

President's Interest and Concern for Constitution-drafting

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Published date: 4 May 2011

<http://asd.org.np/en/transition/constitution/analytical/133-president-interest>

There are clear indications in the Nepali political circles that the transition will be a protracted one. There is a competition among political players to move ahead by restricting others. Interparty and intra-party disputes are at an extreme. The people are losing their trust on the leaders as they get involved in mutual distrust, suspicion, and display conflicting characters. There is lack of mutually acceptable leadership who can end the transition. The leaders have to take the responsibility for this delicate phase in peace and constitution-drafting process. It is no surprise that people have expectation from the prime minister Jhala Nath Khanal and other leaders. There is a need for dialogue between leaders to bring the peace and constitution-drafting process on the right 'track'.

Besides the leaders, President Ram Baran Yadav also has an important role in ending this transition. Whatever his political background, he is everyone's president. The Interim Constitution 2007 has made him the protector of the Constitution. The first sitting of the Constituent Assembly on May 28, 2008 amended the article 36 of the Interim Constitution by adding sub-article 3 which states that 'To protect and follow the constitution will be the main responsibility of the president'. However, whenever the President holds consultations to seek a consensus on peace and constitution, Prime Minister Khanal and UCPN (M) chairperson Dahal become suspicious. On the one hand, the leaders decry that the President has become active and is going for 'coup', on the other hand, they expect his support. It is the executive's responsibility to facilitate the peace and constitution-drafting process, the President has no role and should have no role.

Yadav, Khanal and Dahal should give momentum to completing the peace process and finishing the constitution-drafting by taking the opposition parties and Madhesi parties into confidence, which will get back the lost domestic and international trust. For this, the three leaders (President Dr Ram Baran Yadav, prime minister Jhala Nath Khanal, and UCPN (M) chairperson Prachanda) should hold regular discussions and consultations.

In his last meeting on May 2, 2011 with UCPN (M) chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Congress president Sushil Koirala, and prime minister and UML chairperson Jhala Nath Khanal, the President expressed his concern on the peace and constitution-drafting process. He called the three leaders jointly to Shital Niwas and not only expressed his concern at the present uncertainty and discord but also asked them to seek a solution as soon as possible and provide succour to the people. Last April also, the president had called the leaders of all the political parties to the president's residence to ask about the peace and constitution-drafting process, then suspicion has been raised about the activities of the president.