

Bhattarai assures Maoists will not take up arms again



Babu Ram Bhattarai

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Amid speculations in the political fraternity that the Unified CPN (Maoist) is preparing for a people's revolt to capture the state, a senior Maoist leader has clarified his party is committed to peace and not planning for any revolt.

Maoist vice-chairman Dr. Baburam Bhattarai called editors of some major media outlets at a hotel in Kamaladi, Kathmandu, Wednesday afternoon, and answered the latter's questions on some burning issues related to the party.

Taking up arms again will only invite foreign intervention in Nepal and that will make this country another Afghanistan, said Bhattarai, adding that the Maoists are very aware of regional geopolitics and will not let Nepal take the Afghan road.

Bhattarai also said, leading the government was not his party's priority.

However, at another programme the same day, Maoist party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal said Maoists will be in power soon.

As the largest party in the parliament our demand to be allowed to lead the government is very much "legitimate", he explained.

Bhattarai further said the priority of this agitation was to make Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) agree on the fundamental issues of "civilian supremacy".

He also conceded it was a mistake not to include Nepali Congress in the Maoist-led government last year.

Had we included NC in the government then, the nation's politics would have moved with consensus and present crisis would have been averted, Bhattarai said.

Defending allegations that the Maoists had instigated ethnic and caste-based conflict, Bhattarai said his party's policy was wrongly explained and perceived by the public.

We have not said the federal units should be carved out based on ethnicity or caste, all we have said is the units should be named from the community dominant in a particular area, said Bhattarai, citing examples that the party had been calling for Magarat state, and not a Magar state or a Limbuwan state and not a Limbu state.

Bhattarai's initiative to clarify such issues at a posh hotel in Kathmandu comes a day after the dinner meeting at UML leader KP Oli's house in Balkot, Bhaktapur.

At the meeting, Bhattarai also explained that the take over of Dhankuta municipality by his party's cadres was not as per the party's central policy and that the party would probe the incident to identify the guilty and appropriate take action.

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