Many countries in the world are plagued by armed conflicts.

Nepal is also engaged in armed conflict since the last ten years. The conflict that began from a village in a hilly district of mid-west has now engulfed the entire nation.
In a hilly village in mid-west Nepal there lived a family of four: Chameli, her brother Diley and their parents.

After Chameli and Diley leave for school, their parents talk to each other.

Daughter! Are you going to school?

Yes, dad! I am going with brother. Bye!!

As usual, Chameli and Diley have stood 1st and 2nd in their class. They are doing really well in their studies, aren't they?

Yes! Our kids are really diligent.

Chameli and Diley, so far you have done very well in your studies. Keep it up!!

O.K., Sir!
While the classes are in session, a group of people armed with guns and other weapons enter the classroom.

Sir, we are here to take the students of class 7 and above to attend our function. We also request you to attend this. Please help us in assembling all the students on the school ground.

Oh no!! We're in trouble. Nobody knows what's gonna happen!

The insurgents make the students assemble in a queue at the playground.

Boys and girls, you should watch our program at the nearby peepal tree.
Teachers, students and parents attend the insurgents’ function.

At around 4 pm when the function is about to conclude the security force suddenly open fire at the gathering from a helicopter.
Crossfire begins between the security force and the insurgents.

Three students and two civilians are killed in the crossfire.
Hey !!!
Let’s all run..

The security force surrounds the area after few minutes of the aerial attack. Once again crossfire takes place between the security force and the insurgents from their hiding.
Some students suspected for being insurgents are arrested and beaten up by the security force.

Ouch!

Damn you! Being a student, you go around giving speech like a leader?

No, I didn’t make any speech.

Security force escorts two injured civilians to the district headquarters for treatment
Diley and Chameli tumble off the ground while fleeing the crossfire.

Two security personnel approach Chameli and Diley as they gradually stand up.

We're just students. We know nothing. Please don't hurt us.

You're Maoists’ informants. I know how to deal with you!

Don't spare them!! Hit them!
A security man kicks a terrified civilian fleeing in the process of his arrest.

Security force interrogates arrested civilians and students on the school ground.
Two students are injured and taken to the hospital after the attack at peepal chautari. One loses his hand and the other his leg and become disabled forever.

Security force take the students and civilians, arrested on suspicion of being the insurgents, to their camp.
Detained students and villagers arrive at the camp.

A security personnel inflicts torture upon villagers and students in the camp.

Yes sir!... Hey you, tell me who all have given shelter to the rebels in your village?

I don’t know sir!

Soldier! Handle him properly.
After the crossfire at peepal chautari, human rights defenders arrive at the village for fact finding.

Security personnel inflict torture to the detainees by blindfolding, beating and making them carry stones.

- You've helped the Maoists and don't want to disclose their whereabouts! Means... you're an insurgent.
- Blindfolded, hands tied... where're they gonna take me? Am I gonna die?
- It's really heavy... This is gonna kill me.

How far is the location where the Maoists held their meeting last time?
Human rights defenders talk to the villagers.

How many were killed in the attack? Do you have any idea?

All together five-two students and three civilians

Fortunately, Chameli and Diley are released by the security force and they walk back home.

Thank God! Finally we're safe. It's painful where its bruised. Oouch...

Ya! My back is also hurting like anything. Ooouu...
After the news of crossfire spreads Chameli and Diley's parents are worried and rush to search for them. They're thrilled to see their children return home.

Thank God! Both of you have returned safely. We were really worried about you.

We nearly got killed. We fell down while running away. But I am in lot of pain. My back is hurting. Ooouch!!

The school is shut down due to the fear of renewed clash.

See! Our school is closed. No idea when it will open. It's really hampering our studies.
After the crossfire and mounting fear of recurring violence, some villagers leave for Terai.

We're forced to leave our ancestral village. We're migrating to Terai but we've no destination.

One of the displaced families is stranded in the jungle.

We left the village after sun set for fear of recurrence of the incident. It's already dark. Where do I find shelter in the jungle for my family for the night!?
Another displaced family arrives at a market place in Terai without a clue to their final destination.

Another displaced family arrives at a roadside carrying a sick child but due to transportation strike they are stranded.

Look, her child is very ill.

All vehicles are off the road due to nationwide strike. Wonder how she'll reach a doctor!
One of the displaced victims expresses her joy upon reaching Terai.

Upon arrival in Terai some of the displaced families from the hills set up plastic tents in an open field.
After the attack at the mass meeting, Krishne, a friend of Diley is lured by his uncle to go to Calcutta where he plans to sell him.

Krishne’s uncle takes Krishne and two other unidentified girls to the Indian border.
At the border, a policeman interrogates Krishna’s uncle and the two girls. The police stops the girls at the border, suspecting them of being traffick victims.

Krishne and his uncle about to board the train bound for Calcutta

Krishne and his uncle board the train.
Krishne’s uncle sells him for INRs. 30,000 in a bangle kiln.

What kind of work do I have to do sir?

Keep quiet for a moment! We’ll talk business upon your uncle’s return.

Krishne’s uncle hands him over to the factory owner.
The owner shows him the work place.

You'll work in this factory. Look there!
Those two boys working there are just like you!!

Go! Start working...
Krishne is not paid, even after working for 12 to 16 hours a day for two months. So, he decides to run away but gets caught by his master.

The security forces conduct search operation in Diley and Chameli’s village at night sometime after the attack. The security personnel talk to each other.

I bought you from your uncle for 30,000 rupees. Understand? You fool! If you try to run away again I'll break your bones.

Oh! My uncle has sold me!?!? How do I escape from here?

How long are we going to risk our lives in this battle? It’s already been three years since I was home.

That’s true! Till when do we have to shoot our own brothers and sisters!!

It would be great if there could be a dialogue between the Government and the Maoists.
During the search operation, the security force arrives at Chameli and Diley's village.

Security force knocks on Chameli and Diley's door.
Security force enters the house and searches for any hidden rebel documents.

Hey! Whose book is this?
This is my school book.

One of the security personnel attempts to sexually abuse Chameli but his colleague stops him.

Hey! What the hell are you doing? How can we indulge in such heinous acts!!?
After the incident, Chameli along with other members of her family can't sleep that night.

After a sleepless night, Chameli and Diley talk to each other in the morning.

You're right! I'm also thinking we must take revenge.

Sister! We must join the Maoists to avenge your dishonor.
A week after the search operation, Chameli and Diley come to know about the rebels’ congregation at the nearby jungle and they go over to meet them.

We'll definitely take revenge for your dishonor. For that, you have to join us. Alright! Both of you join us from today itself. We'll train you.

We're ready.

Chameli and Diley participate in the rebel training.

You're new here. It might be hard in the beginning! Doesn't matter, we're well prepared.
Chameli and Diley find it tough in the beginning. Despite this, they continue.

Comrades, we need to crawl on our elbows while fighting and advancing.

Oh! It’s really difficult.

Chameli and Diley face a lot of hardship while undergoing training with grown up boys and girls.
While undergoing training Chameli and Diley miss their home, parents and school.

In the course of the training, a pressure cooker bomb suddenly blasts off their friend Bajra's arm badly damaging it from below the elbow.
Bajra, who is as old as Chameli, becomes disabled forever after losing his arm. The insurgents discuss ways to find out the activities of the security force.

One day, one of the rebel informants discovers the news of security force advancing towards the village.
Panic grips the rebel group with the news of the arrival of the security force.

That night, expecting the arrival of the security force, the commander of the insurgent group orders the mining of the road near the primary school.
The security force takes a detour. The next day, three primary school kids fall prey while playing football. Chameli is shocked to witness this gory incident.

Chameli describes the horrible scene to Diley the very evening.

After this incident, Chameli questions herself. Did I do right by joining the group? Brother! I still feel shivers down my spine whenever I think about the maimed bodies of those innocent children.

Yes, sister! It's really a tragic incident. I'm also shocked to hear about this.
Chameli and Diley are about to complete their training course. They stand in a line with others.

The commander orders Chameli's and Diley's platoons to go to the eastern and the western Terai regions respectively.

Dear comrades, our training ends here. It's now time to move forward and fight the enemies.

Chameli and Diley plea the commander to permit them to be in the same platoon.

Will you allow me and my brother to be in the same platoon?

Can I go together with my sister to the battlefront?

No…
They're compelled to part as per the orders of the commander.

Chameli leaves for eastern Terai and Diley for west. They deeply miss their parents and home at the time of departure.
A month after Chameli’s arrival, the commander makes plans to attack a police station remotely located from the district headquarters.

The insurgents hijack a private van for the attack.
The insurgents prepare for attack in a jungle nearby the police station.

A rebel observes the police station through binoculars.

Just wait a while! We're yet to get the information if everything is O.K.

It's the right time for assault!!

The Commander alerts all the soldiers to be ready for the attack.

Comrades! Now we're going to attack. Everyone get ready!!

Yes sir! We are ready!
After nearly two hours of fighting the insurgents move towards the jungle carrying their injured and dead comrades.

The commander orders the attack and the assault begins.

Comrades, attack!

Beware !!! The rebels are attacking from all sides.

There you go!!

Oouchhh!
The rebels abduct a police officer. They discuss the punishment to be awarded to the officer.

Chameli proposes that the police officer be taken to the labor camp.

No, not like that. We should punish him according to our set procedures. Let’s slash his throat.

Let’s not kill him. Instead, let’s put him to labor camp where we can make him work.
In the course of discussion, majority of the insurgents agree to slain him.

The cold-blooded murder creates hatred in Chameli's mind to disassociate with the insurgents.

Is it possible to avenge my dishonor with such acts of murder and violence?
The insurgents escort the two other security personnel kidnapped during the raid at the police station to a safer place, for a meeting with human rights defenders and journalists.

You must release the captives on humanitarian ground.

We'll only release them after the Peoples Government's verdict.

The insurgents release the abducted personnel in the custody of human rights defenders and journalists.
Chameli goes to sleep with serious thoughts of escaping the rebels.

Next morning Chameli is set to escape in her casual attire.

How can I escape from here! Even if I manage to escape what will happen if the security force finds me?

She manages to escape from the rebels with the excuse of going to the toilet.

Chameli comes out of the jungle. Suddenly she feels pain in her lower abdomen and for the first time she experiences her menstruation.

Hey comrade! I need to go to the jungle to relieve myself.

Ooouch! My abdomen is aching what do I do now!? To whom shall I tell about my pain!?
After she realises that she is having her periods, she goes to the nearby river to take a bath.

When the security force sees a girl taking bath at a lonely area, they suspect her to be a rebel and interrogates her. Panicking she takes to her heels. Suddenly there's a gun fire and she collapses there and then.

Aha... I'm dying…

Don’t shoot! We’ve to catch her and take legal action.

Look! she's running away…

Hey! Who're you?

Aha... I'm dying…
On the other side, after a month of arrival the rebels, including Diley, head towards the village to extort donation and garner support.

Commander talks to his chain of command.

Diley and the rebel fighters reach the outskirt of the village.

Look comrades! We can’t put down our guns unless there is an order from the party central command. If we do it, we'll be considered weak and cowardly.

Hey! Let’s keep quiet... We're nearing the village.
The commander orders all the family members to come out of the house.

The elderly in the family expresses his inability to pay such a big amount.

You have to send either a member of your family to join us or pay Rs.30,000 as support.

Sir! We are very poor. How can we pay such a big amount of money?

If you don’t want to send your children, then, you have to prepare Rs.30,000. We’ll be back after three days.
Diley is not at all happy with the extortion and forced conscription.

Diley pretends to be ill and sits depressed and refuses the command.

Is it right to force people like this? I must escape from here. If possible I'll go home, if not I'll wash dishes. Sister might also return home...

I'll escape by all means...

The commander orders Diley to proceed to the battlefront.

Diley leaves the group next day as per the orders of the commander.

Pick up the gun and march!

I'm having a bad headache. I can't go to battlefront.

You can't leave the battlefront 'cause of a minor headache! If you wanna stay idle, better get out of here!!

If the security force recognizes me they'll kill me. I can't even go home. I think I'll act innocent and work in a hotel.
Diley works in a hotel in mid-west region. Diley decides to work in another hotel as the owner doesn't pay him. He is provided with meagre food and is scolded often.

The owner is not paying me anything! How will I reach home? It's better to find work in another hotel.

Diley engrossed in his thoughts. Diley is deeply worried about his possible arrest by the security force.

If there was Peace; I'd get to go home, live with my parents and go to school again...

Whatever happens I'll go home... What if the rebels force me to join them again!?
Diley shares his feelings with his friends working in other hotels.

Diley keeps on pondering about what to do in such a state of fear and terror. Ultimately, he likes the idea of going over to India as suggested by his friend, Hari.
Ultimately, Diley decides to go to India. Diley goes to India. He, then, never returns to Nepal.

Surely, life will be better in India...

On the other hand, Chameli and Diley’s parents are worried that their children have joined the rebels.

It’s been months since our children joined the rebel group. Where are they? What are they doing? Wonder if they are dead already...

Where do we go and search for them?

Surely, they’d have returned if there was Peace in the country.
Fed up with the continuing violence, Chameli and Diley’s parents talk to the neighbours and villagers for the restoration of Peace.

Sister, we've to raise our voice for Peace. We're so tired of violence. What do you think?

You're absolutely right! We're also frustrated with the violence and killings.

Sick of the killings, violence and bloodshed, people in the villages and towns display banners and erect hoardings with peace messages.

Let there be lasting Peace in the country.

Children as Zone of Peace
To create pressure on the warring factions: human rights defenders, journalists, entrepreneurs, students including people from different strata of life, organize peace rallies and dialogues.

Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and other religious groups jointly light peace lamps, organize meetings and release doves with prayers and wishes for peace.
Political parties also organize rallies and mass meetings to bolster the voice for Peace.

Not only the humans, even the birds weary of gun fire and bomb blasts seem to be praying for peace in the country.

Violence holds no future! Peace possesses no alternative!!
Farewell to Firearms

First Edition : 2005
 Copies : 750

Story, Dialogue, Creation, Illustration, Color Co-ordination :
A combined attempt by 57 children from diverse backgrounds

Concept : Anjana Shakya
Dialogue Editing : Dr. Gopal Krishna Siwakoti
Prapti Sherchan
Translation : S.K. Pradhan
Publication Co-ordination : Purna Shakya
Producer : HimRights
(Himalayan Human Rights Monitors)
Co-producer : Watch List, New York
Copyright : HimRights

May, 2005

HimRights
GPO Box: 4690 Kathmandu
Inar, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel : 5520054  Fax: 5520042
Email : info@inhured.wlink.com.np
www.himrights.org
Saying Goodbye to Guns...

This comic, “Farewell to Firearms” being presented herewith is not a creation of any prominent artist who might have worked through months to produce it. The concept of the comic, illustrations, articulation, impression and the dialogues are the domino effect of the children’s creative thinking. We have merely facilitated the production of this comic by providing technical and material backstopping. The ownership of the comic, therefore, entirely belongs to the children as their original creation.

Thousands of people have lost their lives due to the decade-long internal armed conflict in Nepal. The incidences of disappearance are ever on the increase. Thousands have been displaced. The loss of physical infrastructures is beyond statistical calculation. It is indeed unfortunate that the country, which is renowned as a refugee-hosting nation, should turn into a refugee producing state. Even if children’s rights have been considered as non-derogable, the enduring armed conflict has put these rights in great peril. Attempts have been made through this comic to convey the message by children themselves to the parties in conflict about the pains, plights, sufferings, vulnerability and risks the children have to face as a result. This pictorial report with the message “Violence holds no future: Peace possesses no alternative” is brought to you through direct and meaningful participation of children from diverse backgrounds.

Fifty-seven children have relentlessly contributed to the production of this comic. This includes eight children from the shelter home of CWIN, two from CWISH, seven from Rukum, five from Concern-Nepal, three from Bara, three from Rautahat, three from Makwanpur, twelve from the district child clubs of Banke and shelter home run by Sahara, three from Research and Cooperation Organization of Kathmandu and eleven from different schools in Kathmandu and Lalitpur. Their experiences and aspirations have been truly reproduced in the form of a single story in this comic. We would request the readers to consider this book as a noble creation of young artists.
We would like to express our most heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all those children who worked very hard for twelve long days to prepare the manuscripts for this comic book. We would also take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to our co-producer-Watch List. Our thanks also goes to Mr. Ramesh Kumar Poudel who trained the children as an expert on the theme of the comic along with other contributors namely, Mr. Badri Prasad Siwakoti, Ms. Sushma Chhetri, the art trainers and the HimRights family. Similarly, we are thankful to all those institutions, organizations, clubs and schools who helped in securing children’s participation in this endeavor.

We believe this comic illustrates the plight of the children affected by the armed conflict. We hope that this will also serve as an eye opener to both the parties involved in the armed conflict. The underlying core message of this publication is farewell to arms and armed conflict. Let us respect this virtuous message. Let us be responsive. Let us create a society fit for children.

**Children are zones of peace! Let us endorse the ideal “children’s first”!! Say “YES” for children!!!**

Dr. Gopal Krishna Siwakoti  
*General Secretary*  
Anjana Shakya  
*Chiarperson*