

The Kathmandu Post (full text)

Government bans child adoption

KATHMANDU, MAY 26 - In order to curb child trafficking in the aftermath of the April 25

earthquake, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) has banned child

adoption. The ban implies to both international and local child adoption.

“Children are at high risk of becoming trafficking victims during disaster as they can be lured by traffickers with the prospect of comfortable life and better education. So we have banned child adoption for now,” said Radhika Aryal, joint secretary at the ministry.

According to Aryal, 59 children were rescued from traffickers in the last 30 days. Out of them, 19 children are from Dolakha, 45 from Dhading and 22 from Rukum. “These children are now in child welfare shelters and cases have been filed against the perpetrators,” said Aryal.

To put a stop to child trafficking, the MoWCSW, in coordination with the Home Ministry, has made it mandatory for children travelling without their parents to have permission letter from District Child Welfare Association, District Administration or the Village Development Committee.

Similarly, security forces at the border areas have also been instructed to remain vigilant. “Since the local administrations are focused on rescue and relief works, we need security forces to remain alert at this time,” said Kiran Rupakhetee, chief of the Children Welfare Department at the MoWCSW.

Besides, the MoWCSW has also planned to organise awareness programmes, in association with its development partners, in the quake-hit districts. It has also informed the chief district officers across the country not to issue permission to open new child welfare shelters. The Children Welfare Department’s preliminary data shows that 59 children have been orphaned by the quake. Of them, 21 are from Rasuwa, 16 from Sindhupalchok, 11 from Dhading, three each from Gorkha, Dolakha and Kaski and two from Kavre.

Rupakhetee said the government is drafting a guideline to rehabilitate the orphan children with their closest relatives. “We want to provide family atmosphere so we will try to settle these children with their nearest relatives if possible. If that is not possible, we will look for other shelter homes for these children,” said Rupakhetee. Rupakhetee also informed that the MoWCSW has opened 65 child-friendly spaces in 14 quake-hit districts.