



नेपाल ख्रीष्टियन समाज

Nepal Christian Society

(A Common platform of Christian in Nepal)

दर्ता नं. १४७/०६४/६५
आवद्धता नं. ३०२८४
लेखा नं. ३०४३७२१३९

Translation of the **Press Release** Made of NCS on the occasion of **International Religious Freedom Day**.

October 27, 2017

Nepal has been able to present itself as a Democratic Republic before the whole world making a republican constitution after a long period of dreadful internal conflicts, struggles and wars. It is a matter of esteem that after a long period of bloody struggle, internal wars, and revolutionary protests people could write a constitution of their own choice through their own elected representatives, implement and establish a system of governance of their own preference. Local governance units also have been activated after local level elections as per the provisions of the new constitution. This has facilitated the nation to move towards the federal structure releasing it from a state of indecision and lack of direction though it has not been able to address the needs and demands of all the diverse groups and levels of people in all the regions. Local representatives of the people at the local governance units have been successfully elected as per the provisions of the constitution. Also the notification for the elections of the state assemblies and the national parliament has been made and the election process is already in progress. So the implementation of the new constitution is in due progress. The strengthening of the local governance bodies and distribution of basic facilities for the people through them is one of the best features of the 2073 Constitution.

The constitution Nepal got in 2072 is in the process of full implementation after a long period of political turmoil and confusion. Nepalese have taken it as a historic success to have a constitution made by their own elected representatives. With these positive developments some issues have been surfaced which have not been addressed or even when addressed, not according to the aspirations of the people. Among the unhappy voice of the common man, some of the concerns of the minority religious groups are very important. The present constitution and the laws haven't been able to see the various minority groups including the Christian community as equals with others. The 21st general assembly of the Nepal Christian Society held on this Kartik 5-7 in Kathmandu has taken note of the discriminating clauses in the constitution and the laws targeting religious minorities, especially Christians and has decided to demand amendment of certain constitutional clauses and parts of the newly made penal code. The 300 delegates (leaders of the Christian community) from all the 7 newly carved out states of Nepal had deliberation for three days and have prepared a memorandum to be delivered the concerned authorities. They have also decided to make intense advocacy and efforts to bring this to the attention of the National and International communities. We have made our demands public through a press release on today as we celebrate the **International Religious Freedom Day**.



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1. Amendment of the constitution:

- Remove the clause 26-3 of the constitution which states that no one can be converted.
- In the clause 26-1 of the constitution, it has to be made specific that any one will have the right to choose, change, influence, practice, propagate, teach, train or leave a faith or religion on his own will.
- Remove the explanation for secularism added in the clause 4 of the constitution.

2. Amendment of the penal code:

- Remove the clause 156 of the Penal Code 2074, as it will promote religious disharmony and conflict between religious groups who have been coexisting and living in harmony in the community so far.
 - Remove the clauses 157 and 158 of the Penal code 2074, as they go against the spirit of religious freedom and the clauses of the international treaties and agreements signed by Nepal as a nation.
- Make laws and bylaws for all the religious entities to register with the concerned authorities of the nation as well as to protect and regulate their properties and rightful activities.
 - Make rules and regulations to make the religious organizations already registered under the NGO Registration Act 2034 (sanstha darta ain, 2034), to function as religious bodies without restrictions, freely and fully according to their registered constitutional framework.
 - Make provision for local governments at ward level to facilitate and provide funeral/burial places for all the religious groups according to their own practices.
 - Provide public holidays for the major festivals of all religious minorities, for Christians at least on Christmas and Easter, as all the major religious groups in Nepal already enjoy public holidays for their festivals.

We like to draw the attention of the Nepal Government, all Political Parties, the Executive, the Judiciary, the Parliament, the National Human Rights Commission, the Civil Society and the International Community towards the issues raised and stated above.

Krishna Bahadur Shrestha (Barnabas)
Chairman

Dilliram Paudel
General Secretary