



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Nepal

Nepal – NPL40159 – Rastriya Prajatantra
Party (RPP) – United Communist Party of
Nepal (Maoist) – Hindus

27 April 2012

1. Please provide an update of NPL38704 on the treatment of RPP supporters by Maoists, in Kathmandu in particular.

Limited information was found regarding the treatment of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) supporters by Maoist supporters during the period May 2011 to April 2012. On 2 November 2011 *News in Nepal*, a Nepalese online news portal, reported that an RPP supporter was injured in a clash with Maoist supporters in Sindhupalchowk district, which lies adjacent to Kathmandu district.¹ The report quotes a local woman, who states that there had been “several instances of clashes and attacks between cadres of [the United Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist] UCPN-M and RPP in [the area]” and that “that such incidents have been occurring time and again as action is not taken against the perpetrators of the past incidents.”²

No information was found regarding the treatment of RPP supporters by supporters of the United Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (UCPN-M) in Kathmandu in the defined period.

2. Please provide information on the treatment of Hindus by Maoists.

It is unlikely that UCPN-M supporters target people specifically for being Hindus. According to the US Department of State’s 2010 *International Religious Freedom Report* for Nepal, “Hindus constitute 80 per cent of the population”, and, despite being officially declared a secular State, the president attends “major Hindu religious ceremonies...”³ In addition, according to the 2010 *Freedom in the World* report by Freedom House, “members of the Hindu upper castes dominate government and business...”⁴ Reports indicate that the UCPN – M is also composed of many Hindus, and that its leadership includes high-caste Hindus. According to the website Global Security:

Most of these Maoists are young people from peasant families of dalits, low-caste Hindus, and make up twenty per cent of Nepal’s population. Several leaders of these Nepalese Maoists come from lower middle class families.⁵

A 2011 report by *Foreign Policy Journal* regarding Indian Dalits’ views on Indian and Nepalese Maoists states that:

¹ ‘Map of Nepal: Administrative Divisions’ n.d., ncthakur.itgo.com website <<http://ncthakur.itgo.com/map04.htm>> Accessed 24 April 2012.

² ‘RPP Cadre injured in Maoist attack in Sindhupalchowk’ 2011, *News in Nepal.com*, 2 November <<http://newsinnepal.com/news.php?id=3381>> Accessed 24 April 2012.

³ US Department of State 2011, *2010 International Religious Freedom Report – Nepal*, 13 September.

⁴ Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – Nepal*, 28 May.

⁵ ‘United People’s Front UCPN M’ n.d., Global Security.org website <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/upf.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012.

When asked why [Dalit Indians] distrust the “Naxalites”, the common term for the Maoist movement, they point out, to start, the fact that almost all the rank and file fighters in the Maoist movement are Dalit and that almost all the leadership are “high caste”. The Dalits I know have had firsthand experience with just how caste-ist the “Naxalite”/Maoist leadership is.⁶

This claim is supported by reports which indicate that a number of UCPN-M leaders are high-caste Hindus. The South Asia Terrorism Portal’s summary of the UCPN-M states that:

The main fighting and support forces consist of Magars, Tharus, Janjatis (Gurungs, Rais, Limbus, Tamangs, Dalits, Brahmins and Chhetris, **the last two also providing the political and military leadership**).⁷ (emphasis added)

Information was found which confirms that Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, the Maoist rebel leader and Prime Minister in 2008, is Brahmin, as is his successor, Baburam Bhattarai.⁸ A 2007 opinion piece posted on the Nepalese pro-democracy blog site, United We Blog, lists 19 leaders of the UCPN-M as being high-caste Hindus, and adds that “the list may go forever.”⁹ Both Prachanda and Bhattari have attended Hindu celebrations, and one report was found in which the UCPN-M, while in government, was accused of being pro-Hindu.¹⁰

The UCPN-M’s support for State secularism, as well as its tendency to interfere directly with the administrative operations of important Hindu temples, has attracted criticism from Hindu nationalist groups, which accuse the UCPN-M of being anti-Hindu.¹¹ Supporters of these groups have subsequently clashed with supporters of the UCPN-M, with the former demanding the reintroduction of Hinduism as the official State religion as well as the restoration of monarchy.¹² Although the UCPN-M’s supports official State secularism, the

⁶ Mountain, T C 2011, ‘Why India’s Dalits Don’t Trust the Maoists’, *Foreign Policy Journal*, 25 May <<http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/05/25/why-indias-dalits-dont-trust-the-maoists/>> Accessed 27 April 2012.

⁷ ‘Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist’ n.d., South Asia Terrorism Portal website <<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/nepal/terroristoutfits/index.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012.

⁸ ‘Prachanda elected Prime Minister of Nepal’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 16 August <<http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/16/stories/2008081657780100.htm>> Accessed 26 April 2012; ‘Maoist ideologue finally emerges from shadow of Prachanda’ 2011, *One India News*, 29 August <<http://news.oneindia.in/2011/08/29/maoistideologue-finally-emerges-from-shadow-ofprachanda.html>> Accessed 26 April 2012.

⁹ Giri, K 2007, ‘Nepali Politics: Brahmin and Chhetri Everywhere’, United We Blog website, 2 July <<http://blog.com.np/2007/07/02/nepali-politics-brahmin-and-chhetri-everywhere/>> Accessed 27 April 2012.

¹⁰ ‘Prachanda opens Pushupati Festival 08’ 2008, *One India News*, 18 October <<http://news.oneindia.in/2008/10/18/prachanda-opens-pashupati-festival-08-1224320700.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; ‘PM Bhattari inaugurates Sakya festival’ 2012, *The Himalayan Times*, 25 April <<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/rssReference.php?headline=PM+Bhattarai++inaugurates+Sakya+festival+&NewsID=329603>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Parajuli, K 2008, ‘Minorities accuse Nepalese government of favouring Hinduism’, *Asia News.it*, 28 October <<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Minorities-accuse-Nepalese-government-of-favoring-Hinduism-13600.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012.

¹¹ For demand for secularism see: International Crisis Group 2005, *Nepal’s Maoists: Their Aims, Structure and Strategy*, Asia Report No. 104, 27 October, p. 40. For control of Hindu temples see: Parajuli, K 2012, ‘Maoist government gains control of iconic Pashupatinath Hindu temple’, *Asia News.it*, 11 April <<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Maoist-government-gains-control-of-iconic-Pashupatinath-Hindu-temple-24467.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Marasini, P 2009, ‘Prachanda requests Indian priests to continue’, *The Hindu*, 8 January <<http://www.hindu.com/2009/01/08/stories/2009010854441700.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012.

¹² Haviland, C 2006, ‘Nepal Maoists disrupt Hindu meet’, *BBC News*, 21 August <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5270688.stm> Accessed 27 April 2012; ‘Nepal protest: Hindu vigilantes attack Maoists’ 2010, *ZeeNews.com*, 6 May <http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/nepal-protest-hindu-vigilantes-attack-maoists_624648.html> Accessed 27 April 2012; Sarkar, S 2010, ‘Another Hindu militant group on rise in Nepal?’, *Thaindian News*, 6 June <<http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/world-news/another-hindu-militant->

information cited above suggests that this does not extend to a prohibition on individual or communal worship by Hindus, or indeed, the government's involvement in such worship.

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