

Nepal: Stop Forceful Mass Evictions of Landless Squatters

(Bangkok/Kathmandu – 13 December 2022) - The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) expresses deep concern over the violent confrontation between the protestors and over 200 security forces during the recent landless squatter protests in Nepal on the banks of the Bagmati River at Thapathali. The landless squatters have been protesting against being forcefully evicted by the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC).

As many as [34,096 families](#) have been residing on the banks of the Bagmati river for several years, according to government data. Around [300 landless squatters living in 136 houses](#) were notified by the Bagmati River Basin Development Project to vacate the area by November 20, giving them barely ten days to move to with no alternative housing. The KMC has been supporting the drive to remove the landless squatters living alongside the river as part of the Bagmati Clean-Up Campaign.

'We are gravely alarmed by the use of violence during the protests and urge all parties to ensure the demonstrations are conducted peacefully. We also urge the government to drop all criminal charges filed by the KMC against the protestors and we stand in solidarity with the landless squatters and reiterate their demand for proper rehabilitation before their homes are demolished', said FORUM-ASIA

Although the squatters living on the banks of the Bagmati River organised a peaceful protest against the eviction notice on November 18, on November 28, a team of 200 police officers accompanied by a dozer proceeded to move against the settlement for a demolition drive which would have left as many as [136 houses](#) in the settlement destroyed. However, [this is not the first time KMC](#) and the committee have made such a move; in 2017, KMC demolished half a dozen squatter homes to make way for a public park. In 2012, the government mobilised more than 2000 security personnel to pull down [260 huts](#) in Thapathali; however, this plan was subsequently abandoned. For residents of the Thapathali settlement, fear of forceful eviction is a recurring nightmare.

FORUM-ASIA reminds the KMC that squatting is often the last resort for the landless and poor which warrants uprooting systemic poverty and inequities in the country. Most of the dwellers are illiterate and have no access to notices of eviction and only get to know about the impending eviction through the grapevine. The recurrent demolition attempts by KMC have left the dwellers, who are already afflicted with extreme poverty, in deep shock and trauma. Meaningful dialogue is required to resolve the squatter problem as then only can it be sustainable and inclusive.

FORUM-ASIA calls on the KMC and all relevant government entities to:

- Initiate, proceed, and implement all development projects in accordance with Nepal's obligations under international law, in particular, the core international human rights treaties and relevant ILO Conventions which Nepal has ratified;
- Immediately pay attention to the demands for relocation of the squatters and provide them with an alternative before rushing to demolish their settlements. The rehabilitation must be done in areas with proper infrastructure and facilities, such as access to schools, hospitals and employment.
- Cease all intimidation tactics and violence against the landless families who live under constant threat of eviction. Evictions should only take place when all the members of the community, especially women, youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities have been informed about the process and given adequate time for negotiations, compensation and rehabilitation.

About FORUM-ASIA:

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is a network of 85 member organisations across 23 countries, mainly in Asia. Founded in 1991, FORUM-ASIA works to strengthen movements for human rights and sustainable development through research, advocacy, capacity development and solidarity actions in Asia and beyond. It has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. The FORUM-ASIA Secretariat is based in Bangkok, with offices in Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. www.forum-asia.org

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