

Trends of Violence and Contestation in Nepal

This is the third of a series of quarterly reports from the Nepal Peace Monitoring Project (PMP). The PMP uses a methodology similar to NepalMonitor.org's alert and mapping system, with a focus on gathering information on violence and political contestation. The PMP's goal is to improve our understanding of violence in Nepal to better respond to it and promote peace.

July-September, 2017



Executive Summary

On September 18, the third phase of local level elections was held in Province 2. With 52 incidents recorded, the number of election-related violence and protests in this third phase was significantly lower than during the previous two phases (held in May in Province 3, 4, and 6 and June in Province 1, 5, and 7), although election-related incidents saw a small uptick at the end of August and in September as parties began campaigning.

The third quarter of 2017 also saw an overall decline in incidents by 37 percent compared to the previous quarter, mostly due to the decline in election-related violence (overall 682 incidents were recorded - 489 of them violent and 193 nonviolent). Fatalities due to violence, however, increased by 24 percent to 118 deaths in this quarter. As in the past, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and conflicts of a personal nature remained the leading causes for violent deaths in Nepal (with GBV and personal disputes causing 41 percent and 18 percent of violent incidents and 37 percent and 31 percent of violent deaths respectively). Both types of violence saw an increase in quarter three.

Torrential rains in August led to floods and landslides affecting large parts of the population across the Tarai. PMP recorded sporadic protests against insufficient or unfair relief distribution.

Sporadic Incidents During Third Phase of Local Elections

On September 18, the Government of Nepal held the third phase of local level elections in Province 2, after postponing them twice due to protests in the Tarai region following the first announcement of elections on February 20.¹ The PMP recorded 38 incidents of electoral violence and 14 non-violent incidents such as protests and demonstrations. 69 people were injured and one person killed in election-related violence during this third phase of local elections.²

Violent incidents included five clashes among members within a party because of disagreements with the candidate selection process; 18 incidents aimed at disrupting the election or its preparation, 14 of which involved the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or hoax bombs; eight clashes between rival political parties during campaigning or on election day; and seven confrontations between supporters of rival political parties at vote counting centers after the elections or during victory rallies.³

¹ See: [Second Quarterly Report- Trends of Violence and Contestation in Nepal, April to June 2017](#)

² For a list of election related reports from August to October, see [NepalMonitor.org](#)

³ The campaign period for the third phase of elections started with the candidate registration in Province 2 on September 6. It ended on midnight of September 15 when the campaign silence period 48 hrs before election day was imposed.

In one such incident, on September 20, one person was killed in a clash between the cadres of Nepali Congress (NC) and Rastriya Janata Party Nepal (RJPN) over a polling dispute at Katahari Municipality in Rautahat district.⁴ Vote counting was temporarily halted in parts of Bara, Parsa, and Saptari district due to disputes. On September 24, an election official in Saptari allegedly manhandled a journalist when he enquired about the postponement of the vote counting process.⁵

Number of Incidents Markedly Lower in the Third Phase of Local Level Elections than in the Previous two Phases

With 52 incidents (38 of them violent) recorded in total, the third phase of local elections saw a marked decrease in incidents compared to the first two phases (see Figure 1). For the periods between candidate registration up to vote counting until one week after the elections, the third phase of local elections saw a drop to 35 incidents of electoral violence compared to 144 and 129 incidents in phase one and two (see Figure 2). Similarly, injuries recorded due to electoral violence dropped to 45 injuries in phase three from 172 and 155 during the previous two phases (see Figure 1).

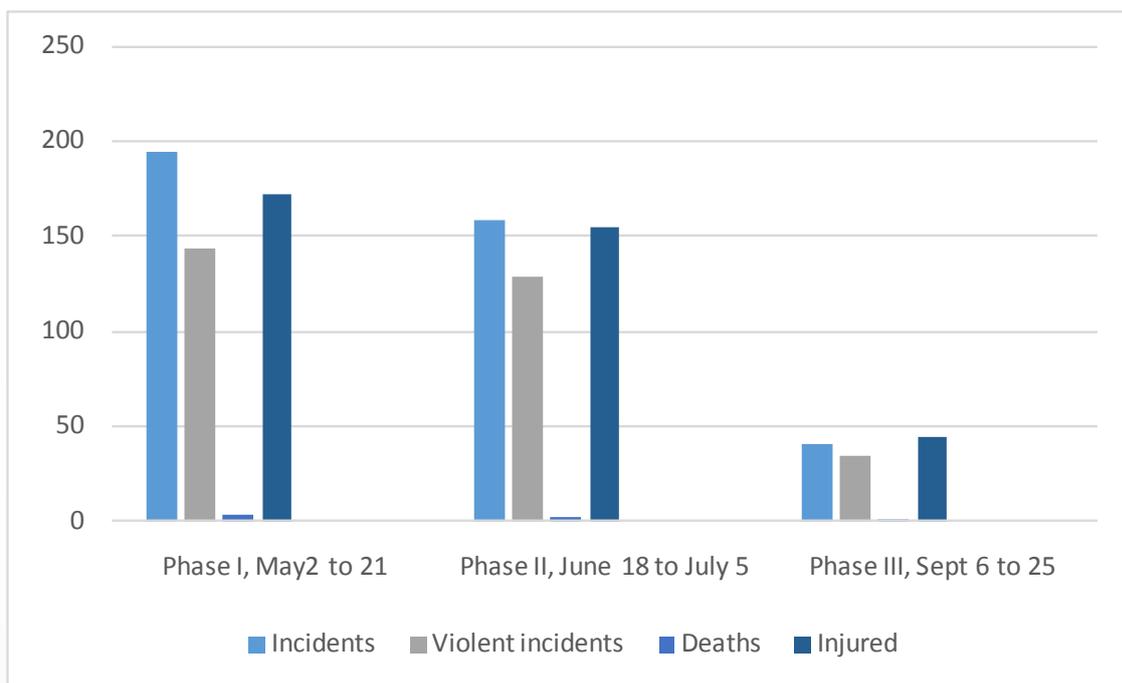


Figure 1: Election Related Incidents in Phase I, II and III

⁴ See: [News: One Dies in a Clash Between NC and RJPN Cadres](#)

⁵ See: [INSEC: Journo Misbehaved by Chief Election Officer](#)

The largely peaceful environment was made possible by RJPN’s decision on August 23 to participate in all upcoming polls after the government tabled the constitutional amendment bill on August 21. Although the bill failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority, the government fulfilled a crucial precondition for the agitating RJPN to call off their protests and participate in the local elections in a province that had previously seen sustained protests. Notably, local elections of the third phase were held in the aftermath of the flooding in the Tarai where discontent about the ineffective distribution of aid at times led to protests (for more details see Box on Floods in the Tarai).⁶

Inter Party Clashes and Use of IEDs mark Campaign Periods and Elections in Phase I and II

Election-related incidents in March and April were driven mainly by protests of Madhesh based parties following the announcement of the elections and by the Government of Nepal’s response to these protests (shown in Figure 3 and 4 in orange). However, violent incidents saw a sharp rise in the campaign periods following the candidate registration of the first and the second phase of local elections respectively (see Figure 2).

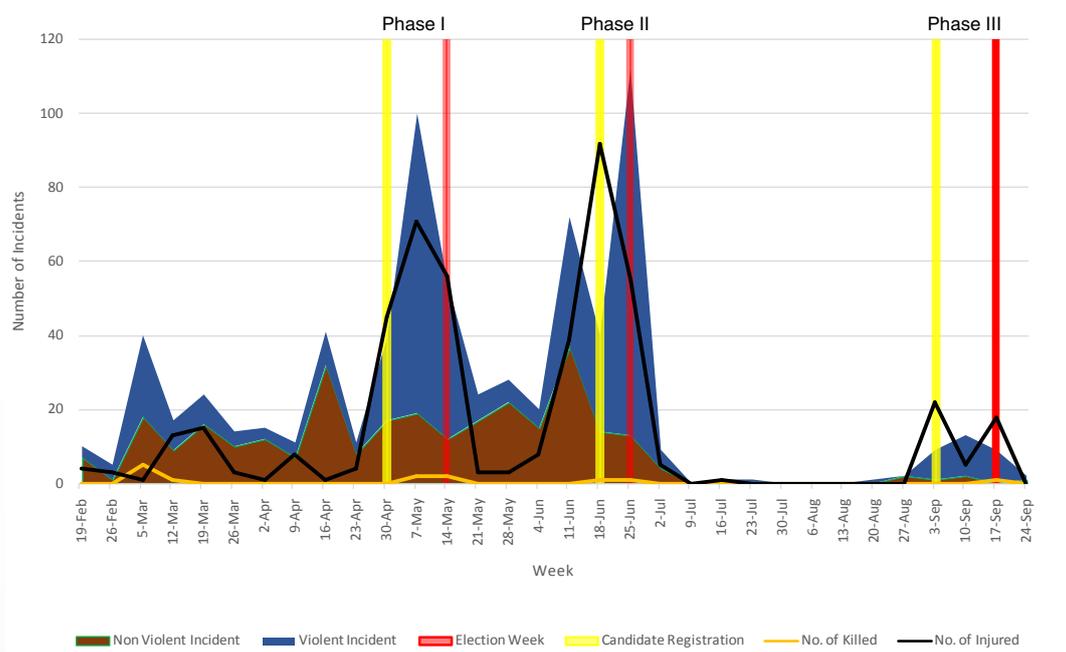


Figure 2: Election-Related Incidents by Week, February - September 2017

⁶ Following the announcement of local elections on February 20, the United Democratic Madheshi Front, a conglomerate of 7 Madhesh-based parties, six of which united on April 20 to the Rashtriya Janata Party Nepal (RJPN), opposed the election and called for a boycott. They demanded a constitutional amendment to boundaries of the newly formed states and local units and to ensure proportional representation first before announcing elections. Protests and calls for boycott in the Tarai resulted at times in violence, including a fatal incident in Maleth Saptari where five protesters were shot by police on March 6. The protests forced the government on April 22 to postpone the elections in Province 1,2,5 and 7 to a second phase and again on June 15 to postpone elections in Province 2 to a third phase. For more details see: [Second Quarterly Report- Trends of Violence and Contestation in Nepal, April to June 2017](#)

In the first phase of elections, clashes between candidates and supporters of major political parties, and the efforts of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)-Chand to disrupt the elections were the main drivers of violent incidents. During the second phase, there was a notable increase in the use of IEDs.⁷ In several districts, police made use of preventative arrests, mainly of known district-level leaders of CPN-Chand.⁸ As noted above, the campaign period of the third phase of local elections saw a marked decline in electoral violence. In those incidents recorded, supporters of the major three political parties and Madhesh based parties were involved (or perpetrators remained unclear when incidents involved the use of IEDs) (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).⁹ Notably, of the 13 people killed in election-related violence since February 20, nine died as a result of police actions.

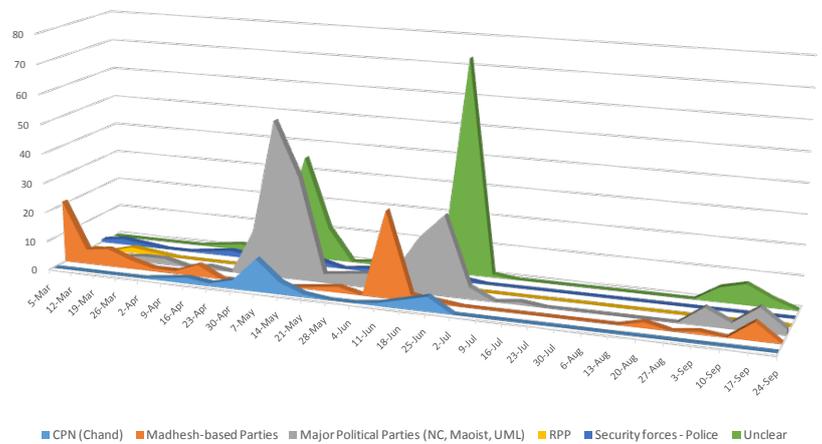


Figure 3: Election related Violent Incidents by Political Actors, March - September 2017

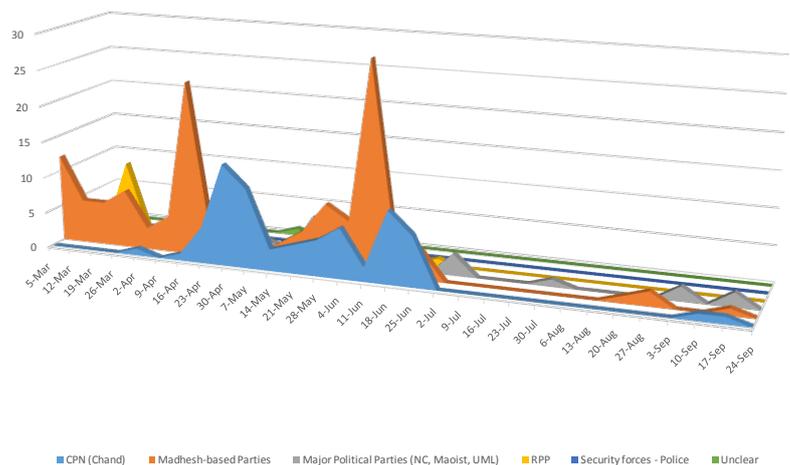


Figure 4: Election related Non-Violent Incidents by Political Actors, March - September 2017

⁷ At times, such incidents could be attributed to activities of the CPN led by Chand, but often the perpetrators remained unclear (shown in green in Figure 3).

⁸ These are recorded in Figure 4 in the blue graph as unspecified ‘anti-election activity’ by CPN-Chand.

⁹ However, Province 2 still witnessed the highest number of election-related incidents in total since the announcement of elections on February 20. For more details see: [Factsheet: Electoral Violence And Contestation during Nepal’s Local Level Election - Third Phase](#)

Dalit and Women Representation in Local Elections

Local-level elections were held this year for the first time in almost two decades in Nepal, providing an opportunity to make Nepalese politics at the local level more inclusive, especially in terms of gender and caste. The Election Commission made it mandatory for all the political parties to ensure women's participation in executive and deputy positions. The Local Level Elections Act of 2015 stipulated that of the 36,639 local representatives elected, 13,360 must be women including 6,680 Dalit women. In addition, each ward committee of five members should have two women representatives including one Dalit woman.¹⁰ The act also demanded that the political parties field 50 percent women candidates for the posts of chairperson or vice chairperson, mayor or deputy mayor of the municipal council, and chief or deputy chief of the District Coordination Committee. Similarly, three seats in the municipal council were reserved for Dalits or people from marginalized communities.¹¹

However, despite such progressive measures, reports indicate that parties lacked the political will to ensure meaningful participation of women and marginalized communities beyond the legally mandated minimum. Out of the 753 mayor and chair positions, women held only 2 percent of executive positions but 91 percent of deputy positions.¹² A similar picture emerges when examining Dalit inclusion: Despite Province 2 having the largest Dalit population among all provinces, the major political parties selected only 17 Dalits out of 652 candidates for the positions of mayors and chairpersons of rural municipalities during the third phase of local elections. Dalits constitute 13.8 percent of the population in Nepal, but only represent 1.9 percent and 4.1 percent of the total elected mayoral and deputy mayoral positions respectively.¹³ Notably, Dalit representation outside the mandatory quota stands at only 3.3 percent.¹⁴

The marginal position of Dalits and women in the political process was also borne out by incidents recorded by PMP:

On September 13, a woman of Rupani Rural Municipality in Saptari was beaten up by her brother for not voting for his favorite candidate.¹⁵ On September 14, a female candidate for a ward member position at Saptakoshi Municipality in Saptari was assaulted by two men.¹⁶ Earlier, some Dalit voters were threatened and manhandled in Rautahat by an independent candidate pressuring them to cast votes in his favour in the upcoming election.¹⁷ On July 16, a Dalit man with a disability was beaten by a newly elected ward chairperson of Chandrakot Rural Municipality in Gulmi when he reminded him of an unfulfilled campaign promise.¹⁸

¹⁰ See: [EC Urges All Parties to Ensure Women's Participation in Polls](#)

¹¹ See: [Data Reveals Local Election a Disaster for Gender Equality](#)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See: [How Quotas Provided a Footing but Left Inequality Unresolved: Dalits in the Local Election](#)

¹⁴ 88 percent of the 7737 Dalit representatives elected were women - mainly due to the mandatory Dalit quota for women (ibid.).

¹⁵ See: [INSEC: Allegations of Assault Because of the Refusal of Voting Against the Interest](#)

¹⁶ See: [News: CPN-UML Condemns Manhandling of Woman Candidate](#)

¹⁷ See: [Hastachhap: 4 Persons from Dalit Community Physically Assaulted by Independent Mayoral Candidate](#)

¹⁸ See: [Ratopati: Ward Chairperson Thrashed a Dalit Man in Gulmi](#)

Overall Violent Incidents And Injuries Decreased In The Third Quarter, But Fatalities Due To GBV And Personal Disputes Were On The Rise

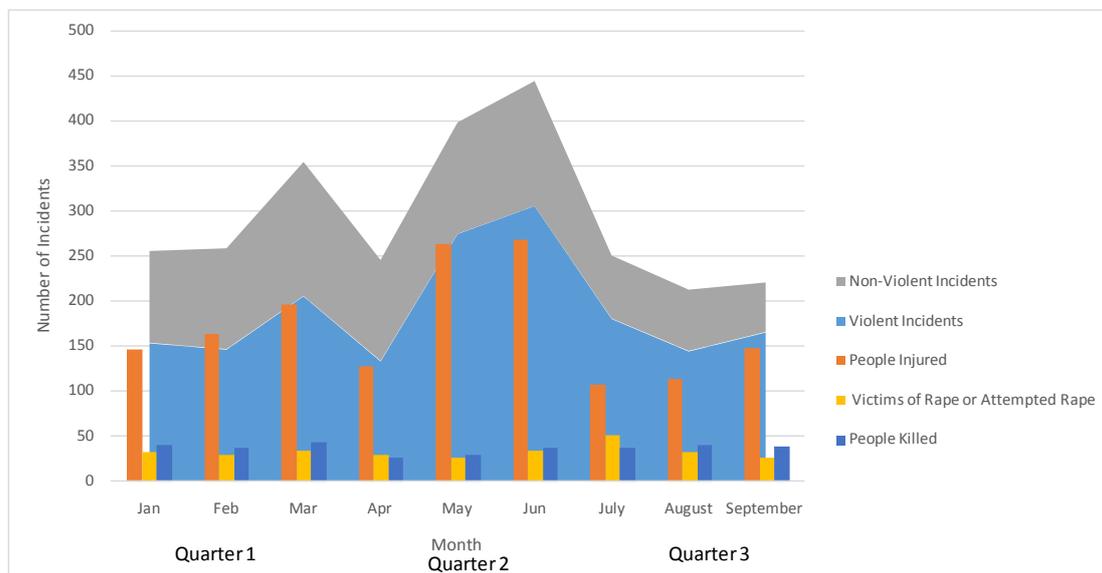


Figure 5: Incidents and Their Impacts by Month, January - September 2017

The third quarter saw an overall decline in violent incidents by 32 percent (from 713 to 489) and resulting injuries by 43 percent (from 659 to 370) compared to the previous quarter (see Figure 5). This reduction was largely due to the decline in electoral violence as noted above (shown in Figure 6 as ‘Political’ triggers).

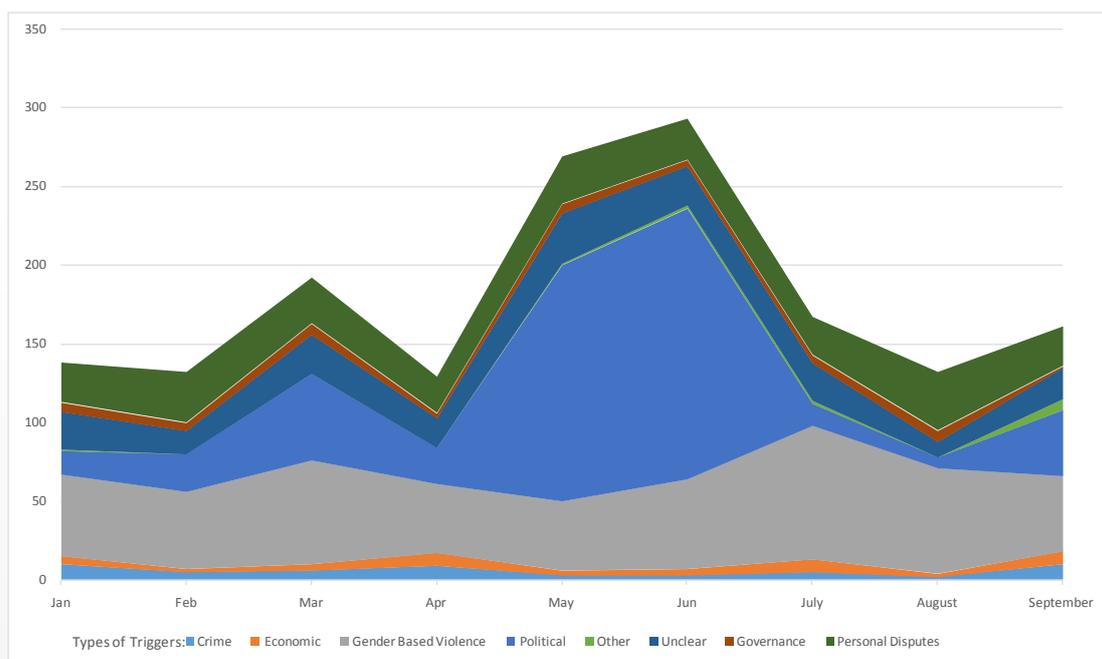


Figure 6: Triggers of Violent Incidents, January to September 2017

In contrast, incidents of GBV over the same period increased by 37 percent (from 162 incidents in quarter two to 209 in quarter three) with a 23 percent increase in fatalities due to GBV (rising from 34 in quarter two to 42 in quarter three).¹⁹ Personal disputes²⁰ resulted in 36 deaths (up from 24 deaths in quarter two) making it the leading cause of violent deaths after GBV (see Figure 7).²¹

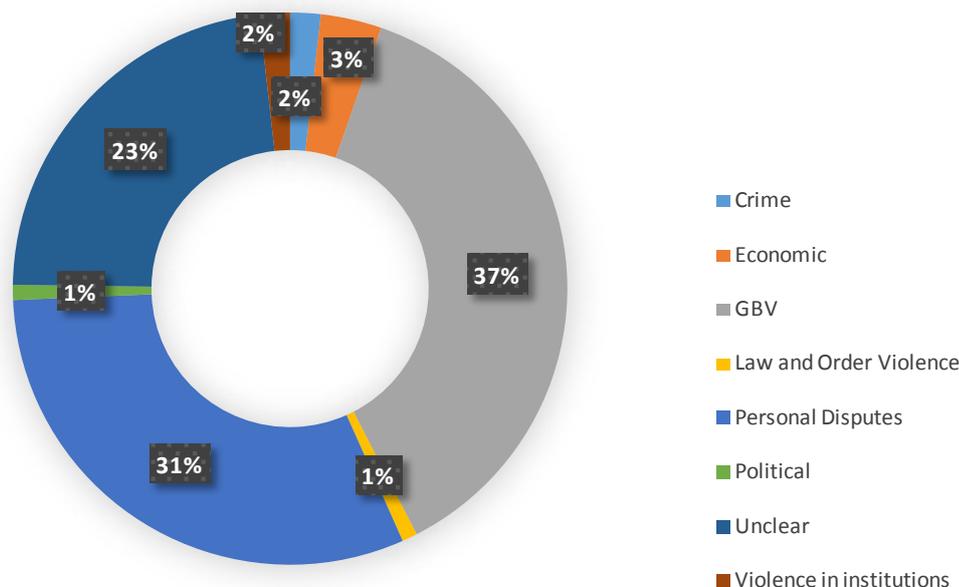


Figure 7: Causes of Violent Deaths, July - September 2017

Law criminalizing Chaupadi Pratha introduced, but enforcement remains a challenge

Chaupadi is a tradition that banishes menstruating girls and women from their houses to cow sheds or mud huts also known as “Chhau”. Mostly practiced in the mid and far-western regions of Nepal, the tradition considers girls and women to be polluted during menstruation. Menstruating women are not allowed to participate in family activities or to have any contact with men in the family. The living conditions in sheds are often unsanitary and undignifying to women. Though banned by the Supreme Court in 2005, the practice has continued in some Western parts of the country.²² In Achham district alone, eight girls have died practicing Chhaupadi in the past 9 years.²³ This year on July 7, an 18 year old women died of a snake bite she received while banished to a shed during her menstrual period in Dailekh district.²⁴ In many cases women have also died of hypothermia during cold weather due to the pressure to conform to the tradition.

On August 10, the legislative assembly passed a law criminalizing the tradition. According to the new law, women during menstruation or after childbirth should not be forced to practice Chhaupadi or treated

¹⁹ The month of July witnessed the highest number of incidents of GBV with 96 cases and 16 deaths reported (followed by 62 incidents of GBV reported in August and 51 in September). Part of this might be due to an “editorial effect” with

²⁰ Personal disputes include financial disputes, inheritance, debt and land disputes.

²¹ In quarter three 41 percent of violent incidents recorded were GBV and 18 percent due to personal disputes.

²² See: [Chhaupadi in Nepal: Can the First Female President Abolish the Bleeding Shame?](#)

²³ See: [Republica: Ties of Tradition-Arun Bam’s Oped on Chaupadi](#)

²⁴ See: [Nepali Teen Dies from Snake Bite in “Menstruation Hut”](#)

with any kind of discrimination.²⁵ However, implementation and enforcement remains a challenge. Deeply rooted religious practices and superstitions have kept the practice alive despite the government's efforts at ending it.²⁶ Thus, in spite of having a five year plan developed by the Office of Women and Children in Jumla, even health workers are compelled to observe Chhaupadi in the district.²⁷ On September 14, women in Achham district organized an awareness campaign against Chhaupadi demanding robust law enforcement to end such tradition that demeaned the health and wellbeing of women and girls.²⁸

Incidents of GBV recorded in this quarter include 133 cases of sexual assault of which 111 cases were rapes (an increase from 97 cases in quarter two); 61 cases of domestic violence (resulting in 37 deaths); and 4 cases of infanticide.

In 95 of the 111 rape cases recorded, victims were women or girls of 25 years or below (see Figure 8). In 55 of the 206 cases of GBV, the perpetrator was identified as a family member or relative (see Figure 9). As in the previous quarter, Rupandehi and Siraha district recorded the highest number of GBV incidents with 14 and 13 cases each (see Map 3).



Figure 8: Share of Women of 25 years or Below among Rape Victims



Figure 9: Share of Cases of GBV Where Perpetrator was a Family Member/Relative

²⁵ See: [New Law Criminalises Chhaupadi Custom](#)

²⁶ It is believed that gods and goddesses would get angry at a woman who stays with family during her menstruation the wrath of which will have to be faced by the male members.

²⁷ See: [News: Even Health Workers Live in Shed During Menstruation](#)

²⁸ See: [Campaign Against Chhaupadi in Achham](#)

Floods in the Tarai and discontent with relief efforts

Torrential rains for several days from August 10 onwards wreaked havoc in 21 districts of Tarai this year inviting floods and landslides that left almost 11.5 million people affected.²⁹ According to Rural Reconstruction Nepal's (RRN) situation report on August 18, the flood destroyed 35,000 houses.³⁰ The Ministry of Home Affairs reported that by August 14, the death toll had reached 120 with 35 people still missing.³¹ On August 27, the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) announced a flood recovery package of NRs. 1.25 billion. The floods had destroyed 80 percent of agricultural land with 37,757 hectares of standing crops in the affected Tarai districts. According to estimates, the total damage amounted to NRs. 5.84 billion.³²

In the aftermath, victims of flood and landslides voiced their discontent about the ineffective relief distribution by the government. PMP recorded several protests by victims and activists against the state's inefficiency. No damages and injuries were reported. Victims also accused the state of discrimination in relief distribution. On August 19, an advocate protested in Kathmandu against the government's decision to provide Rs. 70 per day for a month to the flood victims as the amount was insufficient to sustain a family. Similarly, on August 25, flood victims from Bhokraha Rural Municipality in Sunsari district blocked the East West highway protesting against discrimination in relief distribution.³³ On August 27, flood victims protested in front of the District Administration Office (DAO) in Rautahat with claims that the relief items distributed by the state were received by fake victims instead of bona-fide victims.³⁴ Similarly, on September 11, the flood victims from Gulariya -9 in Bardiya district accused local activists of CPN-Maoist Center of threatening them for registering a complaint at the District Police Office against unfair relief distribution.³⁵ The flood also raised concerns among tenant farmers regarding their eligibility of receiving the government's post-flood agricultural recovery aid, as farmers were asked to show proof of land ownership or a written contract of tenancy in order to receive aid.³⁶

²⁹ See: [Nepal Flood 2017 Situation Report](#)

³⁰ See: [Nepal Flood 2017 Situation Report](#)

³¹ See: [Death Toll in Tarai Floods Reaches 120](#)

³² See: [THRD Alliance Submits Petition to: MoAD; Minister Says Concerns of Tenant Farmers in Post-Flood Agricultural Recovery will be Addressed](#)

³³ See: [Sit-rep: Flood Victims Obstruct Highway Against Unfair Distribution of Relief](#)

³⁴ See: [News: Rautahat Flood Victims Picket Administration Office](#)

³⁵ See: [News: 'Maoist Cadres Threatens Flood-hit people'](#)

³⁶ Terai Human Rights Defenders (THRD) Alliance reported that on October 15, 2017 the MoAD assured them that tenant farmers will not be excluded from receiving the recovery aid. See: [Third Alliance Submits Petition to MoAD; Minister says Concern of Tenant Farmers in Post-Flood Agricultural Recovery will be Addressed](#)

The Nepal Peace Monitoring Project

The Nepal Peace Monitoring Project (PMP) is a joint initiative by Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP)|NepalMonitor.org and The Asia Foundation, with the support of Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC). Building on the NepalMonitor.org platform, the PMP focuses on violence and contestation, with a view toward improving our understanding of, and response to, violence and conflict in Nepal. The PMP also provides an instrument to measure progress against Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Targets 16.1 (reduction of all forms of violence and related death rates) and 5.2 (elimination of violence against women) in Nepal.

The PMP monitors:

Violence: any incident involving the intentional use of physical force against another person or group that results or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, or other forms of physical harm to persons or damage to property.

Non-violent contestation: demonstrations, protests or other types of non-violent events that involve collective action and may be of potential significance for violence dynamics in Nepal. This includes strikes (bandha), hunger strikes, padlocking and other forms of political protest. Incidents involving intimidation and threats but no direct physical violence are also tracked.

PMP uses a broad range of information sources, including national and district-level newspapers (from 25 districts), police reports, reports of human rights organizations, as well as reports by international agencies, civil society organizations and direct reports by citizens.

For each incident, the PMP collects detailed information on the following variables: time and location of the incident, form of the incident, weapons used, reported cause/motive of the incident (political competition, land dispute, communal tensions, crime etc.), affiliations of perpetrators and victims, human impacts (broken down by gender and age) and damage to property.

For more information on methodology, please refer to the coding handbook [here](#).

For a guide to how to download the database click [here](#).

Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) is a national network of peace and human rights non-governmental organizations in Nepal, registered since 2002 with the Government of Nepal as a non-profit.

NepalMonitor.org is a COCAP protection and conflict prevention initiative, supported by pbi.

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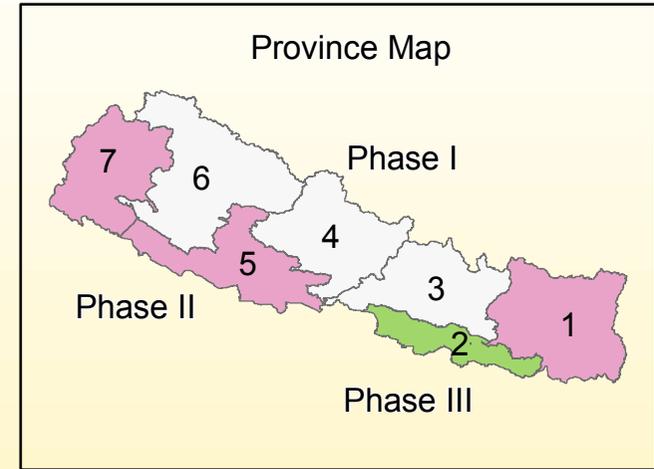
Email: info@cocap.org.np

Map 1: Incidents Related to Local Election, Phase III



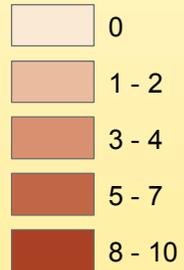
September 9: A person died during a clash over voting between cadres of Nepali Congress and RJP-N in Katahari-8 of Rautahat

Province: 2

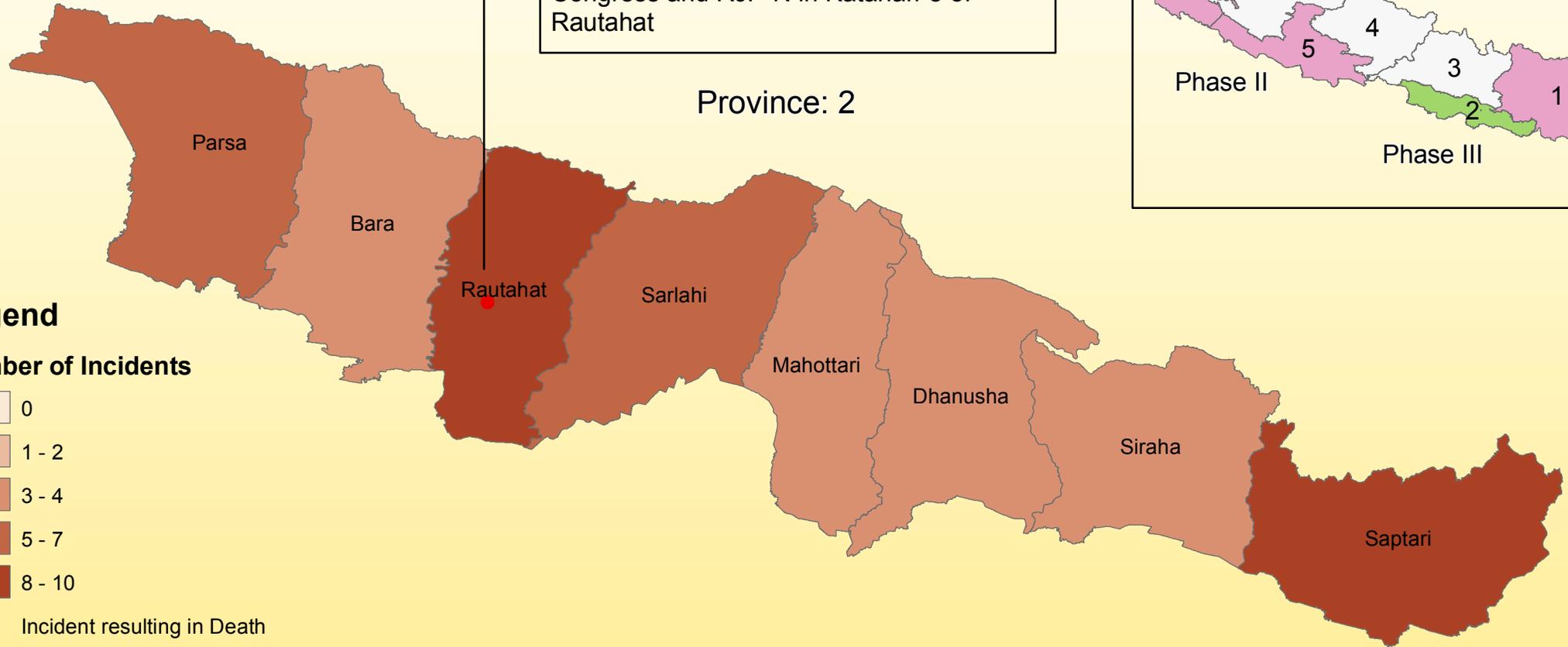


Legend

Number of Incidents



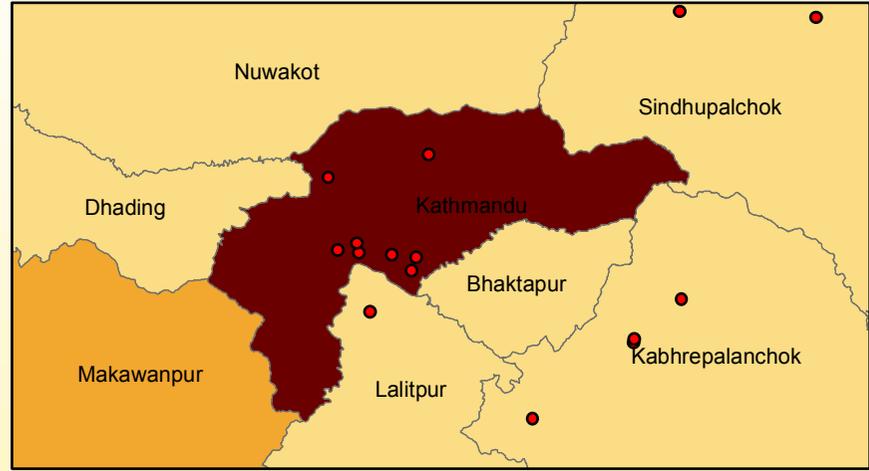
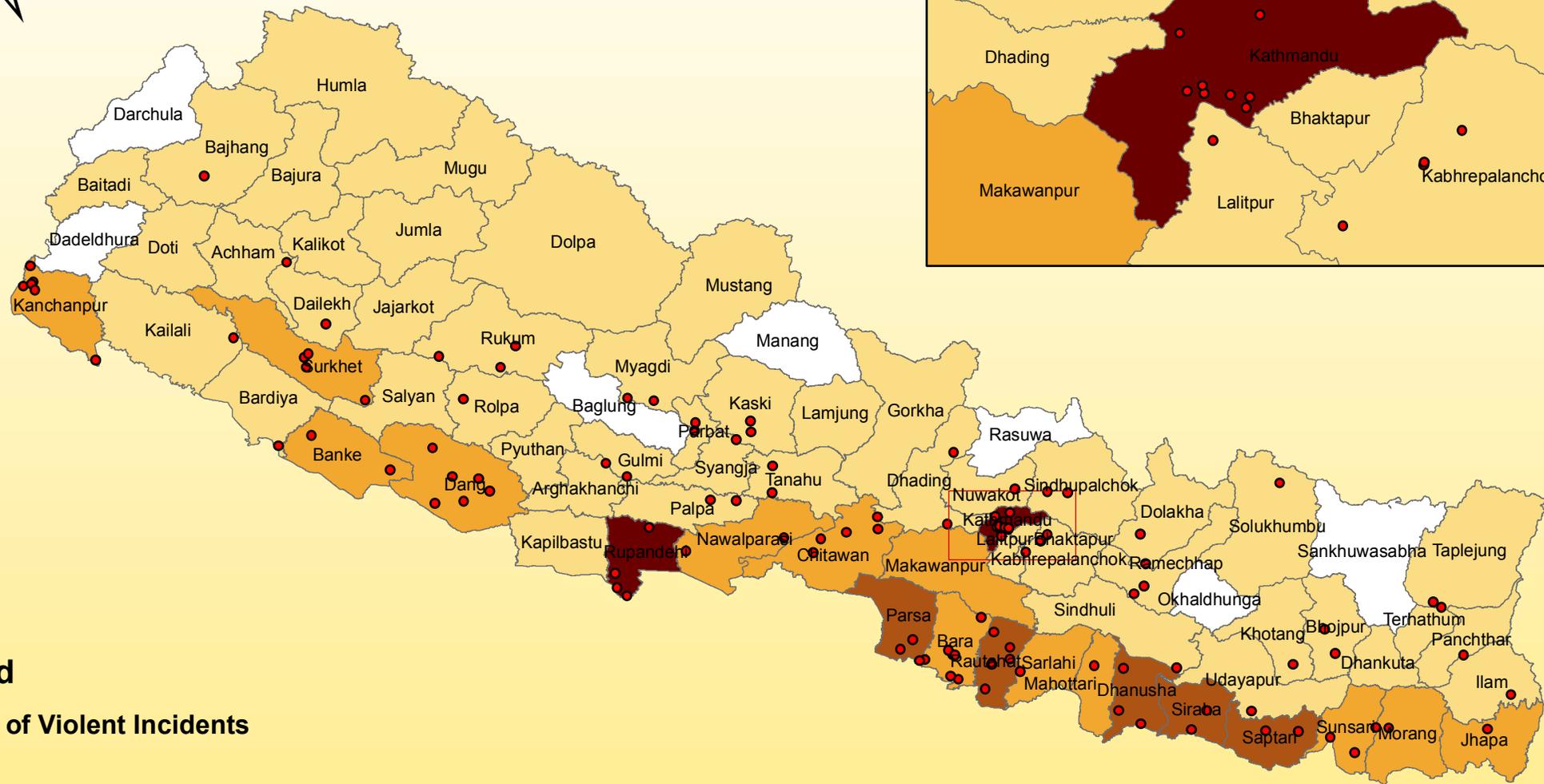
● Incident resulting in Death



	Phase I – May 14	Phase II – June 28	Phase III – September 18	Local Election
Held in Province	3,4 and 6	1,5 and 7	2	All Nepal
Registered Voters	4,556,525	6,432,765	2,664,950	13,654,240



Map 2: Violent Incidents and Resulting Deaths, Jul-Sep 2017



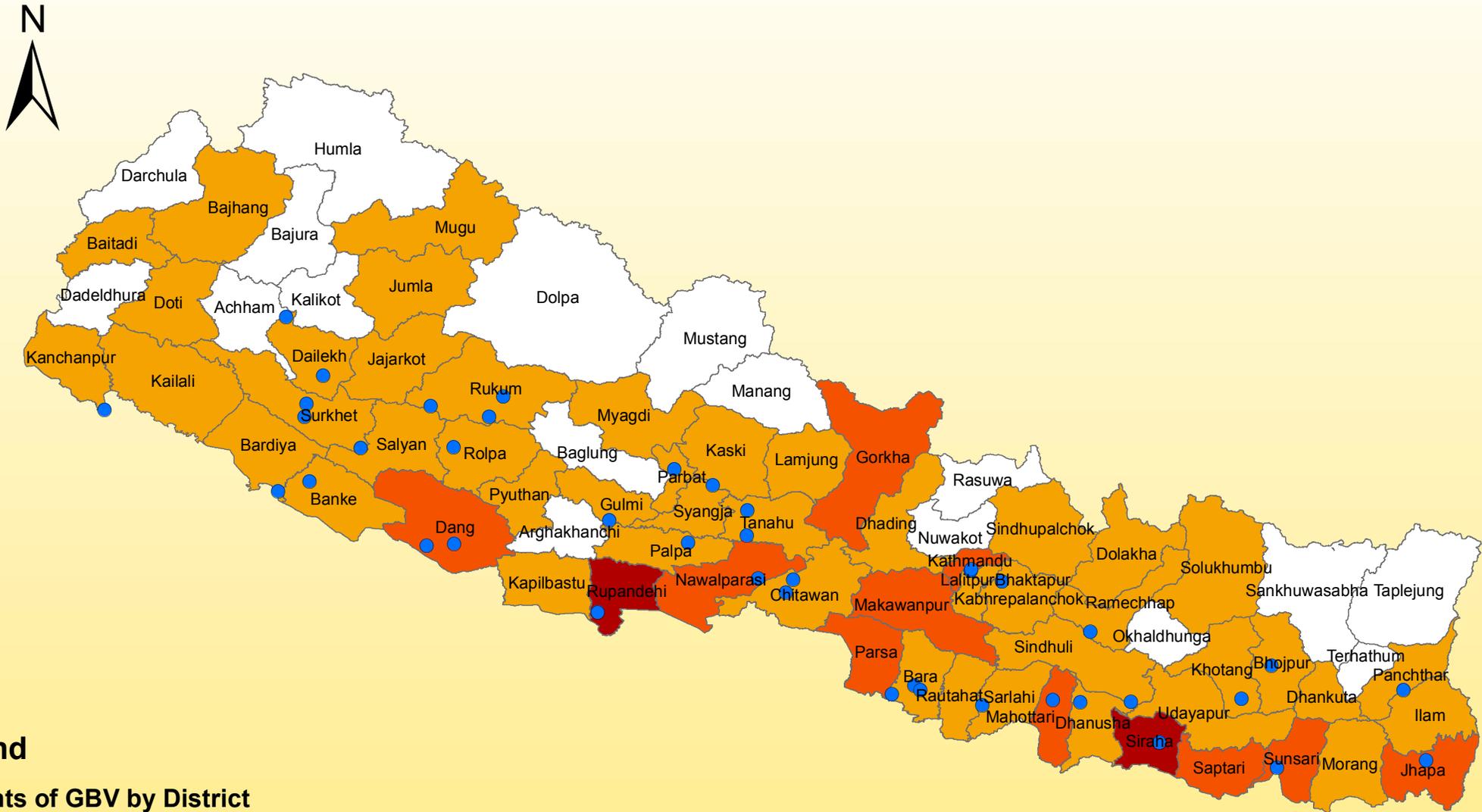
Legend

Number of Violent Incidents

- 0
- 1 - 8
- 9 - 16
- 17 - 24
- 25 - 30

• Deadly Incident

Map 3: Incidents of Gender Based Violence, Jul-Sep 2017



Legend

Incidents of GBV by District

- 0
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 14
- Deadly Incident