

Nepal Govt., Maoists At Loggerheads Over UNMIN Extension

3/9/2010 12:29 AM ET

(RTTNews) - The Nepalese government and the main opposition Unified CPN-Maoists are at loggerheads over the extension of tenure of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) in that nascent democratic country.

The UNMIN, which has been monitoring the peace process in the Himalayan country since January 2007, had its tenure extended from time to time and the latest extension expires May 23.

UCPN-Maoist leader Krishna Bahadur Mahara defended the UNMIN against government allegations that the U.N. body did not co-operate in the peace process. He said allegations leveled at the UNMIN were the reflections of the larger Indian interests. He added, Nepal's southern neighbor wanted a bigger role for itself in Kathmandu's politics by ending UNMIN presence.

Maoist Vice chairman Baburam Bhattarai also asserted that the UNMIN's term should be extended and it should remain till the successful conclusion of the peace process.

In sharp contrast to this Deputy Prime Minister Bijaya Gachhadar ruled out the possibility of extending the term beyond May 15. He said that UNMIN's tenure should not be extended as its role was contrary to the incumbent government and favored UCPN-Maoists.

Accusing the UNMIN of always working in a base manner, he said: "The government doubts UNMIN's activities and its role could not be visible till now and therefore it has decided not to extend UNMIN's tenure after May 15."

Terming the Maoist cantonments as recruitment centers run by UNMIN, he said, "The UNMIN opened 28 recruitment centers. UCPN-M recruited children luring them with different things and UNMIN verified them."

He also claimed that the Maoist combatants in the cantonments are not qualified, but they will be integrated according to the number of weapons they handed over to the UNMIN, he said.

by RTT Staff Writer

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