



**Press Statement**

**17 August 2020**

**Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Doramba Victims Still Await Justice- 17 Years of Impunity**

Today marks the 17<sup>th</sup> year since the merciless killing of 21 people in Doramba, Ramechhap district by the then Royal Nepal Army (RNA). Advocacy Forum-Nepal (AF) strongly condemns the Government's failure to bring even a single perpetrator of this heinous crime near to prosecution, demonstrating the stark reality of the prevailing impunity.

On 17 August 2003, Maoists were attending a meeting inside a civilian house in Doramba, when the security forces of the RNA (now Nepal Army) arrived at the scene and opened fire. All 21 people had their hands tied behind the backs, were divided into groups of five to seven and were forced to march to the top of the hill in the Village Development Committee, Daduwa, Dandakatari where they were lined up and shot dead, one by one.

An investigation report conducted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) concluded that the victims were summarily executed, which created national and international pressure over the RNA to publicize the truth of the incident.<sup>1</sup> Later, on 12 March 2004, the RNA issued a statement admitting that a few of those killed in Doramba were killed unlawfully, but maintaining that a larger number were killed lawfully. Any act of killing of prisoners not only constitutes a heinous crime, but is contrary to International Humanitarian Law, especially Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which embodies the principle of protection to prisoners who are arrested and taken under control during a time of armed conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Even after 17 years, the killings at Doramba remain among the most notorious examples of the egregious crimes committed during the armed conflict. Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal had publicly pointed to the Doramba massacre as the incident that provoked the withdrawal of the Maoists from the ceasefire.<sup>3</sup> However, the failure of the ruling Government, which he is a part of, to punish even a single perpetrator till date for this crime demonstrates a wider, deep seated unwillingness to investigate and prosecute this and many other, similar cases.

Dahal visited Doramba in 2018 to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre, and assured villagers that Doramba would be developed as a site for 'war tourism' and that a war museum would be built

<sup>1</sup> 'On-the-spot Inspection and Report of the Investigation Committee', NHRC, Doramba Incident, Ramechhap. 2060 (2003). [https://nepalconflictreport.ohchr.org/files/docs/2003-00-00\\_report\\_nhrc\\_eng\\_b.pdf](https://nepalconflictreport.ohchr.org/files/docs/2003-00-00_report_nhrc_eng_b.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NP/OHCHR\\_Nepal\\_Conflict\\_Report2012.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NP/OHCHR_Nepal_Conflict_Report2012.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Maoist Information Bulletin # 4, Revolutionary Worker # 1212, September 14, 2003, Kathmandu Post, September 9, 2002



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honoring the people who lost their lives on 17 August 2003.<sup>4</sup> Following his visit, statues of those killed were built, citing their names and contributions to the Maoist party.

AF recognizes that the right to reparation for the victims includes commemorations and paying tributes by, as in this case, building memorials. However, AF stresses that judicial sanctions against the perpetrators of gross human rights violations are equally fundamental to adequate and effective reparations for the victims. It has been 17 years since this massacre, 14 years since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It is a high time to ensure truth, justice and reparations, not only the victims of Doramba, but also the victims of armed conflict in Nepal.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://kathmandupost.com/travel/2019/08/10/out-and-about-in-doramba>