Trends of Violence and Contestation in Nepal

This is the fourth 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 data 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.

October - December, 2017
Executive Summary

On November 26 and December 7, Nepal held its first elections to the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies under the new constitution promulgated on September 20, 2015. Both elections were held simultaneously in two phases and followed elections to local units held earlier in the year on May 14, June 28 and September 18. For the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies elections, the PMP recorded 476 election related incidents (319 of them violent). 247 people were injured and two people died in separate incidents of electoral violence.

The most common form of electoral violence recorded in Quarter Four were incidents involving the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (in 221 cases). At times these attacks targeted senior leaders and campaign events and created considerable security concern. This was followed by clashes and assaults in 78 cases. Clashes often erupted as rival parties accused their opponent of breaching the electoral Code of Conduct, which included trying to influence voters during the silence period or malpractice on election day. Electoral incidents increased with the intensification of campaigning in the weeks leading up to the polls.

In total, the PMP recorded 919 incidents this quarter (639 violent and 280 nonviolent). Half of these incidents were election related. In comparison to the previous quarter, this quarter witnessed an overall increase in incidents by 35 percent but a decrease in fatalities due to violence by 10 percent (from 118 in third quarter to 106). As in the past, disputes of a personal nature and gender-based violence (GBV) remained the leading causes for violent deaths, killing 43 and 28 people respectively in the period under review.
IED Explosions and Violent Incidents During First and Second Phase of Elections

On November 26 and December 7, Nepal held the first and second phase of elections to the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies. On November 26, voting took place in 32 mountain and upper hill districts, while polling was conducted in the remaining 45 districts on December 7. Election days remained largely peaceful, despite concerns about a rise in incidents involving the use of IEDs in the days leading up to the polls.

In total, the PMP recorded 476 election-related incidents in the period from October to December 2017, with 319 of them being violent. 247 people were injured and two people killed in separate incidents of electoral violence. With parties intensifying canvassing for votes, the number of electoral incidents sharply rose in the week from November 19 and only abated after polling for the second phase was concluded on December 7 (see Figure 1).¹

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¹ See: Analysis Updates and Factsheets on Electoral Violence
221 incidents of electoral violence involved the use of improvised explosive devices (IED) or hoax bombs which targeted campaign events, candidates, senior leaders or their supporters. In many cases, explosions only caused minor damage or security forces were able to defuse explosives before the bombs detonated. However, 14 incidents yielded casualties with 53 people reportedly injured. On November 28, a temporary policeman died after being injured in an explosion at a campaign event of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in Tulsipur, Dang. On November 29, Nepali Congress (NC) candidate Narayan Karki was injured in a bomb explosion at Nepalta, Udayapur district. On December 4, cadres of NC and former Minister of Health and Population Gagan Thapa were injured when a bomb detonated at a campaign event in Budhanilkantha Municipality in Kathmandu. In response to such attacks, security forces stepped up preventative arrests of cadres and leaders of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) accusing them often of vague ‘anti-election activities’. Although no political entity had claimed responsibility for such incidents at the time, on December 7, a spokesperson for the CPN led by Netra Bikram Chand later acknowledged that these were part of the “Cancel the Election Campaign” under the leadership of their party.

Provincial Assembly and House of Representatives Elections - Background

On August 21, the government announced that elections to the federal parliament and provincial assemblies would be held on November 26. This followed the successful completion of Phase I and II of the first Local Elections in 20 years. The third phase of local elections in province 2, was made possible after an understanding was reached between the government and the Rastriya Janata Party - Nepal (RJP-N) who had previously opposed any election before the amendment of the constitution. On August 23, RJP-N decided to participate in the election after the government table d the constitutional amendment bill on August 21.

The government again revised the schedule on August 30 and announced elections to be held in two phases on November 26 and December 7 due to concerns about logistical management and weather conditions as snowfall was likely to impede elections in mountain districts in winter.

On October 3, CPN-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) and CPN-Maoist Center (MC) announced the formation of a “Left Alliance”. In response, NC established the “Democratic Electoral
Alliance” including Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and RPP-Nepal on October 4. The Naya Shakti Party that had previously been part of the Left Alliance joined the Democratic Electoral Alliance later. The Madhesi parties, RJP-N, and Federal Socialist Forum Nepal (FSFN) filed common candidates in the direct elections. In particular, the alliance of CPN-UML and CPN-MC, former rivals on the left, took many by surprise and reshaped Nepal’s fragmented political landscape considerably: candidates of the Left Alliance won nearly two thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives and a clear majority in 6 of 7 provincial assemblies.

The PMP also recorded 78 election-related clashes or assaults in which 185 people were injured, a share of 75 percent of the total injuries recorded in electoral violence (see Figure 2). Most of these clashes took place between supporters of rival political parties accusing their opponent of either breaching the electoral Code of Conduct during the campaign period, trying to influence voters during the silence period, or malpractice on election day. Two incidents stemmed from dissatisfaction within a party regarding the candidate selection process and two clashes occurred between security forces and cadres of CPN who tried to disrupt preparations for the elections in Kalikot and Surkhet.

Figure 2: Share of Injuries Recorded in Electoral Incidents, by Form of Violence

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8 See: [FSF-N, RJP-N Agree to Forge Electoral Alliance](#)
9 See: [Police Fire Shots After CPN Cadres Pelt Stones at Electoral Team in Kalikot and Clash Between Electoral Team and CPN Cadres](#)
After the elections, several districts saw protests by temporary police personnel whose tenure was about to end. These temporary police officers had been recruited to provide security during the elections and now alleged irregularities in their pay or provision of their rations. One such protest led to a temporary policeman being shot by security personnel in a clash in front of District Police Office (DPO) in Manma, Kalikot district on December 22 (for more details see Box: Protests by Temporary Police Personnel).

**Protests by Temporary Police Personnel**

On December 22, a temporary police was shot by security personnel in a clash in front of District Police Office (DPO) in Manma, Kalikot district. He was shot after a clash broke out during a protest by the temporary police accusing the DPO of misusing the budget meant for their salaries. The temporary police personnel had been recruited as part of the security arrangements during the elections after the Nepal Police Headquarters had called for applications of 98,268 temporary police personnel on October 10 for the elections to the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies.

Protests of temporary police personnel was also witnessed in other districts after the government had terminated their contract prematurely after 45 instead of the initially stipulated 55 days with a simultaneous cut in pay. On December 14, temporary police personnel staged protests in Birgunj, Parsa district, accusing the government of paying them less than their official salary. On December 18, temporary police personnel in Dolakha rallied to protest that they were charged more than regular police personnel for their meals in the canteen. The protests led to a scuffle with police in which a few of the protesters were injured. In Kalikot, temporary police personnel further intensified their protests after the death of their fellow temporary policeman.

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10 See: Temporary Police Intensify Protests in Kalikot
11 See: Temporary Cop Vacancies Announced
12 See: Temporary Police Hit the Streets
13 See: Myadi Police Protest Against Overcharging on Food
Violent Incidents and Injuries Increase in The Fourth Quarter While Fatalities Decline

Compared to the previous quarter, the fourth quarter saw an overall increase in violent incidents by 31 percent (from 489 to 639 incidents) and non-violent incidents by 50 percent (from 193 to 290). Similarly, injuries increased by 13 percent with the number of people injured increasing from 370 to 418 (see Figure 3). However, the number of fatalities due to violence fell slightly from 118 to 106 fatalities.

The increase in violence and resulting injuries was driven by electoral violence: 73 percent of violent incidents and 59 percent of resulting injuries in the fourth quarter were related to the elections to the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies (shown in Figure 4 as “Political” triggers). However, the number of incidents, injuries, and deaths in electoral violence for the fourth quarter remained below the figures for the second quarter when the first and second phase of local elections were held (see Figures 3 and 4).14

14 The lower level of election-related violence during the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies elections in Quarter Four can be attributed to the understanding reached in August between the government and previously protesting Madhes-based parties and the higher number of candidates during elections to local bodies when compared to the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies elections.
In addition, incidents of GBV fell by 38 percent (from 209 incidents recorded in Quarter Three to 130 in Quarter Four) and resulting fatalities by 36 percent (from 42 to 27 deaths). Personal disputes resulted in 41 deaths (a rise of 14 percent compared to the 36 deaths in the third quarter) making it the leading cause of violent deaths in this quarter. In 28 percent of the cases, the motive of killings remained unclear (see Figure 5).
As in the past, sexual assault was the most common form of GBV recorded, with 86 cases in this quarter. Among those 82 cases were incidents of rape or attempted rape (a decrease by 26 percent from 111 cases in the third quarter). 33 victims of rape were women and girls of 25 years or below. PMP also recorded 37 cases of domestic violence (resulting in 22 deaths) and six cases of infanticide. In 39 cases (or 30 percent) the perpetrators of gender based violence were family members or relatives. The districts of Kathmandu, Siraha, and Saptari saw the highest number of incidents of GBV, with nine cases each (see Map 3).

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](#).
Map 1: Incidents Related to Provincial Assembly and House of Representatives Elections, Phase I and Phase II

Legend
- Provincial Boundaries
- Deadly Incident
- Incident Resulting in Injures

Number of Incidents by District
- 0
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 15
- 16 - 18

Dec 22: One killed as police personnel clash with retiring temporary police personnel in Kalikot

Nov 28: A temporary police personel succumbed to his injuries he sustained in an explosion targeted at Sher Bahadur Deuba's election rally in Dang

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Map 2: Violent Incidents and Resulting Deaths, October-December 2017

Legend

Number of Incidents by District

- 0
- 1 - 8
- 9 - 16
- 17 - 24
- 25 - 35

▲ Deadly Incident

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Map 3: Incidents of Gender Based Violence, October-December 2017

Legend

Incidents of GBV by District

- 0
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 9

○ Deadly Incident

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