Press release
14 May, 2021

Ensure Citizens' right to life along with right to health

National Human Rights Commission concerns seriously towards the present situation created by the second wave of COVID-19 where citizens are deprived of their fundamental right to life and availability of essential medical treatment. The Commission receives the information from various media that dozens of persons had succumbed to the deadly infection due to alleged shortage of lifesaving oxygen and beds at several hospitals.

The monitoring shows that 9 coronavirus patients at Rupandehi, 6 at Nepalgunj and 18 persons at Bir hospital and Trauma center in Kathmandu had lost their lives and on Wednesday only due to lack of life saving oxygen. Many private hospitals in Kathmandu valley including Medicare, Medicity, Om, Helping Hands, Dirghau, Karuna, Bayodha, Madhyapur Thimi, Star and Universal hospital located at Rupandehi have refused to admit new patients of COVID - 19 citing acute shortage of oxygen. Citizens are dying because of lack of oxygen more than a year after the pandemic owing to inaction of the government in increasing the supply of essential logistics. Due to lack of supply of essential vaccination, the 2nd dose of COVID vaccination campaign is also stopped. Similarly, there is shortage of ICU beds, ventilators and essential medicines such as remdisivir for patients and the hospitals charge exorbitant fees on available medicines and medical commodities as the Commission's monitoring shows. The news has been published that the prohibitory order that has deprived poor people and daily wagers of their livelihoods. The team led by Hon. Lily Thapa, Member of the Commission has drawn the attention of the Deputy Prime Minister of the government of Nepal and Coordinator of the Covid-19 Crisis Management Centre CCMC Ishwor Pokharel.

The right to health is enshrined in the Article 16 and 35 of the Constitution of Nepal, Section 2 (1), 3 (1) and 4 of the Public Health Service Act- 2018, Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 12 of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 in which Nepal is a state party has also assured to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

Thus, the Commission draws attention of the government of Nepal to arrange health treatment of the patients suffering form COVID – 19 and other acute diseases in this critical situation, arrange life saving oxygen and bed in the hospitals, make effective efforts to production and supply of the life saving oxygen essential for patients, arrange 2nd dose of COVID vaccine, arrange ventilator, ICU, including medical arrangements, arrange the easy supply of food stuffs and essential services. Similarly, the Commission requests to the government of Nepal to arrange necessary conditions to achieve high moral for the frontliner health workers and security personnel including others, announce a comprehensive relief package for the poor people and daily wagers for their livelihoods.

…………………………

Dr. Tika Ram Pokharel
Joint Secretary
Spokesperson