

Incidents during the May 14 Elections Counting Period

Analysis Update – 6

Period: May 15-21, 2017 | Published: May 23

Summary

Election-related incidents declined significantly after the first phase of local elections was held on May 14¹, with the nation's attention quickly turning to vote counting.² According to Nepal Monitor data, there were at least 13 election-related incidents between May 15-21, compared to the 81 incidents reported between May 12-14.³

There remains uncertainty about the second phase of local elections expected on June 14. Little progress has been made towards a constitutional amendment that remains a precondition for Madhesh-based parties' participation. The ECN has about three weeks to prepare for elections to be held in four provinces (versus three during the first phase). A much discussed change of government before the second phase of polls could also impact election preparations by shifting the priority from election preparations.⁴

Based on the last phase of polling, the possibility of election-related incidents occurring as election preparations and campaigning recommence is high.⁵ Flexibility will need to be exercised by all if the next phase of elections is to happen on time, and successfully.

Four incidents related to vote counting were recorded during this period, including: cadres of Nepali Congress and Rastriya Jana Morcha (RJM) clashing in Baglung; cadres of Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) protesting for vote counting to commence in Bharatpur, Chitwan; and two incidents in which journalists were manhandled by party cadres or election officials. There were at least three incidents involving the participants of victory rallies being attacked, resulting in multiple injuries.

The number of incidents involving Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) cadres carrying out 'anti-election activities' decreased significantly during this period – three incidents were reported.

¹ The first phase of polling was held on May 14 in 283 local units across Provinces 3, 4 and 6. The second phase of local elections is scheduled to be held on June 14 in Provinces 1, 2, 5 and 7.

² Vote counting began on May 15 in the majority of counting centers across Provinces 3, 4 and 6. As per results published by May 21, CPN-UML had won 114 mayoral positions, Nepali Congress had won 104, and CPN-MC had won 46. It is expected that counting will be completed in remaining local units this week.

³ See '[Factsheet 1](#)' for a complete list of incidents that occurred during this period.

⁴ See the Kathmandu Post's "[Dahal working to step down 'in a few days'](#)"

⁵ See all previous analysis updates in English and Nepali on [DRCN's website](#).

Overview of Incidents

Vote Counting Incidents

- On May 15, CPN-UML supporters protested in front of the Bharatpur District Development Office in Chitwan to demand that counting begin for Bharatpur Metropolitan City. Counting had not started because political party representatives could not agree on counting rules. Counting later began, although rival political parties continued to allege foul play throughout the process.
- On May 15, Nepali Congress and RJM cadres clashed at the vote counting center of Galkot Municipality of Baglung. RJM's mayoral candidate accused the Returning Officer of only allowing Nepali Congress cadres to enter the counting premises. The mayoral candidate further claimed that when his party cadres spoke against limited access that Nepali Congress cadres attacked them. The shops of Hatiya Bazar in Galkot Municipality remained closed after the clash in fear of further violence.
- On May 15, CPN-MC affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) cadres reportedly injured a journalist from Dudhauri Khabar in Dudhauri Rural Municipality of Sindhuli. The cadres are said to have beaten the journalist for taking a video of an argument that took place inside the counting center.
- On May 15, journalists protested in front of the counting center of Bharatpur Metropolitan City of Chitwan. They accused the Chief Returning Officer of the district of forcing them to leave the center.

Rally-Related Incidents

- On May 17, an unidentified group hurled stones at a CPN-UML victory rally in Chamunda Rural Municipality of Dailekh, reportedly resulting in at least 25 CPN-UML supporters being injured.
- On May 17, an unidentified group threw stones at a CPN-UML victory rally happening in Tinpatan Rural Municipality of Sindhuli, resulting in at least six injuries. One CPN-UML cadre sustained serious injuries.
- On May 20, CPN-UML cadres allegedly attacked and injured seven Nepali Congress cadres while they were returning from a Nepali Congress victory rally in Jwalamukhi Rural Municipality of Dhading. The injured included the recently elected Chairperson of the rural municipality. In protest of this incident, Dhading Nepali Congress called a general strike in Dhading on May 21.

CPN-Related Incidents

- On May 17, police arrested four CPN cadres from Phidim, the district headquarters of Panchthar, accusing them of conducting anti-election activities in the district⁶. The arrestees included the CPN District In-charge. The police reportedly did not allow

⁶ The news sources did not disclose what kind of "anti-election activities" the CPN cadres were involved in.

anyone to meet the arrested. Several human rights organisations in the district issued a statement demanding that the police allow access.

- On May 18, CPN cadres allegedly removed signboards from Aathrai Triveni and Phaktanlung rural municipalities of Taplejung. The party had announced elections would be prohibited in the area. CPN's District In-charge took responsibility for the incident.

Explosive-Related Incidents

- On May 15, an improvised explosive device (IED) was found 200 meters away from the vote counting center at Shankarapur Municipality (located in the outskirts of the Kathmandu valley). Nepal Army defused the explosive.

Incident Regarding Potential Voter Disenfranchisement

- On May 15, a group of voters of Mandhara Polling Center in Kharpunath Rural Municipality of Humla picketed the District Election Office and District Administration Office demanding that polling be repeated at the center. Nepali Congress cadres reportedly threatened the protestors and told not to vote in the local elections, so many did not cast their votes. It is claimed that as many as 400 citizens were denied their right to vote.⁷

Other Incidents

- On May 15, CPN-UML cadres allegedly threw stones at the house of a Nepali Congress candidate who had run in ward 1 of Narayan Municipality of Dailekh. Nepali Congress and CPN-UML cadres clashed after the event. In order to prevent further escalation, the Dailekh District Administration Office prohibited political parties from conducting activities between 7:00 PM on May 16 until 5:00 AM on May 17.

⁷ Read this [report of INSEC](#) for more information.

Post-Election Incidents, May 15 - May 21, 2017

May 21: Nepali Congress called for bandh in Dhading protesting against attack on it's cadres by UML Cadres at Jwalamukhi Rural Municipality

May 20: Seven persons including head of Jwalamukhi Rural Municipality were injured due to attack by UML cadres

May 18: Cadres of Nepal Communist Party vandalised and threw away the signboards of Aathrai Triveni and Phaktanglung Rural Municipality in Taplejung

May 17: Police arrested four cadres of Nepal Communist Party from Phidim on suspicion of being involved in anti-election activities

May 17: Six persons were injured when an unknown group pelted stones at the victory rally of UML in Tinpatan Rural Municipality of Sindhuli

May 15: Maoist Centre affiliated YCL cadres reportedly assaulted a journalist for capturing video at vote counting site in Sindhuli




May 15: Cadres of Nepali Congress and Janamorcha clashed with eachother at Galkot Municipality of Baglung during a dispute over vote counting

Legend

Event form

-  Gherau/Dharna/Padlocking
-  Demonstration
-  Strike/Bandh
-  Other forms of non-violent political protest
-  Curfew/Prohibitory Order
-  Group Clash/Attack
-  Symbolic Violence Involving Improvised Explosive Device
-  Vandalism

Total number of Incidents

-  0
-  1 - 2
-  3 - 5



May 17: 25 persons including mayor of Chamunda Bindrasaini Rural Municipality in Dailekh were injured when an unidentified group pelted stones at victory rally

May 16: DAO issued prohibitory order in Narayan Municipality of Dailekh after situation started turning tense due to clash between Nepali Congress and UML cadres