

Incidents During Campaign Period Before May 14 Elections

Analysis Update – 5

Period: April 22 to May 10, 2017 / Published: May 11

The number of election-related incidents significantly increased across Provinces 3, 4, and 6 during this period as political parties intensified their activities for the May 14 first phase of elections.¹ Between April 22 and May 10, Nepal Monitor reported at least 56 incidents² occurring across Province 3, 4, and 6.³ Compared to the previous reporting periods, the number of incidents involving Madhesh-based parties drastically reduced due to preparations for the polls being halted until after the first phase of polls, and Madhesh-based parties waiting to see if the major parties honor an agreement to amend the constitution before the second phase of elections.

At least 34 incidents reported were violent. These included acts of vandalism, arson, planting of improvised explosive devices (IED), clashes, and attacks on candidates or party cadres. One clash led to the death of a Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) cadre at Jungu village of Gaurishankar rural municipality in Dolakha when CPN-UML clashed with Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) [CPN(MC)].

Violent events have raised concerns amongst civil society, observer groups, and parts of the government with the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) and Prime Minister reportedly expressing concern about recent events.⁴ The increase in violent activities poses a challenge for holding elections across the country, and infringes upon the rights of candidates to run for office and voters to cast their ballots without fear of intimidation or violence. Incidents may have already scared or intimidated voters in certain parts of the country, which could drive down voter turnout. Violence on election day could lead to postponement or cancellation of polling, which could disenfranchise voters in those locations.

Major parties including Nepali Congress (NC), CPN-UML, and the CPN(MC) were involved in multiple incidents as their campaign activities increased across municipalities and rural municipalities. Incidents were generally between groups of party cadres of opposing political parties competing at ward-level, or for positions in rural municipalities or municipalities. There were at least 13 incidents where major parties clashed during campaigning that led to injuries.

¹ The second phase of elections is expected to be held on June 14, 2017 in provinces 1, 2, 5 and 7.

² Additional incidents are being recorded by Nepal Monitor and reported by the news media as this report goes to publication. An updated total and breakdown of incidents will be published in an analysis update after the elections are completed.

³ 24 incidents were reported in Province 3, 17 incidents in Province 6, and 15 in Province 4

⁴ See the Kathmandu Post's '[Incidents of violence a cause for concern: EC](#)', May 11, 2017.

These incidents turned violent as cadres of different parties fought as campaigning intensified closer to the election date.⁵

The Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)⁶, which stands against the existing parliamentary system and announced that it will disrupt local elections, also increased activities during this period, particularly in the more rural areas of Province 4 and Province 6. CPN has been involved in at least 20 incidents, including: cadres intimidating candidates with aim to have them withdraw their candidacies; obstruction of election campaigns; padlocking of rural municipality offices; arson; and attacks on candidates. In 11 incidents CPN cadres were arrested for threatening candidates and their supporters, holding meetings against elections, or disrupting election campaigns. In one incident CPN cadres were arrested while carrying improvised explosive devices (IEDs). CPN cadres were also reported to have been involved in at least five more violent incidents that involved arson or attacks on candidates, however no arrests were made. In another major incident, CPN cadres in Kalikot attacked a police patrol, leaving seven police personnel injured.

10 incidents were attributed to ‘unidentified groups,’ with the intention of seemingly intimidating candidates. Seven incidents directly targeted candidates running for local level positions, including three cases of arson, one case of abduction, and a case of election campaign obstruction, firing of a gun, and planting of a bomb.

Madhesh-based party activities and protests considerably decreased during this period as election preparations in Provinces 1, 2, 5 and 7 were halted until after the first phase of elections. There was only one incident related to Madhesh-based parties in which Morcha cadres disrupted a voter education program. Rastriya Janata Party Nepal (RJPN), a major stakeholder in Madheshi Morcha, decided not to participate in the first phase of elections, whereas Sanghiya Samajwadi Forum Nepal (SSFN), another major party in Morcha, decided to participate.⁷ All Madhesh-based parties continue to demand a constitutional amendment as the major pre-condition to participating in the second phase of elections scheduled for June 14.

Overview of Incidents

Below is a sample of incidents that occurred during the reporting period. Additional incidents are being recorded by Nepal Monitor and reported by the news media as this report goes to publication. An updated total and breakdown of incidents will be published in an analysis update after the elections are completed.

Incidents Involving CPN

- On April 24, CPN cadres removed the signboard of Pyuthan Municipality, Swargadwari Municipality, and Mandabi Rural Municipality in Pyuthan in protest of the elections. In Kaski, CPN cadres padlocked the offices of the Machapuchre, Annapurna and Madi rural municipalities. In Rolpa, CPN cadres burned the signboard

⁵ There were six reported cases of CPN-UML cadres clashing with NC cadres, three cases of NC clashing with CPN(MC), two cases where cadres of CPN-UML and CPN(MC) clashed, and one case of Naya Sakti Party Nepal (NSPN) and CPN(MC) clashing.

⁶ CPN, one of the splinter groups of the erstwhile United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPNM), is led by Netra Bikram Chand Biplav. They have announced that they will disrupt the local elections.

⁷ Madheshi Morcha was an alliance of seven Madhesh-based parties. On April 20, six of them excluding SSFN formed a unified party called RJPN, led by Mahantha Thakur. SSFN led by Upendra Yadav has participated in first phase of elections in alliance with NSPN led by Dr. Babburam Bhattarai.

of Runtigadi rural municipality. According to a ward official in Runtigadi, the cadres also tried to physically attack the rural municipality staff.

- On April 25, CPN cadres staged a demonstration against the elections and parliamentary system in Shanti Batika in Kathmandu.
- Between April 24 and May 8, CPN cadres were arrested from 11 places for reportedly carrying out anti-election activities:
 - On April 24, 30 cadres were reportedly arrested from Birendra Municipality in Surkhet as they began a rally demanding cancelation of local elections. The police confiscated more than 100 flags and banners that had slogans printed on them against the elections.
 - On May 2, police arrested two cadres in Jumla district headquarters alleging that they had removed election promotion posters, and had posted pamphlets against the elections.
 - Police arrested three CPN cadres in Chitwan on May 3, four in Kavre on May 5, twelve in Dhading on May 5, three in Sindhuli on May 6, and two in Baglung on May 8, for allegedly threatening candidates to withdraw their candidacies.
 - On May 4, 13 CPN cadres were arrested from Gulariya, Bardiya while they were holding a meeting, allegedly for possessing pamphlets with anti-election slogans.
 - On May 5, three cadres were arrested from Machhapuchchhre rural municipality in Kaski while posting and writing anti-election slogans on the walls.
 - On May 5, police arrested three CPN cadres in Dolakha for allegedly threatening candidates and distributing anti-election pamphlets.
 - On May 6, police apprehended three CPN cadres IEDs in Bardibas of Mahottari. According to Police Superintendent of Mahottari, the accused had a plan to detonate bombs in 18 government offices to obstruct the local elections.
- On May 4, CPN cadres reportedly obstructed the door-to-door election campaign of CPN(MC) at Mumra village of Sanni Triveni rural municipality in Kalikot. According to a central committee member of CPN(MC), a group of approximately 40 cadres of CPN displayed a black flag and stopped the CPN(MC) election campaigners from entering the village.
- On May 6, CPN cadres torched a vehicle being used by a NC candidate contesting for ward chairperson from Machhapuchchhre rural municipality, ward-2 of Kaski. NC in Kaski issued a press statement condemning the incident and demanding action be taken against perpetrators.
- On May 6, CPN cadres also attacked the police in Puchchhegaun village of Rastakot Municipality in Kalikot, which led to the injury of seven police members. According to police sources, the CPN cadres began throwing stones at the police when police went to the village to arrest a CPN leader allegedly involved in anti-election activities. A CPN politburo member claimed it was local residents who attacked the police as they attempted to arrest a CPN leader who was attending a marriage ceremony in the village. A police constable, who sustained serious injuries, was taken to the District Hospital in Manma, the headquarters of Kalikot.

Incidents Involving Major Political Parties

- On April 27, dissatisfied NC cadres from Lekbesi Municipality reportedly padlocked their party office in Surkhet, alleging that the Regional Working Committee of Constituency No. 2 had unilaterally selected party candidates for the local elections. The cadres said that the party's decision to choose candidates for mayor and vice-mayor of Lekbesi Municipality did not come from consultation with cadres of the municipality.
- On May 4, three CPN-UML cadres were critically injured when NC cadres disrupted an election mass meeting of CPN-UML in Kaphalbata of Kushe Rural Municipality in Jajarkot. The CPN-UML District Under-Secretary alleged that a group of NC cadres led by a local leader had attacked the meeting with knives and stones.
- On May 6, six CPN(MC) cadres and a civilian were injured in a clash between the cadres of CPN(MC) and NC in Musikot Municipality, Rukum. The clash began when CPN(MC) cadres allegedly threw away a NC flag hoisted at a local NC supporter's home. A spokesperson at the District Police Office said that six NC cadres and four CPN(MC) cadres suspected of being involved in the incident were arrested.
- On May 6, four cadres of NSPN sustained injuries in a clash with CPN(MC) cadres in Gorkha Municipality of Gorkha district. The CPN(MC) cadres allegedly attacked the NSNP cadres while they were travelling to the district headquarters in a jeep as a part of their election campaign. The injured cadres were hospitalised.
- On May 6, five NC cadres and four CPN(MC) cadres were injured after a clash in Tribeni Rural Municipality, Rukum. NC officials in Rukum said that CPN(MC) attacked their cadres who were peacefully engaged in an election campaign. The critically injured NC cadres have been hospitalised at the District Hospital in Salle, Rukum.
- On May 8, CPN(MC) and CPN-UML cadres clashed with each other at Mudkechula Rural Municipality in Dolpa. Police later confirmed that two CPN-UML cadres and five CPN(MC) cadres sustained injuries in the clash.
- On May 9, CPN(MC) cadres injured two CPN-UML cadres in Dudhauli Municipality, Sindhuli. The victims were beaten up at their own home for an election-related dispute. The injured CPN-UML cadres were referred to Kathmandu as they had sustained serious injuries.
- On May 9, a CPN-UML cadre was killed in a clash with CPN(MC) cadres at Jungu village of Gaurishankar Rural Municipality, Dolakha. Kul Bahadur Tamang, a CPN-UML cadre was killed in the incident and Dil Bahadur Budathoki, another CPN-UML cadre sustained serious injuries.

Incidents Involving Unidentified Groups

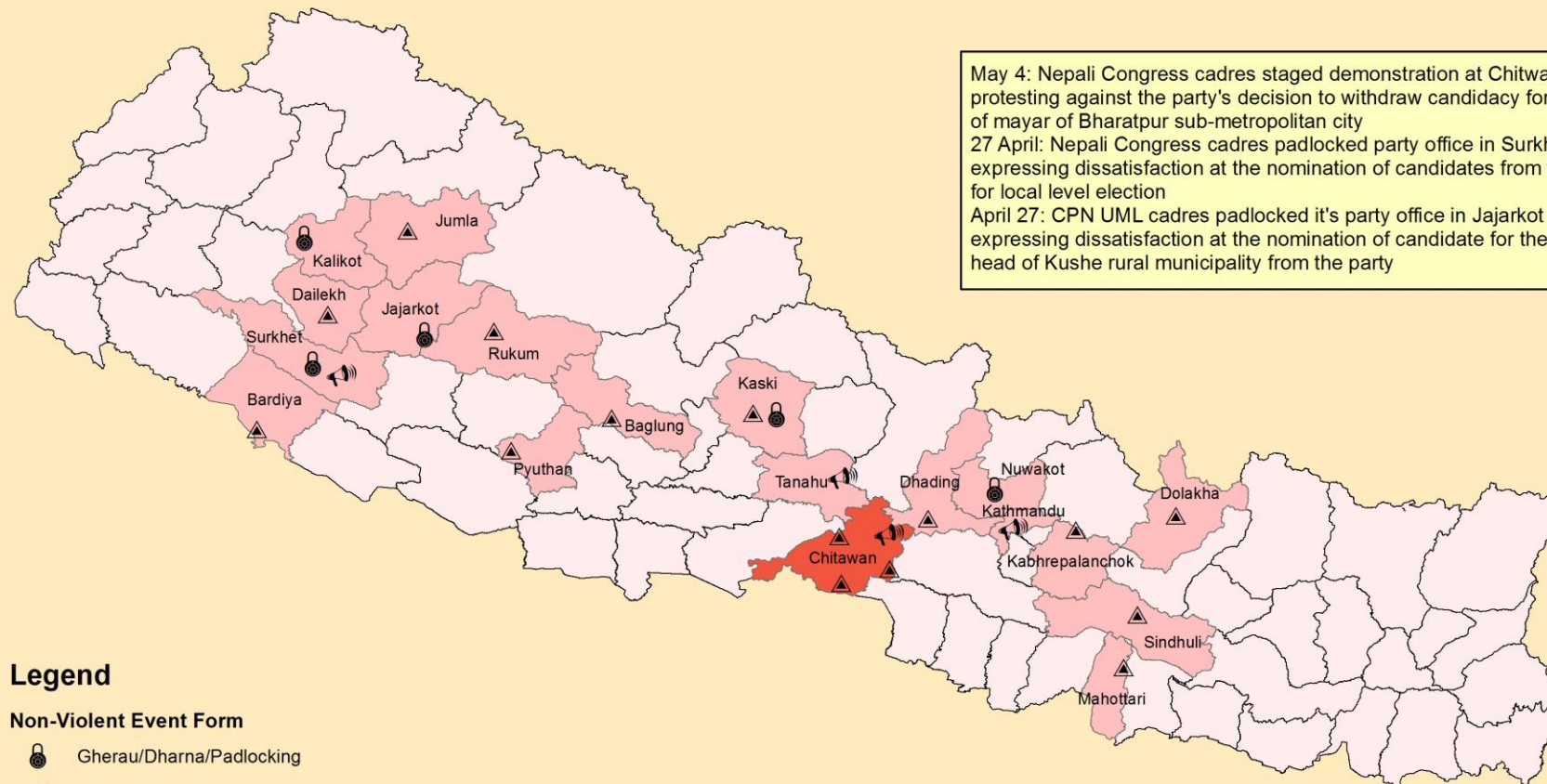
- On April 25, an unidentified group at Kokhim, Khaniyabas Rural Municipality in Dhading, reportedly disrupted an election campaign program organised by CPN-UML. The group vandalised the stage, which was supposed to be used for a mass meeting the next day.
- On May 1, an unidentified group abducted a NC candidate vying for the position of ward chairperson in Beni Municipality, ward-4 of Myagdi. Police suspected that CPN activists might have abducted the Nepali Congress candidate.
- On May 4, an unidentified group fired shots at the home of a CPN-UML candidate competing for ward chairperson in Khadachakra Municipality, ward-8 of Kalikot.
- On May 5, a socket bomb was discovered at the ground floor of a NC mayoral candidate's house in Kushma Municipality, Parbat. The Nepal Army defused the bomb.
- On May 5, an unidentified group torched a vehicle belonging to a NC candidate in Shivapuri Rural Municipality of Nuwakot.
- On May 6, an unidentified group set two vehicles on fire that were being used in a NC election publicity campaign. The attack took place while the two vehicles were parked at Dhunibensi Municipality, ward-5 in Dhading.
- On May 6, a jeep used by a CPN-UML candidate for ward chairperson of ward-2 of Thakre Rural Municipality in Dhading was reportedly set on fire while it was parked in the premises of the candidate's house.
- On May 8, a group of unidentified persons hurled a petrol bomb at the Shivapuri Water Industry in Kathmandu that is owned by a NC leader. According to the company manager, a group of five masked persons overtook the company guard and threw the bomb at the industry. A car and a motorcycle parked in the premises of the company were completely damaged in the attack. Another motorbike was partially damaged.

Incident Involving Madheshi Morcha

- On April 22, Morcha cadres reportedly clashed with police when the cadres disrupted a voter education training in Rajbiraj, Saptari. Police moved to disperse the Morcha cadres after they entered the training venue at Anirudra Secondary School and took away training materials. Four Morcha cadres were injured and were reported as being hospitalized.

This is the fifth of a series of periodic analysis updates that Democracy Resource Center Nepal (DRCN) and the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) | NepalMonitor.org will be releasing during the upcoming election period. This project receives financial and technical support from The Asia Foundation and The Carter Center.

Non-Violent Incidents, April 22 - May 10, 2017



Legend

Non-Violent Event Form

- Gherau/Dharna/Padlocking
- Demonstration
- Other forms of non-violent political protest

Total Non-Violent Incidents

- 0
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 10

May 4: Nepali Congress cadres staged demonstration at Chitwan protesting against the party's decision to withdraw candidacy for the post of mayor of Bharatpur sub-metropolitan city
27 April: Nepali Congress cadres padlocked party office in Surkhet expressing dissatisfaction at the nomination of candidates from the party for local level election
April 27: CPN UML cadres padlocked it's party office in Jajarkot expressing dissatisfaction at the nomination of candidate for the post of head of Kushe rural municipality from the party

April 24-May 9: During this period police arrested cadres of Netra Bikram Chand led Nepali Communist Party from Bardiya, Chitawan, Dailekh, Dhading, Dolakha, Jumla, Kaski, Kathmandu, Kavrepalanchok, Mahottari, Pyuthan, Rukum, Sindhuli, and Surkhet for engaging in anti-election activities
In Mahottari and Chitawan Chand's cadres were arrested in possession of bomb making items





Violent Incidents, April 22 - May 10, 2017

May 5 - May10: During this period vehicles belonging to or used by candidates of local level election from different political parties were found torched in Chitawan, Dhading, Kaski, Kathmandu, Nawalparasi, Nuwakot, Rolpa and Rukum district
Police suspect cadres of Netra Bikram Chand led Nepal Communist Party behind these incidents





May 10: Police fired warning shots after Maoist Center and Nepali Congress cadres clashed with each other in Sanobhari-1 rural municipality of Rukum
May 9: A CPN UML cadre was killed while another was seriously hurt during a clash between Maoist Centre and CPN UML at Jungu in Gaurishankar rural municipality-2 of Dolakha
May 8: Four injured as Nepali Congress cadres resort to khukuri attack on CPN UML cadres on campaign at Dharapani of Chapakot municipality-6, Syangja
May 8: Nepali Congress and CPN UML cadres clashed in Juphal of Dolpa
May 8: Seven persons were injured during a clash between Maoist Center and CPN UML cadres at Mudkechula of Dolpa
May 8: CPN UML candidate for the post of Beni-5's ward chief was injured in Nepali Congress cadre's attack in Myagdi
May 6: 7 policemen were injured during a clash with cadre of Netra Bikram Chand led Nepal Communist Party at Raskot municipality-7 of Kalikot
May 6: Four Naya Shakti cadres were injured after being attacked by Maoist Centre cadres at Gorkha municipality-9 of Gorkha
May 6: 6 Maoist cadres were reported injured during a clash between Nepali Congress and Maoist Center at Musikot municipality-2, Rukum
April 25: Unidentified men vandalised the stage set for CPN UML's program in Khaniyabas-2 of Dhading

Legend

Violent Event Form

-  Arson
-  Group Clash/Assault
-  Symbolic Violence involving Improvised Explosive Device (IED)
-  Vandalism

Total number of violent incidents

-  0
-  1 - 2
-  3 - 5
-  6 - 10

