

## **June 16<sup>th</sup>: Sit-In Protest in Banke in support of people of Ailani and Guthi lands in Nepal**

The land deprived people of Banke today demonstrated a Sit-In Protest in front of the Land Revenue Office. These people who strongly believe in a peaceful protest of the poor and marginalized work day and night in the form of Kamaiya, Kamlari, Haliya, Haruwa/ Charuwa, Farmers, Squatters and so on. However, despite this they still do not have access to land, resulting in a lack of basic necessities like food, shelter, education, health facilities etc. and they have been forced to live below the poverty line.

The entire nation is celebrating with joy and happiness the fact that Nepal has been declared a federal democratic republican state. However, these land deprived people cannot even join in this historical celebration that is a mark of a truly peaceful era, because they still have to worry about feeding their family every day. To make their problems and voices heard, they have submitted a memorandum stating their basic demands, to District Land Reform Office, District Land Revenue Office and District Administration Office on the 27th of May 2008 which was as follows:

- Put an immediate stop to the act of evacuating the land deprived and squatters who are living in the Ailani and Guthi lands without making proper arrangements for their shelter first.
- Implement decisions in favour of the land deprived who have filed for applications in the District Administration Office seeking their rights.
- Make provisions for the land deprived to be able to live in the Ailani land and the cultivation be used only by ploughers themselves.
- Put an immediate stop to the injustice done by landowners who are ejecting unregistered tenants from their land.
- The government should put a stop to the process of transferring land in the name of others until a revolutionary land reform process is put into action.

In this context, 100-150 land deprived people today; the 16th of June, staged a sit-in protest in front of the District Land Revenue Office to make their demands and voices heard. In order to show solidarity to the protest of the land deprived, representatives of various political parties also gave speeches and joined the protest program. Among these representatives were, District Member Mr. Raun Harsa Dhital of CPN (M), Mr. Ganesh Khanal of Janamorcha Nepal, Diwakar Sharma of CPN (UML). The land rights deprived victims have also publicly declared that they will padlock the District Revenue Office if their demands and rights are not met. Local FM station and various media personnel were also present in the protest. Human Rights activist also attended the protest to investigate the issues being addressed.

The land deprived people hope that civil societies, human right activists, media, political parties, intellectuals, students, communities and everybody in general will show their solidarity to their peaceful and lawful protest.