing access to information, prevent and address GBV through rights-based and survivor-based responses, and ensure free and inclusive quality education.

The representative of Oman recommended that Nepal continue to implement the 2019 Legal Aid Framework to ensure access for vulnerable populations and strengthen its efforts to combat human trafficking.

The representative of Paraguay recommended that Nepal continue to strengthen the rule of law and ensure the right to peaceful assembly, combat corruption, and eliminate discrimination, especially against the Dalit population.

The representative of India recommended that Nepal strengthen the National Women Commission, continue its long-term anti-poverty plan, and continue efforts to combat GBV.

The representative of the Philippines recommended that Nepal strengthen its policies for human rights and vulnerable populations and ensure the protection of rights for migrant workers and families.

The representative of Portugal recommended that Nepal ensure the function of its National Human Rights Commission and align with the Paris Principles, and amend the national penal code to ensure a comprehensive definition of rape.



The representative of Qatar recommended that Nepal redouble its efforts to increase girls' education and ensure the effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission by aligning it with the Paris Principles.

The representative of the Republic of Korea recommended that Nepal take further steps to protect women and girls from discrimination and harm, and to ensure a safe environment for human rights defenders and journalists.

The representative of Romania recommended that Nepal adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits the discrimination of women, prohibit child marriage by 2030 as per the SDGs, and guarantee women equal land inheritance.

The representative of the Russian Federation recommended that Nepal comply with the UN Paris Principles, ensure equal land ownership, ensure the protection of vulnerable groups, step up efforts to ensure the rights of citizens, and eradicate all forms of child labour, especially in the informal sector of the economy.

The representative of Rwanda recommended that Nepal develop and implement a mechanism for fact-based reporting to ensure transparency and accountability.

The representative of Saudi Arabia recommended that Nepal continue the promotion of women's participation in public life and ensure the support of programs for people with disabilities.

The representative of Serbia recommended that Nepal strengthen its mandate and increase resources for the Women National Commission, set the minimum age for marriage at 18 for both girls and boys, and continue promoting social inclusion with attention to vulnerable communities.

The representative of Sierra Leone recommended that Nepal strengthen its public education system, strengthen its mandate and increase resources for the Women's National Commission, and take legislative measures to eliminate discrimination against women and migrants.

The representative of Singapore recommended that Nepal strengthen its efforts to protect children's rights.

The representative of Slovenia recommended that Nepal consider adopting more legislative measures to ensure the representation of women in public life, criminalise all forms of GBV, and eliminate the statute of limitations to report rape.

The representative of South Africa recommended that Nepal eliminate discrimination against all, specifically Dalits and women, and align its National Human Rights Commission with the Paris Principles.

The representative of South Sudan recommended that Nepal ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, establish measures to promote women's access to decision-making positions, and implement a free plan for education.

The representative of Spain recommended that Nepal ensure democratic elections in 2026, fully implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda, guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly against evictions, and combat discrimination against all, especially vulnerable groups.

The representative of Sri Lanka recommended that Nepal take further steps to advance all rights, especially social and cultural rights, promote equality of women and girls, and continue efforts to combat violence against women and girls.

The representative of Suriname recommended that Nepal comply with the Paris Principles and establish an independent accountability mechanism to investigate human rights violations by law enforcement officials.

The representative of Switzerland recommended that Nepal develop accessible mental health services which are adapted for women and children, ensure the rights of Dalits, and investigate caste-based violence.

The representative of Thailand recommended that Nepal ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and accelerate the adoption of a gender-neutral citizenship law.

The representative of Togo recommended that Nepal strengthen its fight against discrimination and violence against women and girls, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and ensure the rights of migrant workers.



The representative of Türkiye recommended that Nepal further improve equal access to education, continue to implement preventive measures to eliminate all forms of GBV, and protect climate-displaced persons.

The representative of Ukraine recommended that Nepal strengthen its efforts to combat human trafficking, prevent the recruitment of Nepali nationals as mercenaries, ratify the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The representative of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recommended that Nepal ensure transparency in the commission of the enquiry into the 2025 protests,

strengthen efforts to prevent GBV and human trafficking, and effectively implement transitional justice measures.

The representative of Uruguay recommended that Nepal amend its legislation regarding sexual identity, recognise same sex marriage, and ensure a comprehensive sexual health education.

The representative of Uzbekistan recommended that Nepal strengthen the retention of the rights of migrant workers.

The representative of Vietnam recommended that Nepal further enhance access to quality education and enhance access to quality healthcare, and newborn care.

The representative of Albania recommended that Nepal strengthen its efforts to combat impunity.

The representative of Algeria recommended that Nepal establish and enhance the implementation of public policies to improve the independence of people with disabilities, and continue to uphold gender equality.

The representative of Armenia recommended that Nepal further strengthen its efforts to protect the rights of women, children and indigenous folks, continue efforts to combat child labour, and ensure the protection of various vulnerable groups in the public sector.

The representative of Australia recommended that Nepal strengthen its efforts to eliminate GBV and ensure access to justice, repeal the statute of limitations, eliminate threats of violence for journalists, and conduct an impartial investigation into the 2025 protests.

The representation of Azerbaijan recommended that Nepal enhance support of anti trafficking laws, establish legislative measures to combat child labour, and strengthen the Women National Commission.

The representative of Bahrain recommended that Nepal continue its efforts to combat human trafficking and implement legislation to protect women in rural and remote areas.

The representative of Bangladesh recommended that Nepal continue to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, advance gender equality in social, economic, and political spaces, and ensure access to education, health, and employment for people with disabilities.

The representative of Belarus recommended that Nepal increase funding for its School Education Sector Plan, develop a national program that promotes employment, and continue to participate in transboundary cooperation to eliminate trafficking.

The representative of Belgium recommended that Nepal ensure the implementation of the Social Practice (Reform) Act, prohibiting the coercion, demanding, or acceptance of dowry, set the legal age of marriage for both boys and girls at 18, and ratify ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work.

The representative of Bhutan recommended that Nepal enhance women's access to legal aid services, continue to address poverty and income disparities, and protect vulnerable farmers and communities.

The representative of Bolivia recommended that Nepal continue to create mechanisms to eliminate violence against women, and ensure that the country maintains its leadership efforts in international organisations.

The representative of Brazil recommended that Nepal adopt measures to reduce natal mortalities, adopt measures to prevent hunger and promote food security, and intensify efforts to eliminate child labour.

The representative of Brunei recommended that Nepal remain committed to mitigating climate change, promote the rights to safe and nutritious food, and ensure adequate healthcare services.

The representative of Bulgaria recommended that Nepal continue its efforts to address domestic violence against women by criminalising all forms of GBV, and ensure accessible healthcare for people with disabilities.

The representative of Burkina Faso recommended that Nepal ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and strengthen the combat of human trafficking.

The representative of Burundi recommended that Nepal continue actions aimed at combating climate change and ensure measures are taken to reduce unemployment.

The representative of Cameroon recommended that Nepal continue efforts to protect refugees and displaced people and continue to increase education.

The representative of Chile recommended that Nepal ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, eradicate all forms of GBV, and comply with the Paris Principles.

The representative of China recommended that Nepal continue improving its legislative framework for the protection of human rights, and ensure the protection of people with disabilities and minorities.



The representative of Colombia recommended that Nepal comply with the Paris Principles and promote measures to increase women's land ownership and tenure security.

The representative of Congo recommended that Nepal strengthen measures that guarantee the working conditions of migrant workers and ensure that the rights of women and Dalits are protected.

The representative of Costa Rica recommended that Nepal amend and revise policies related to mass media and cybersecurity, guarantee the freedom of expression to ensure that the internet remains a safe and open space, ensure the protection of Dalit persons, and guarantee that victims of trafficking are fully recognised as victims.

The representation of Croatia recommended that Nepal ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, ensure women have access to affordable aid services, and strengthen the implementation of caste-based discrimination and untouchability.

The representation of Cuba recommended that Nepal strengthen the national project for the mobilisation of agriculture, and ensure programs are put in place to support adequate living standards.

The representation of Cyprus recommended that Nepal ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, set the legal age of marriage for both boys and girls at 18, and establish campaigns at school to ensure the respect of people with disabilities.

The representative of Venezuela recommended that Nepal promote women leadership posts, ensure an inclusive education for all, and continue adopting laws to combat the discrimination of women, girls, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, and people with disabilities.

The representative of Pakistan recommended that Nepal continue to support programs for agriculture and food security, and continue to expand youth employment programs, especially for women.

Delegation of Nepal: Remarks

The delegation of Nepal began by indicating that Nepal has taken strong measures to advance human rights since its last cycle, and reaffirmed its commitment to a transparent adherence of human rights.

Since its last review in 2021, the delegation mentions having progressed, noting that their constitution holds a broad range of rights, including for minority communities, women, children, and elderly communities. Amid the recent domestic situation, notably the Gen Z protests and the interim government, the delegation of Nepal reiterated its government's commitment to hold its general election on its given date (5th of March) and to deliver good governance.

The delegation mentioned that its UPR national report was prepared in collaboration with various stakeholders, noting that the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Nicolas Levrat, visited in late 2025 to assess the situation of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. On a separate note, Mr Levrat will present his findings to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2026.

The delegation affirms its belief in the universality of human rights and mentions that its constitution guarantees an expansion of human rights. The delegation notes freedom of religion as a fundamental right, despite Nepal's status as a secular country.

Amongst recent developments, the representatives of Nepal mention the penal code criminalising hate speech and attacks on cultural sites, a toll-free helpline to provide assistance for women and girls in need, and police-provided safe houses for victims of gender-based violence (GBV). They also noted that almost all reported cases of women and girls victims of GBV were resolved. Further, the delegation mentioned that their Constitution ensures $\frac{1}{3}$ of seats for women in the state assembly, that they have incorporated a human rights-based approach to business development, and that they have made remarkable progress on the SDGs, maintaining that fighting climate change is their priority.

The representatives of Nepal also mentioned the increasing digitalisation as a feature of Nepal, noting their concern with security and privacy issues.

Regarding education, the delegation commented on the constitutionally guaranteed rights to education, where 62/77 districts have been declared literate.

They have also noted that local governments provide people with disabilities canes, hearing aids, braille books, and wheelchairs. LGBTQ+ rights have also been reinforced by constitutional protections and court rulings. LGBTQ+ communities have been recognised, and their right to live with dignity has been honoured.

The delegation reaffirms that Nepal's anti-corruption framework reflects constitutional commitment to good governance, and that online services to facilitate migrant workers have been put in place.

The delegation mentioned that the constitution ensures the rights to employment and fair labour practices, which they noted 2.5 million people benefited from last year. Furthermore, a plan for reducing child labour is in place. They have also adopted a national action plan regarding Business Human Rights, and note that trade union rights are guaranteed by their constitution. Additionally, several mechanisms to protect and promote the rights of migrant labour have been put in place.

According to its representatives, Nepal has been providing social security to all its citizens, as guaranteed by its constitution. This constitution also ensures the right to appropriate housing.

Nepal also reasserts its commitment to ensuring national health and increasing health care facilities through the necessary mechanisms.

On the topic of education, the delegation announces that the government is providing daily meals to students in primary schools, and that higher education scholarships have supported more than 7,000 students, including those from marginalised and vulnerable communities.

On the topic of women's rights, the delegation asserts that Nepal's constitution has guaranteed the rights of women through the implementation of a series of laws. Furthermore, a certain number of seats in parliaments and local governments are reserved for women, with a minimum of 33% representation for women in federal and provincial parliaments, and 40% representation in local government. Lastly, the delegation notes that 94 hospitals throughout Nepal specialise in supporting victims of GBV, and female literacy rates and female-headed households have increased in the past decade.

The delegation of Nepal also addressed environmental issues and discrimination, noting that their constitution ensures economic and social equality. Furthermore, the delegation reasserted that the government of Nepal does not tolerate caste-based discrimination and ensured that the protection and respect of women and girls is one of the core values of Nepal. Similarly, the delegation reminded its audience that its government does not tolerate violence and discrimination in the name of tradition.

The delegation emphasised that its government prohibits all forms of slavery and servitude, and has zero tolerance against GBV. Further, the delegation mentioned the establishment of a hotline for children at risk, which operates 24/7, as well as the establishment of child rights committees at local levels.

The delegation of Nepal reiterated its country's commitment to protecting the rights of indigenous and Dalit Peoples, adding that they are guaranteed seats in the parliament. Furthermore, the delegation affirms that its constitution guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities as fundamental rights. 86 government hospitals are providing mostly free services to people with disabilities.

In closing, the delegation reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to protect and promote human rights, noting that it welcomes this review with humanity and openness. They expressed their gratitude to the members of the troika as well as to all member states, including those with recommendations. They ensured that all recommendations would be thoroughly reviewed with an open mind. Finally, the delegation reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to promoting human rights.

Analysis

Continuities Across the Third and Fourth Cycles

Several core issues remained stagnant between the two reviews, with many countries repeating calls for legislative action.

In both cycles, numerous countries recommended that Nepal ensure the National Human Rights Commission's independence and financial autonomy in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

Transitional justice and recommendations regarding human rights violations also remained a priority throughout both cycles. In 2021, countries like Belgium and Germany called for amending the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act to meet international standards. In 2026, the United Kingdom and Australia continued to stress the need for a victim-centric transitional justice process and the conclusion of these cases.

During both reviews, repeated recommendations were made for Nepal to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Finally, the elimination of untouchability and the effective implementation of legislation to eliminate caste-based discrimination were recommended in both 2021 and 2026.

Key Contrasts and New Developments

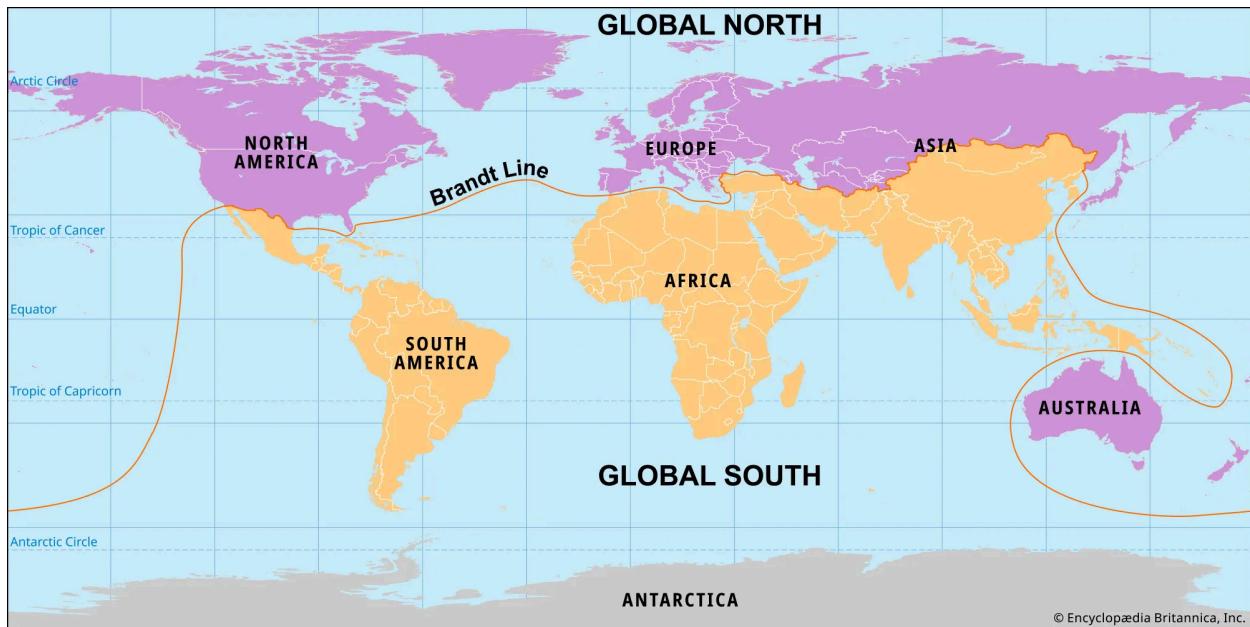
The fourth cycle introduced urgent recommendations linked to Nepal's internal political unrest and the digital age, likely due to the recent Gen Z protests. A few countries urged Nepal to revise its media and cybersecurity laws to ensure they comply with international standards and do not facilitate censorship. Some countries recommended impartial investigations into the protests and the use of force by security personnel. Finland, France, Luxembourg, and Paraguay emphasised safeguarding the constitutional right to peaceful assembly and public gathering. Lithuania recommended enhancing human rights training for security forces, particularly regarding the management of peaceful protests. Suriname suggested establishing an independent accountability mechanism to investigate violations by law enforcement. While the third cycle briefly touched on freedom of expression, the fourth cycle saw specific calls from Estonia, Mexico, and Costa Rica to revise media-related and cybersecurity laws to prevent censorship, specifically referencing the 2025 social media ban.

Recommendations to decriminalise and legalise abortion in all circumstances became more prominent in the fourth cycle, whereas the third cycle focused more broadly on "safe

motherhood". Additionally, a large coalition of countries focused on criminalising all forms of GBV and eliminating the statute of limitations for reporting rape.

Countries also continued to press Nepal on the rights of Dalits and indigenous peoples.

Global South vs Global North



Countries from the Global South significantly focused on socio-economic rights, development, and the protection of migrant workers, reflecting Nepal's heavy economic dependence on remittances. They recommended enhancing legal protections, creating safe migration channels, and ensuring the rights of families of migrant workers.

Countries from the Global South also tended to focus on long-term anti-poverty plans and the mobilisation of the agricultural sector to ensure food security.

Conversely, countries from the Global North tended to focus more on the rule of law, transitional justice, and individual liberties. These included the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Individual liberties included recommendations surrounding same-sex marriage and abortion.

Conclusion

Nepal's fourth UPR cycle reflects both the country's willingness to engage with international human rights mechanisms and the enduring structural challenges that continue to undermine meaningful progress. While the diversity and breadth of recommendations demonstrate strong international concern and engagement, many of the issues raised remain unresolved from previous cycles. Without concrete implementation strategies, clear timelines, and independent oversight, these recurring recommendations risk perpetuating a cycle of stagnation.

In light of recent political unrest and socio-economic pressures, this UPR cycle represents a critical opportunity for Nepal to move beyond symbolic compliance and toward substantive reform. GICJ urges Nepal to translate its constitutional guarantees and international commitments into enforceable policies that prioritise accountability, protect fundamental freedoms, and address systemic inequality. Sustained progress will depend not only on legislative reform but also on political will, institutional independence, and genuine engagement with civil society. The effectiveness of Nepal's human rights framework will ultimately be measured by its impact on the lived realities of its population.

GICJ position

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) acknowledges Nepal's constitutional recognition of a broad range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as the State's continued engagement with the Universal Periodic Review process. However, GICJ remains concerned by the persistent gap between formal commitments and their effective implementation. Despite Nepal's consistent acceptance of recommendations across successive UPR cycles, progress on the ground - particularly regarding transitional justice, caste-based discrimination, accountability for past human rights violations, and institutional independence - has remained limited. The lack of enforcement mechanisms and delayed reforms risks reducing compliance to a performative exercise rather than a genuine effort toward structural change.

GICJ is particularly alarmed by recent developments surrounding restrictions on freedom of expression, including the 2025 social media ban, and the use of force during protests. These measures raise serious concerns regarding Nepal's adherence to its international obligations under instruments. GICJ stresses the urgent need for independent, transparent investigations into protest-related violence, the strengthening of safeguards for peaceful assembly, and the revision of media and cybersecurity legislation to ensure full compliance with international human rights standards. Furthermore, GICJ supports recommendations calling for the ratification of key international treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Convention against Enforced Disappearance, as essential steps toward combating impunity and restoring public trust.

Sources

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