



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

The Honourable Ramesh Lekhak
Minister of Home Affairs

Via e-mail: lekhakr@moha.gov.np; control@moha.gov.np

Dear Minister:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals – PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters worldwide – to share our deep concerns regarding the serious public safety risks posed by the annual Chitwan Elephant Festival. The presence of both captive and wild elephants at or near this event means it is not just a matter of *if* an incident will occur but *when* and *how severe* it will be. The safety of attendees and the well-being of animals must be prioritised before a serious tragedy occurs.

During the 2024 festival, wild elephants entered the event area multiple times and a group of wild rhinos also approached the grounds on one occasion, upsetting some of the elephants. Just weeks after the festival, one of the same wild elephants who entered the event area was killed by rangers after an incident that reportedly endangered human lives. Each year, we see tragic deaths around the world involving captive elephants at festivals and attractions – often caused by stressed or panicked animals. The use of captive elephants, together with the added threat of wild animals, poses a deadly risk to attendees of the Chitwan Elephant Festival.

Earlier this year, a Spanish tourist was killed at an elephant attraction in Thailand, and in India last month, nine elephants in just 10 days attacked and killed five humans and injured many others at events in Kerala. A similar incident in Nepal would irreparably damage the country's reputation and tourism industry. Your ministry must take immediate action to prevent a tragedy. We urge you to ban the use of elephants at this festival and ensure the safety of both humans and other animals.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Jason Baker
Senior Vice President
PETA

cc: The Right Honourable KP Sharma Oli, Prime Minister,
Government of Nepal (info@opmcm.gov.np)

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