



**Human Rights Council**  
**Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Nepal**  
**51<sup>st</sup> Session (Jan-Feb 2026)**

**Joint Stakeholders' Submission on:**

**Human Rights in Nepal**

**Submitted by:**

**OLCGS: Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd**

**IIMA - Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco**

**VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education  
and Development**

**(NGO in Consultative Status with ECOSOC)**

**Opportunity Village Nepal**

**Good Shepherd International Foundation Nepal**

**Geneva, July 2025**

## **I. Introduction:**

1. This stakeholders' report is submitted by the group of organisations mentioned above. The report highlights key concerns related to Human Rights in Nepal.
2. The data and information for this written submission were obtained from various sources, mainly girls and young women working in the adult entertainment sector, as well as survivors of Gender-Based Violence staying in the residential care services of Opportunity Village Nepal. In addition to this, information was gathered from the girls who are staying in long-term residential care services and the participants of vocational training services. The information included in the report covers the period from 2020 – mid of 2025.
3. **Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd:** As an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, since 1996, the Congregation has official representation at the United Nations Offices in New York and Geneva.
4. **Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) Nepal:** The **Good Shepherd International Foundation Nepal** is a not-for-profit, non-political, non-sectarian, humanitarian organization desirous of furthering development activities in Nepal. It was established as a branch of the GSIF, Rome and registered as an INGO in Nepal in 2018.
5. **Opportunity Village Nepal (OVN):** Opportunity Village Nepal (OVN) is a non-governmental and non-Profit organisation, established in 1998 and registered in the Kathmandu District Administration Office. Founded and managed by the Good Shepherd Sisters, Opportunity Village Nepal is dedicated to empowering children, youth, and women at risk of trafficking, exploitation, and poverty to lead their lives independently with dignity and respect. The partnership of GSIF Nepal and OVN has been implementing projects on anti-human trafficking, safe migration, strengthening child protection mechanisms and emergency response in vulnerable communities of Nepal since 2019.
6. **Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA)** is an international NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. IIMA is present in 97 countries where it provides education to children, adolescents, youth and women, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.
7. **VIDES International**, established in 1987, is an international NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council operating in 49 countries. It promotes youth volunteer service at the local and international levels to ensure the implementation of human rights to vulnerable groups, especially children and women.

## **II. General Remarks:**

8. This submission incorporates the recommendations addressed to Nepal following the third UPR cycle in 2021 in relation to the mental health and online safety of children, particularly

girls, and young women. In addition, this submission emphasizes the recommendations related to human trafficking, safe migration and strengthening protection mechanisms for children.

### III. Methodology:

9. The preparation of this report included the following

- Capacity enhancement of the team of GSIF Nepal in the UPR process by VIDES International and IIMA
- Three consultations with girls and young women; 2 in Pokhara and one in Kathmandu
- The grassroot experiences harnessed from the projects focused on anti-human trafficking; cross-border anti-human trafficking in Rupandehi district, prevention of sexual exploitation & trafficking in the adult entertainment sector in Kathmandu and Pokhara; prevention of unsafe migration in Kathmandu, strengthening of protection mechanisms of children; and cross-border collaboration on rescue and repatriation of trafficking survivors from India to Nepal.

### IV. Online Safety of Children:

10. The exposure of children to the internet has obviously increased following the lockdown during COVID-19. Research has identified that girls became more vulnerable to online abuse such as sexual harassment and grooming<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, another study on online child sexual exploitation in Nepal has found that 27% of respondents did not know about cyberbullying. 10% were already encountering cyberbullying<sup>2</sup>.

11. We welcome the acceptance by the state of recommendation 159.181<sup>3</sup>. We appreciate the state's efforts in responding to cases of online abuse and exploitation of both children and adults, through a dedicated institution/department of police i.e. Cyber-Bureau. Considering the severity of the impact of the abuse and exploitation in online upon the children, we **recommend the Government of Nepal to;**

- 1. Extend the presence of the cyber-bureau to all seven provinces to enhance the accessibility of legal services, thus encouraging survivors to go through the legal process.*
- 2. Step up ongoing efforts in collaboration with civil society organisations, schools, and communities to raise awareness about online safety.*
- 3. Scale up effective mechanisms to provide immediate psychosocial support and protection to the survivors (within 24 hours of reporting).*
- 4. Engage the Association of Internet Service Providers to contribute a percentage of their profits towards raising awareness on online safety and minimizing the digital divide.*
- 5. Endorsement of the Standard Operating Procedure for the effective handling of cases of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.*
- 6. Ratify the 2024 United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, in accordance with the concluding observations of CEDAW on Nepal's seventh periodic report.*

### V. Mental Health of Children:

12. Reports have identified that 4 percent of adolescents have had suicidal thoughts and 0.7 percent of the same group have attempted suicide. The report of the National Mental Health

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<sup>1</sup> <https://howarethegirls.gsif.it/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cwin.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/a-study-on-online-child-report-layout-final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Step up efforts to provide equal access to online education for girls, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown (Islamic Republic of Iran); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/47/10/Add.1 - Para.6

Survey in 2020 estimated that 7.2% of the population had a prevalence of suicidality<sup>4</sup>. The research has identified that the lockdown during COVID-19 has caused emotional distress on girls and adolescents<sup>5</sup>.

13. We welcome and appreciate the efforts of the state in scaling up services for children and adolescents with mental health issues through the Child and Mental Health Outpatient Department in Kanti Children Hospital.

**Recommendations:**

1. ***Scale up school and community-based initiatives like school mental health program to sensitize children and adolescents on mental health and access to counseling services.***
2. ***Ensure responsive and accessible support mechanisms to children, adolescents, and adults in need.***
3. ***According to the Article 62 of act relating to children 2018, Create a roster/enlistment of psychosocial counsellors in every local government following the provision in the Act relating to Children 2018.***

**VI. Formation and Strengthening of Institutions for Children's Holistic Development:**

14. The formation and functioning of institutions responsible for the overall development of children are crucial for the protection and promotion of children's rights. The Act Relating to Children, 2018 has provisioned the formation of child rights committees, the appointment/recruitment of child welfare officers, the creation of a child fund, and the registration of social service providers and child psychologists in all of the 753 local governments. However, the latest report by the National Child Rights Council<sup>6</sup> has cited that out of **753 local governments**;

- Less than half, **372** local governments have formed child rights committees
- Only 378 have appointed child welfare officers, and 12 have recruited child welfare officers
- Only 27 local governments have social service providers and child psychologists enlisted.
- Only 286 local governments have created a child fund.

15. We welcome the efforts and financial support of the state to the initiatives toward declaration of a child labour free state.

**Recommendations:**

1. ***Ensure the formation of Child Rights Committees in all 753 local government areas.***
2. ***As per the Article 61 of act relating to children 2018, Scale up efforts toward the appointment/recruitment of child welfare officers, enlistment of social service providers and child psychologists (Art.62), and the creation of a child fund in all of the 753 local government areas (Art 63).***
3. ***Enhance the capacity of child welfare officers and child rights committees through various capacity building training to plan and deliver services effectively related to the protection, participation, and development needs of children in a timely manner.***

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<sup>4</sup><https://kathmandupost.com/health/2024/08/08/children-and-adolescents-to-be-screened-for-mental-health-conditions>

<sup>5</sup> <https://howarethegirls.gsif.it/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ncrc.gov.np/content/21/children-s-national-report/>

## VII. Human Trafficking:

16. The study reports have identified the Adult Entertainment Sectors (AES)<sup>7</sup> as fertile ground for traffickers<sup>8</sup>. Informal and illegal recruitment of minors in this sector is the severe violation of human rights. The worst situation in this sector is depicted by the study reports which highlighted the findings on a significant percentage of children, particularly girls, employed in these settings. Similarly, a study in 2019 revealed that 17% of the workers in AES are children (mainly girls), and more than 60% of them started working in these sectors below the age of 18 years<sup>9</sup>. These figures & situations resonate with the reporting of the context in Trafficking in Person (TIP) report of 2024 by the US Department of State<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, 7% of the total recommendations in the matrix of recommendations during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review were related to human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery<sup>11</sup>. These findings and concerns highlight the gravity of the issue and the urgency to action in assuring the rights of girls and women.
17. Research on practices and approaches to reintegration of trafficking survivors identified many barriers to the reintegration of survivors: the lack of adequate legal / paralegal support, poor documentation, risks of abuse from offenders, the unwillingness of the family to accept the survivors due to many reasons, misconceptions about trafficking survivors, lack of knowledge about trafficking and their rights among survivors, and lack of proper financial support to continue a new life<sup>12</sup>.
18. We welcome the state's acceptance of recommendations 159.93<sup>13</sup>, 159.96<sup>14</sup> 159.98<sup>15</sup>, and 159.101<sup>16</sup>. However, not all the recommendations have been implemented, and therefore, we request prompt action from the government.

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<sup>7</sup> Adult entertainment sectors refer to dance bars, massage parlours, small hotels, cabin restaurants, dohori sanjh, and similar settings.

<sup>8</sup> <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/entertainment-sector-fertile-ground-traffickers>

<sup>9</sup> Dank, M., Vincent, K., Hughes, A., Dhungel, N., Gurung, S., & Jackson, O (2019). Prevalence of minors in Kathmandu's adult entertainment sector. John Ray College of Criminal Justice Research, New Era and The Freedom Fund

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/nepal/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/np-index>

<sup>12</sup> <https://ovnnepal.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Reintegration-of-trafficking-survivors-Research-1.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Continue to strengthen efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, slavery, sexual exploitation and forced labour, and ensure effective implementation of standard operating procedures to address early identification of trafficking victims and provide adequate resources to rehabilitation centres for trafficking victims (Fiji); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/47/10/Add.1 - Para.6

<sup>14</sup> Increase efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, slavery, sexual exploitation and forced labour, including child labour (Malaysia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/47/10/Add.1 - Para.6

<sup>15</sup> Revise the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act to bring the definition of human trafficking into line with international law and to include all aspects of human trafficking (Armenia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/47/10/Add.1 - Para.6

<sup>16</sup> Continue efforts aimed at implementing the law on combating trafficking in human beings, notably the national action plan to combat human trafficking (Saudi Arabia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/47/10/Add.1 - Para.6

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Expedite the process of endorsement and Implementation of the draft National policy on trafficking and the national plan of Action on Anti-Human Trafficking.
  2. Increase monitoring of the Adult Entertainment Sector to identify and assess the working conditions. Ensure safe and dignified working conditions for the young women in the adult entertainment sector.
  3. Increase investigation and prosecution against the company involved in recruiting minors in the adult entertainment sector along with increasing awareness and sensitization program among recruiters.
  4. The Supreme Court of Nepal issued directives in 2065 B.S (2008 A.D) to regulate Adult Entertainment Sectors. However, since Nepal's transition to a federal governance system, no updated legal framework has been introduced to ensure the protection of workers working in the adult entertainment sector. We recommend the Government of Nepal develop and endorse a comprehensive & focused law addressing the issues in AES.
  5. Expedite the process of the amendment of the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, aligning with the Palermo Protocol.
  6. Develop and endorse a Standard Operating Procedure for early identification of victims of trafficking the rescue, repatriation, reintegration and referral of trafficked persons and those at risk of trafficking.
  7. Increase investment in awareness, protection services, and support mechanisms for the survivors of trafficking.
19. In the context where Nepal shares an open border of 1,751 kilometres with India, the engagement of communities is crucial. Research on the effectiveness of community-based surveillance mechanisms in the project sites of a cross-border anti-human trafficking project implemented by GSIF Nepal and OVN, has identified that such mechanisms have been effective in raising awareness, identifying and signalling suspected cases of trafficking to the authorities in the areas where there is an absence of government mandated committees<sup>17</sup>.

#### **Recommendation:**

1. **Step up efforts to implement community-based surveillance mechanisms in the border (open) areas. Ensure that all municipalities and wards have formed Local Committees to Combat Human Trafficking (LCCHT) and these committees are functional.**

#### **VIII. Safe Migration:**

20. Nepal Migration Report (2022) published by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security specified that more than 1.1 million labour approvals were issued within 2019/20 and 2021/22<sup>18</sup>. The contribution of the remittances sent by these migrant workers was 23.8 percent of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product. This percentage is the tenth highest globally for 2021. However, this contribution has come with some costs which are, but not limited to, death, accidents leading to injuries and disabilities, trafficking, exploitation, and indebtedness. Various reports and cases have signalled that the provision by the Government of Nepal in restricting women migrant workers from going for domestic work has diverted them into following illegal routes of migration for the same purpose.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://ovnnepal.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Research-on-CBSVMs.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://moless.gov.np/content/11280/11280-nepal-labour-migration-report/>

21. We welcome the state's acceptance of recommendation 159.103<sup>19</sup> on harmonizing the Foreign Employment Act and The Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act to ensure consistency with the Palermo Protocol. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the government toward this process however the end results have not been met. Further, we welcome the initial efforts of the state to lift the ban on female migrant workers working as domestic workers, through a pilot project with UAE.

**Recommendations:**

- 1. Amend the Foreign Employment Act aligning with the Palermo Protocol and avoiding ambiguities around the nexus between human trafficking and migration.**
- 2. Lift restrictions on female migrant workers seeking domestic work in Gulf countries to discourage irregular migration, and engage with destination countries to establish bilateral agreements based on a rights-based approach.**
- 3. Ratify the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and enact specific legislation to criminalize migrant smuggling, in line with the landmark verdict of the Supreme Court of Nepal, which highlighted the legal gap and the need to distinguish smuggling from trafficking.**

**IX. Conclusion:**

22. This report underscores the critical human rights challenges faced by vulnerable groups in Nepal, particularly girls and young women exposed to exploitation, trafficking, unsafe migration, and online abuse. While the government has made commendable progress in accepting and initiating steps to implement international recommendations, gaps remain in fully realizing protective mechanisms, legal frameworks, and support services. The protection, empowerment, and holistic development of children and youth require sustained commitment, enhanced institutional capacity, and meaningful engagement with communities and civil society organizations.
23. We urge the Government of Nepal to prioritize the swift enactment and enforcement of comprehensive policies and laws aligned with international standards, including the Palermo Protocol and the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime. Strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration, expanding access to justice, and scaling up psychosocial support and awareness programs are essential to safeguard the rights and dignity of those most at risk. Only through such concerted actions can Nepal move closer to fulfilling its human rights obligations and ensuring a safer, more equitable future for all its citizens.

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<sup>19</sup> Increase efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, slavery, sexual exploitation and forced labour, including child labour (Malaysia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/47/10/Add.1 - Para.6