

### **Press Statement**

The impact of the pandemic caused by the Corona Virus is increasing day by day in Nepal. Till August 15, 2020, the number of deaths due to COVID19 disease reached to 102 and the number of infected persons reached to 26,019. Information and data collected through the INSEC's district representatives from all 77 districts, the news published and broadcasted in the media and the information of the Ministry of Health and Population indicate that the risk of infection will not be reduced soon. Meanwhile, the information regarding the refusal to treat the infected patients by private and government hospitals have come forward along with the incidences of attacks on health institutions and health workers.

Padma Bahadur Rai, 23, of Katari Municipality-5 of Udayapur died outside the emergency room of Koshi Hospital on July 24, 2020 after Nobel Teaching Hospital and Koshi Hospital denied treatment. Chalitar Mahato, 64, of Shreepur in Birgunj Metropolitan City-11 died on the morning of August 6 after the National Medical College Teaching Hospital in Birgunj refused to treat him. Similarly, Bishnu Lama, 20, of Chhapkaiya of Birgunj Metropolitan City-2 was refused to be admitted to hospitals in Birgunj due to the suspicion of having corona virus infection. She died on the morning of August 8. Sushil Kumar Sah, 9, of Sukhipatra in Baragadhi Rural Municipality-2 of Bara district, died at the National Medical College in Birgunj on August 11 because the hospitals refused to treat him on time. Representative incidents that resulted in deaths due to lack of access to health care in July/August 2020 have highlighted the sensitivity of the current situation. We urge all three levels of the government to be more proactive in raising awareness on the sensitivity of health issues and ensure that such incidents do not recur.

A meeting of the COVID19 Crisis Management Centre (CCMC) held on August 9, 2020 has decided to increase the number of isolation since the number of infected people in most districts of the country including the Kathmandu Valley is rapidly increasing. The Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers has also decided to make additional arrangements for isolation and quarantine in coordination with the local level and the District Crisis Management Centre. According to the Ministry of Health and Population, there are 496 ventilators and 942 ICU beds in government hospitals nationwide. There are 1,772 isolation beds and 38 laboratories for corona test. In the current complex situation where the number of infected people is increasing and the death toll is also rising, it seems necessary for the government to pay due attention to ensure the right to health of the people by providing necessary equipment and mobilizing the health workers and security personnel in protective environment. We urge the Government of Nepal to be accountable for the rights to health of the citizens who are suffering from lack of treatment.

The spread of infection in rural areas, cities and communities, and amid health workers and security personnel, has caused panic among the civilians. Hospitals and health institutions should not be deprived of their responsibility to ensure the rights to health of the people by providing necessary

security. We urge the Government of Nepal to be more proactive in addressing difficult situations and ensuring the rights to health of citizens. INSEC would like to remind that it is the responsibility of the government and private health agencies to ensure the treatment of the citizens who are in need.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Indira Shrestha', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Indira Shrestha

Chairperson