



# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)



## 90th Session, 7th Periodic Report (CEDAW/C/NPL/7)

National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF) and Freed Kamlari Development Forum (FKDF) have jointly prepared and submitted a shadow report for the 90th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), scheduled to take place from February 3 to 21, 2025, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. This submission serves as a critical document highlighting the persistent inequalities faced by Indigenous and Marginalized Women, particularly former Kamlari Women and Girls, in Nepal.

The report is the result of a rigorous, year-long process that involved extensive consultations with Kamlari Women and Girls, as well as engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, human rights advocates, legal experts, and policymakers. Through community dialogues, focus group discussions, and expert analyses, the report captures the lived experiences of former Kamalaris, shedding light on the systemic discrimination, economic hardships, and legal barriers they continue to endure despite the formal abolition of the Kamalari system. Although Nepal abolished bonded labor more than two decades ago and officially outlawed the Kamalari system over a decade ago, the transition to freedom has been far from complete for many of the affected women and girls.

By submitting this shadow report, NIWF and FKDF seek to bring global attention to the unfulfilled promises of justice and rehabilitation for former Kamalaris. The report calls on the CEDAW Committee to hold Nepal accountable for its commitments under international human rights treaties and to urge the government to implement concrete, sustainable measures that ensure the social and economic empowerment of former Kamalaris. These measures include effective policy implementation, access to quality education and vocational training, employment opportunities, legal support, and social protection programs that can break the cycle of systemic marginalization.

This submission is part of a broader effort to ensure that the voices of Indigenous and marginalized women are not only heard but also meaningfully incorporated into national and international human rights frameworks. By shedding light on the persistent challenges faced by former Kamalaris, NIWF and FKDF seek to hold the government accountable for its commitments and push for tangible policy changes that promote justice, equality, and lasting social transformation. Both organizations remain steadfast in their commitment to advocating for the rights of former Kamalaris and other marginalized women in Nepal, ensuring they are not left behind in the pursuit of social and economic development.



## In our commitment to the inclusion and upliftment of former Kamalaris, we demand the following steps be urgently taken:



- 1** The Government of Nepal must immediately enact and implement a comprehensive rehabilitation program for former Kamalaris, in accordance with the Constitution of Nepal, 2015, which mandates the state to provide justice and rehabilitation to individuals marginalized by bonded labor systems.
- 2** The Government of Nepal must fulfill its promises outlined in the Seventh periodic report to CEDAW, which claims that the Program and Budget for Fiscal Year 2022/23 include provisions for the rehabilitation of former Kamalaris. The reality on the ground does not reflect these assurances; hence, immediate and transparent action must be taken to deliver tangible support to former Kamalaris.
- 3** Publicly disclose the allocation of funds and the specific programs aimed at rehabilitating Kamalaris, ensuring the transparency and accountability of these initiatives.
- 4** The state must prioritize providing land to landless former Kamalaris and their families, resolving the jurisdictional dispute between federal and provincial governments that has hindered access to land. Provide legal aid and support services for former Kamalaris to navigate land disputes, access justice, and hold the state accountable for its promises.
- 5** Ensure effective legal frameworks that prevent the continued exploitation, discrimination, and marginalization of former Kamalaris, ensuring they have access to the same human rights protections as all citizens of Nepal.