

Nepal: Stop using bureaucracy to silence Himal Southasian

(Bangkok/Kathmandu, 30 August 2016): The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is saddened to learn that [Himal Southasian](#), a regional journal promoting 'cross-border journalism' in South Asia, is suspending its publication from November 2016. According to the publishers, the decision was taken 'due to non-cooperation by regulatory state agencies in Nepal that has made it impossible to continue operations after 29 years of publication'.¹

Himal started publication in 1987 as a Himalayan journal and later converted into a South Asian magazine in 1996.

The publishers have informed through a [public notice](#), how the bureaucracy has harassed and paralysed the functioning of the journal through: unreasonable delays in approving grants for the journal; denial to renew or approve work permits for non-Nepali editorial staff; and holding of the processing of payments to contributors. These difficulties are faced despite strict adherence to the 'regimen of rules and regulations' for the administration and publication of the journal. Earlier this year the Commission for Investigation of Abuse and Authority (CIAA) arranged for the arrest of the founding editor of *Himal*, Kanak Mani Dixit on charges of corruption. He was arbitrarily detained. He was later released, after a Supreme Court order stating that Dixit's arrest was 'illegal'.

FORUM-ASIA condemns the tactics used by the Government of Nepal to force *Himal Southasian* to close its operation. This flies in the face of Nepal's international human rights obligations and duties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. These obligations include creating an environment conducive for the right to association, expression and freedom of the press, including soliciting, receiving and utilising resources for these purposes, as provided for under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Nepal is a State Party. By creating barriers in accessing resources and administrative difficulties in clearing work-permits of the editorial staff of *Himal Southasian*, the Government of Nepal has violated its obligations under the ICCPR.

The Government of Nepal should immediately take all measures necessary to enable *Himal Southasian* to continue its functioning, and stop the clampdown on media professionals.

¹ <http://himalmag.com/himal-southasian-to-suspend-publication/>

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About FORUM-ASIA:

FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 58 member organisations in 19 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA has offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratization.

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