

TRENDS OF VIOLENCE AND CONTESTATION IN NEPAL

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2020



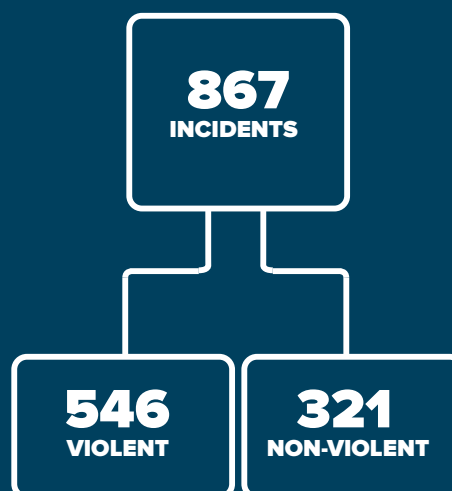


TRENDS OF VIOLENCE AND CONTESTATION IN NEPAL FROM SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2020

This report from the Nepal Peace Monitoring Project (PMP) analyses trends of violent and nonviolent public contestation in Nepal from September-November 2020. Data of violent and non-violent incidents are compiled from reports of all major online news portals, national and local newspapers from 20 districts in Nepal, and incident reports directly submitted to us. The goal of the PMP is to improve our understanding of violence in Nepal to better respond to it and to promote peace. The number of incidents recorded in this report are based on reports mapped by [NepalMonitor.org](https://nepalmonitor.org).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From September to November 2020, the Peace Monitoring Project (PMP), recorded 867 incidents which marks a decrease of incidents by 35 when compared to June-August. Of the total incidents recorded, 546 were violent and 321 were non violent. The main triggers of violent and non violent incidents mainly involved violence against women, disputes of personal nature, issues related to governance, politics, incidents related to COVID-19 and discrimination against Dalits. Violence killed 109 and injured 99 people. Disputes of personal nature and gender-based violence alone claimed the lives of 46 and 35 people respectively.



About 190 governance related incidents were recorded of which 47 incidents were directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The PMP also recorded 85 incidents related to political issues which mainly involved demonstrations by the Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) on the constitution day and protests in Province 5 regarding the designation of its capital. The Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) led by Netra Bikram Chand was involved in about 23 incidents in which 19 incidents were of politically significant arrests of its cadres.

*“109
GOVERNANCE
RELATED
INCIDENTS”*

*“47 INCIDENTS
DIRECTLY
RELATED TO
COVID-19”*

OVERVIEW OF INCIDENTS BETWEEN 1 SEPTEMBER - 30 NOVEMBER

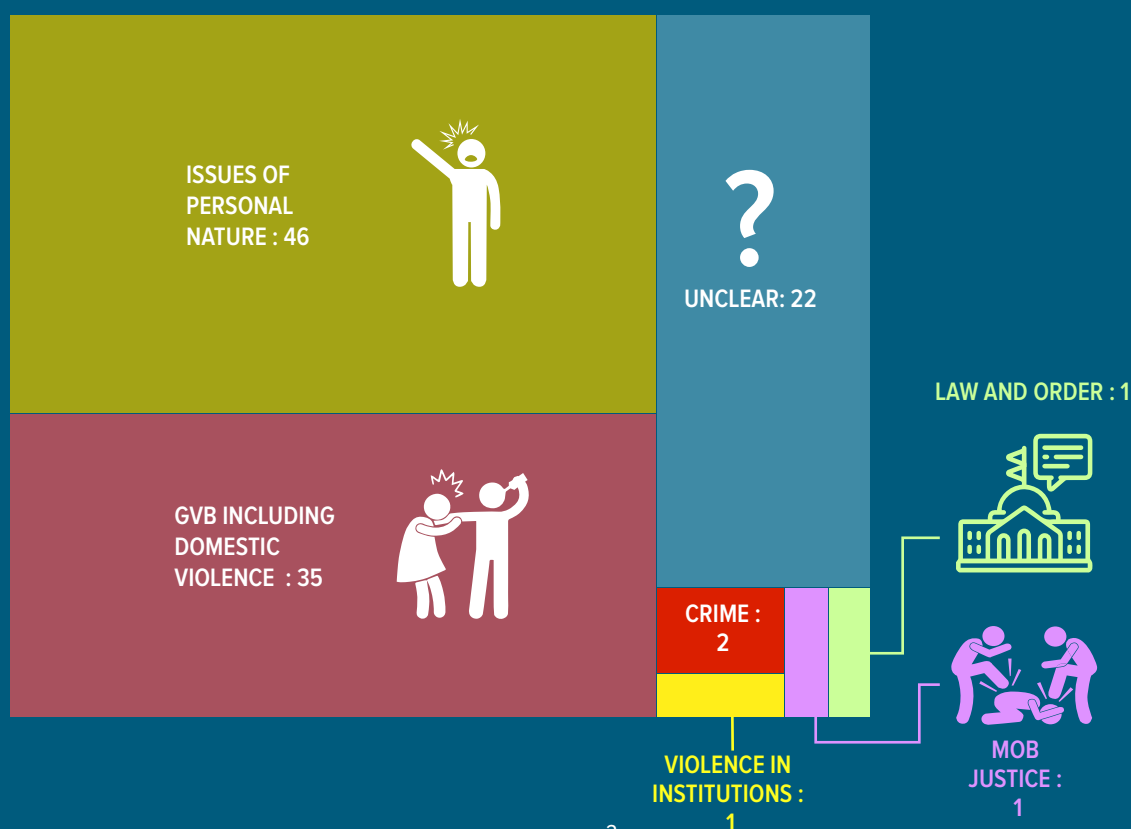
From September to November 2020, the Peace Monitoring Project (PMP), recorded 867 incidents. Compared to the previous quarter from June-August, the number of incidents decreased by 35 percent. Of the total incidents recorded, 546 were violent and 321 were non violent incidents.

The main triggers of violent and non violent incidents in the past three months mainly involved violence against women including sexual assault, domestic violence and allegations of witchcraft, issues related to governance, politics, crisis brought along by the COVID-19 pandemic including poor management of quarantine centers and caste based discrimination against Dalits. A total of 109 people were killed and 99 injured in violence from September to November 2020. The primary triggers of fatal violence were disputes of personal nature followed by gender-based violence which claimed the lives of 46 and 35 people, respectively (See Fig1).

Disputes of personal nature mainly involved economic issues, clash over inheritance, debt or land and violence with an intention of revenge.

Gender based violence (GBV) or violence against women has become a problem of great magnitude in Nepali societies with cases of violence affecting the daily lives of many women and girls. The PMP recorded 326 cases of GBV with sexual assault being the most common form of violence with 217 cases of rape with 180 victims under the age of 25 years (See fig 1 and 3). The PMP also recorded 35 cases of domestic violence. Violence against women in the Nepali societies have raised a big question regarding the safety of young girls and women. Gender based violence has not spared boys and men but as per our data majority of the victims are women. The numbers of cases are likely to be higher than our data or record as so many cases go unreported due to threats to the victims or fear of being stigmatized.

FIG 1: NUMBER OF FATALITIES IN VIOLENCE BY TRIGGER



About six cases of discrimination against people from the Dalit community were recorded in which three incidents involved violence. Similarly, the 190 governance related incidents mainly involved protests demanding legal action and delivery of justice and against the poor quality of services in sectors of health and education (see fig 2 and 3). Out of the total 190 incidents, 47 were directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PMP recorded 85 incidents related to political issues (see fig 2 and 3) which mainly involved protests demanding restoration of monarchy, demonstrations by the Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) on the constitution day demanding to revoke the present constitution and protests in Province 5 regarding government's proposal to designate Deukhuri of Dang as the provincial capital and the name of the province as "Lumbini Province". The Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) led by Netra Bikram Chand (Biplov) was involved in about 23 incidents in which 19 incidents were of politically significant arrests of their cadres.

FIG 2: TRIGGERS OF VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT INCIDENTS

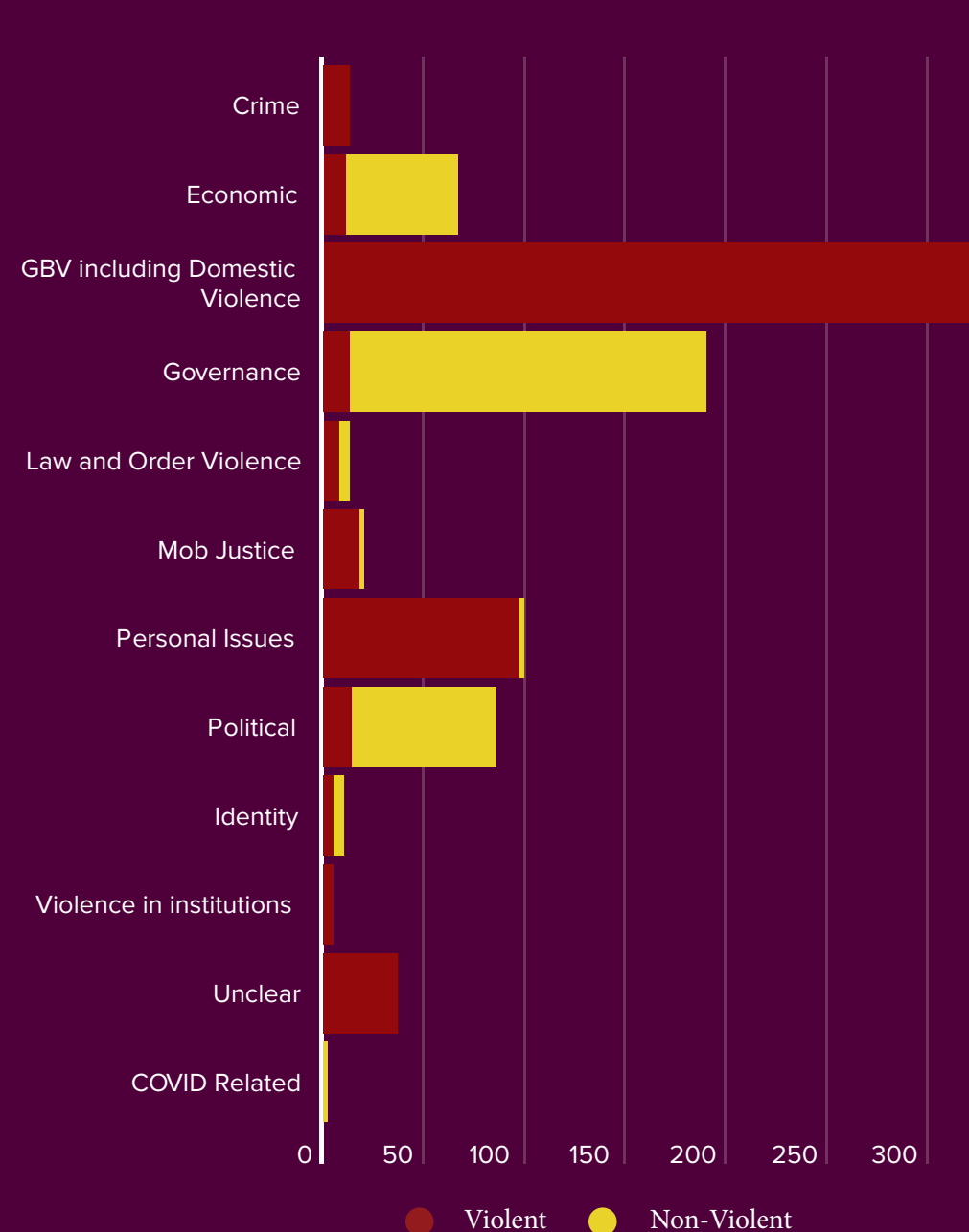
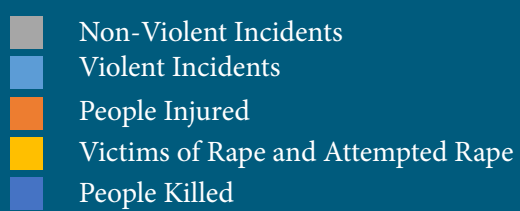
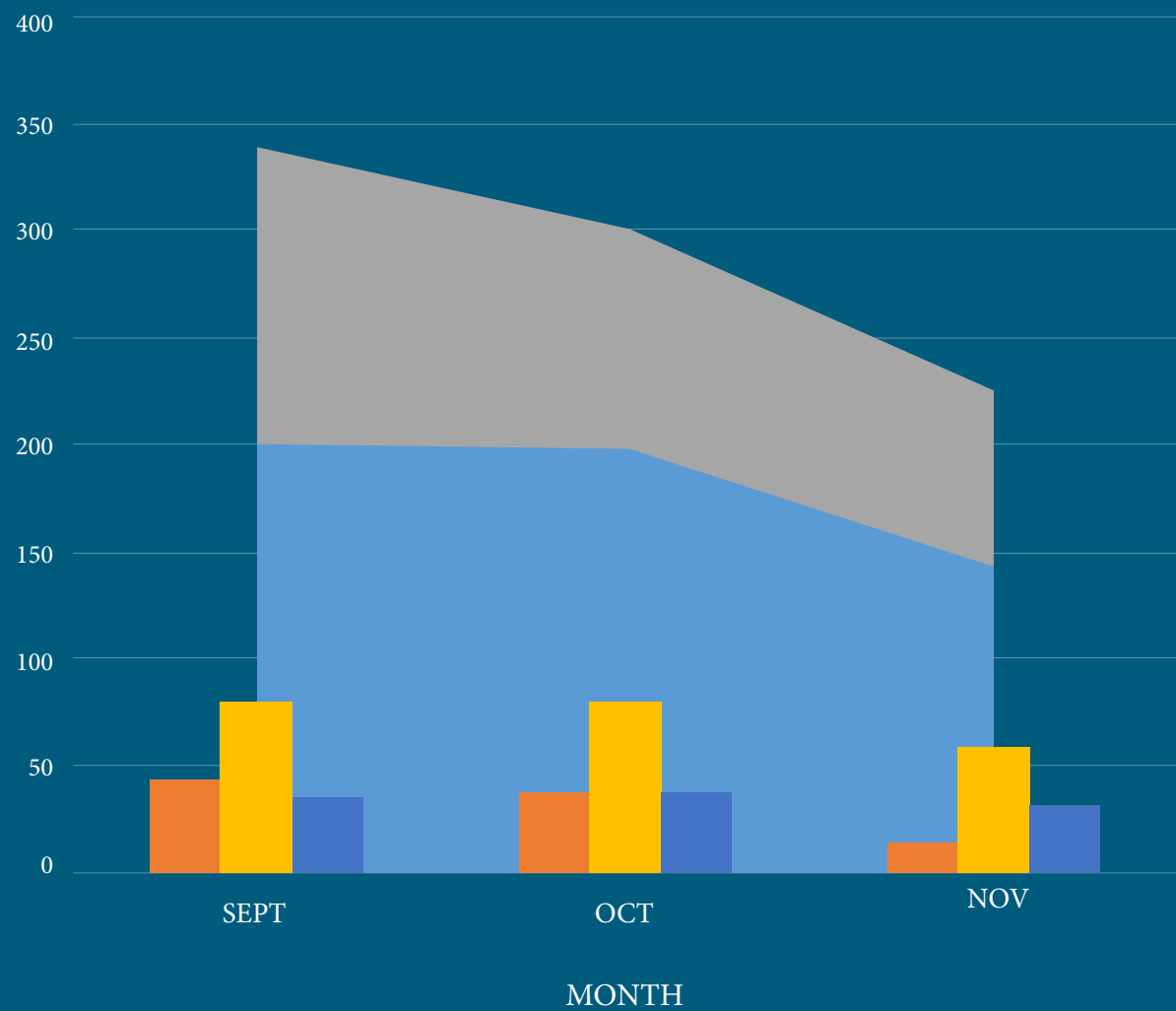


FIG 3: INCIDENTS AND THEIR IMPACTS



GOVERNANCE RELATED ISSUES INCLUDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The PMP recorded 190 governance related incidents of which 47 incidents were related to government's response to the pandemic, protests demanding quality management of quarantine centers and prohibitory orders to prevent the spread of the virus. Governance related incidents including the issues surrounding the pandemic decreased by 79 percent compared to the numbers of incidents from June-August 2020 (from 214 incidents to 47 incidents). Out of the 190, governance related incidents from September-November, 177 were non violent incidents involving 96 demonstrations and 59 incidents of strikes. While, the remaining 13 incidents were violent that involved eight incidents of assaults and five group clashes.

About nine incidents were recorded in demand of relief which involved five incidents of padlocking of institutions like schools, three protests and an incident of an assault. For instance, on October 26, 21 political organizations staged a protest against the government's decision to withdraw its support for the treatment of COVID-19 infected patients. The political parties involved in the protest include CPN maoist, CPN-Masal and patriotic people's democratic front.¹ Similarly, ten incidents of protest against the health care management system were recorded which involved demonstrations by the health workers

and patients. For instance, on September 8, kidney patients and their relatives staged a demonstration in Bharatpur, Chitwan demanding regular dialysis as the hospital had put out a notice saying that only emergency dialysis services will be provided as some doctors and nurses of the unit contracted COVID-19.² Similarly, on October 25, the nurses of BP Koirala institute of Health Sciences Dharan boycotted duty for three hours accusing the hospital of ignoring the needs of nurses assigned for the COVID-19 treatment such as regular PCR tests.³

About 18 incidents against the prohibitory orders were recorded which mainly involved demonstrations, group clashes and defiance of prohibitory orders implemented to prevent the spread of the virus. For instance, on September 3, police and public clashed in Pulchowk, Lalitpur after locals attempted to conduct the procession of pulling the chariot of Rato Machindranath as part of their yearly festival.⁴ According to the senior superintendent chief of Lalitpur metropolitan Police Range around 800 people were gathered without any social distancing despite a prohibitory order issued by the Lalitpur District Administration office as at the time the number of COVID-19 infections were on rise.⁵ A group of youths thrashed a traffic police after the police obstructed them from pulling the chariot.⁶ The police had to use water cannons and tear gas to disperse the crowd as people pelted stones at them. Similarly, there were protests demanding the opening of temples by religious Hindu groups⁷ and other protests demanding the opening of Nepal-India border.⁸

POLITICAL INCIDENTS FROM SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2020

From September to November, the PMP recorded 85 incidents related to political issues. Compared to June-August, the number of incidents decreased by 47 percent from 160 incidents to 85 incidents. The incidents mainly involved protests demanding restoration of monarchy, demonstrations by the Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) against constitution day and protests regarding the capital of Province 5. Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) led by Netra Bikram Chand (Biplove) was involved in about 23 incidents which include 19 politically significant arrests of its cadres.

On September 19, the constitution day of Nepal the Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) party organized protests all across the country marking it as a black day. Protestors in Saptari and Janakpur burned the copies of the constitution whereas indigenous groups in Kathmandu organized a big rally demanding to revoke the present constitution.⁹ The PMP recorded six cases of protests organized by the party on September 19 against the constitution in the following districts Saptari, Kapilvastu, Dhanusha, Morang, Nawalparasi and Rautahat.

The PMP recorded about ten incidents of demonstration against the government's proposal to designate Deukhuri of Dang as the capital of Province 5 and to name the province as Lumbini Province. The Nepali Congress, Janata samajwadi Party, and Rastriya Janamorcha demonstrated against the proposal stating that no discussions were conducted with the political parties before the proposal of registration of the capital of province 5.¹⁰ The main opposition party the Nepali Congress (NC) announced a series of protests against the proposal.¹¹

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN :A CRISIS IN THE NEPALI SOCIETY

In Nepal, women have faced inequality and discrimination since a long time with no equal access to resources and power. Violence against women and girls have become a serious issue and has raised a big question regarding their safety from an elderly woman to a young girl child. Social stigma and fear still keeps many women from speaking of the violence. In the past three months, about 326 cases of GBV was recorded which showed a continued trend of sexual assault being the most common form of violence against women with 279 cases. Out of the total cases of sexual assault, 217 incidents were of rape in which 180 victims of the heinous crime were girls and women below the age of 26.

Domestic violence was the second most common form of violence against women with 35 cases from September to November 2020. Jhapa district (province 1) had the highest number of incidents of domestic violence with five cases followed by Siraha district (province 2). There were three cases in Kanchanpur district of province 7 and two cases each in Myagdi and Parbat districts of province 4. Similarly, three cases of dowry related violence were reported in Saptari, Rupandehi and Rautahat districts where women were mentally and physically tortured for not bringing enough dowry.¹²

Among the various other forms of gender based violence witchcraft related violence is widespread in Nepal which has hindered the protection of

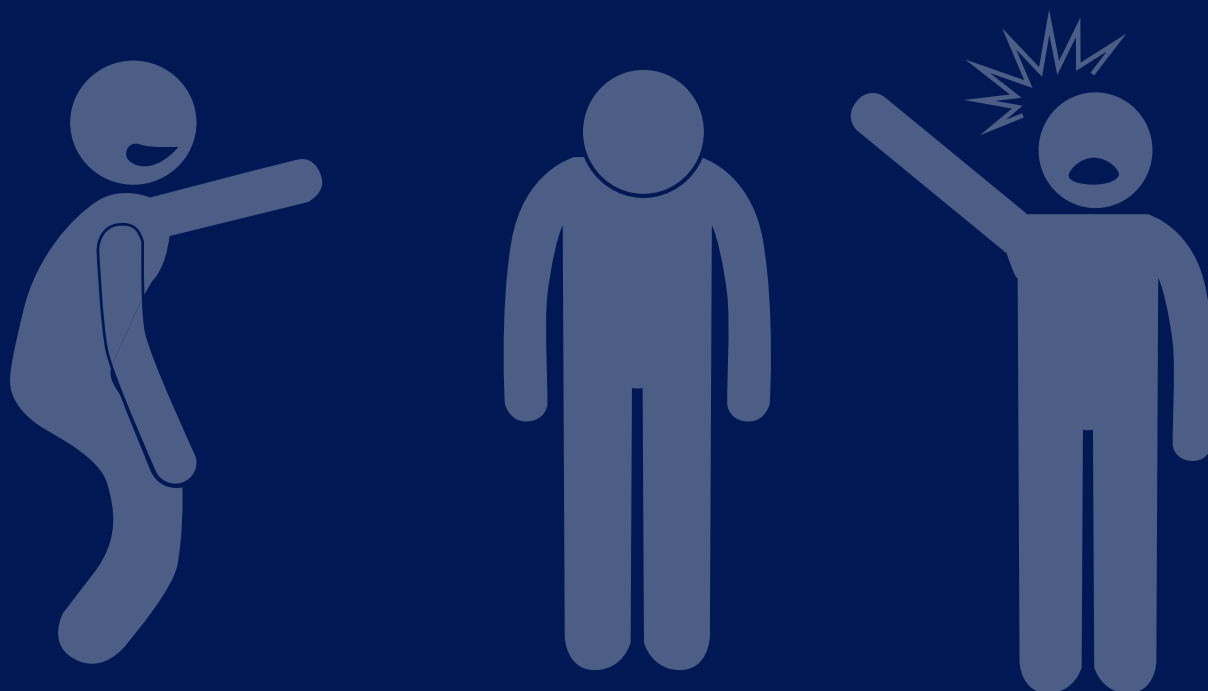


women's human rights. Superstitious beliefs, illiteracy, lack of awareness and culture are some of the root causes of allegations of witchcraft. The PMP recorded 12 cases of witchcraft allegations where all the victims were women and the youngest victim was a 12 year old girl. On September 17, the Metropolitan Police Circle, Kritipur arrested a man from Chovar, Kathmandu on the charge of burning a 12 year old girl with a hot spatula for four times believing she was possessed through witchcraft.¹³ Similarly, in another case on October 31, after falling sick a famous shaman was called to treat Sharmila BK, a Dalit woman from Panchkhal Municipality, Kavre but instead the shaman accused her of being a witch and tortured her by burning her face and body with a hot metal spatula.¹⁴

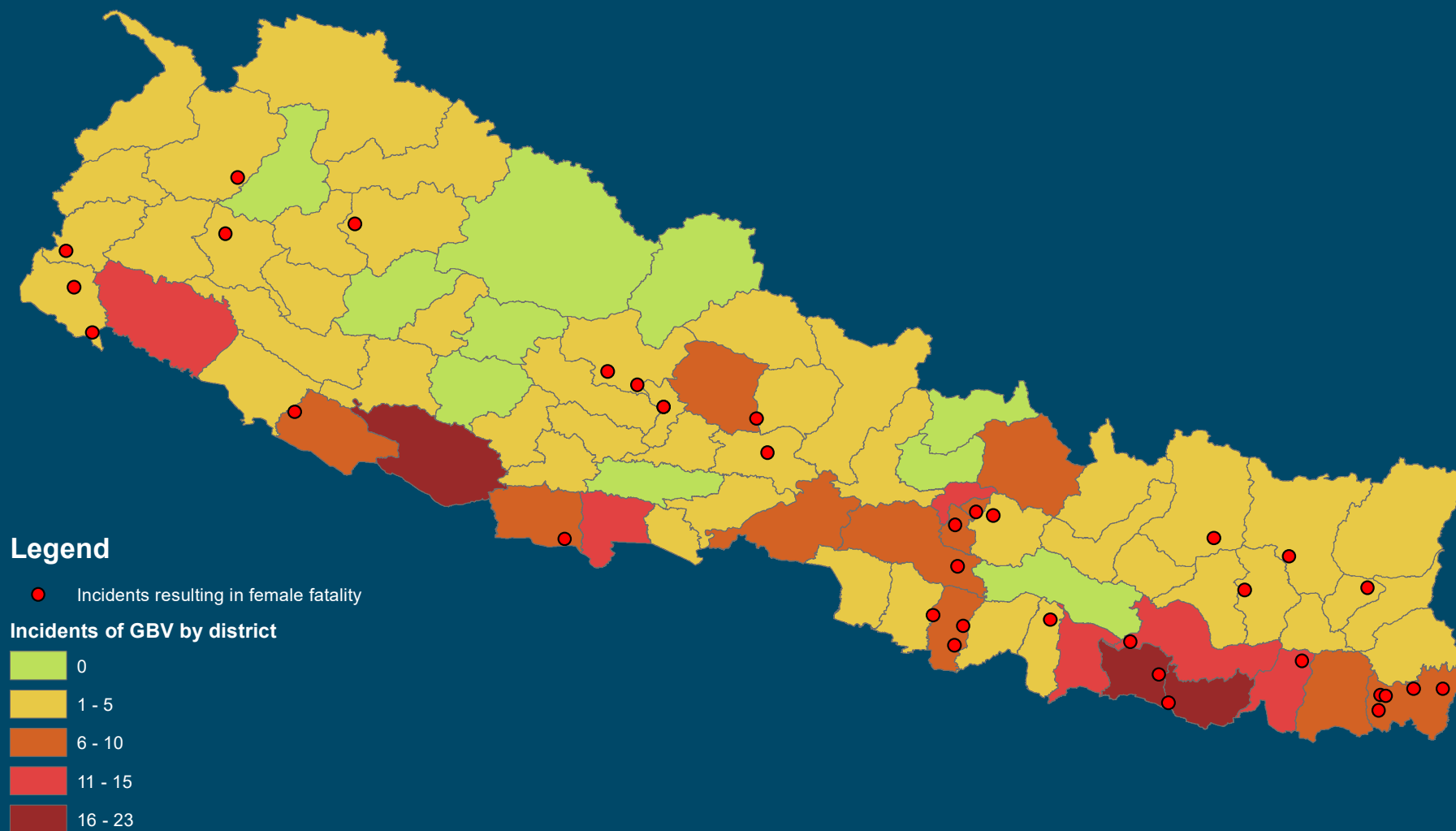


DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DALITS EXISTS TILL THIS DAY

Discrimination against the Dalit community has marginalized them for years and it continues till today. About six incidents of discrimination against Dalits were recorded in which three incidents involved violence.¹⁵ For instance, on October 2, a 24 year old Dalit woman, a resident of Suddhodhan Rural Municipality, Rupandehi was brutally beaten by three local men and three women over a land dispute. The group attacked her and insulted her with discriminatory words when her family started to construct a small hut on the land that they own.¹⁶



Incidents of Gender-Based Violence, September-November 2020



THE NEPAL PEACE MONITORING PROJECT

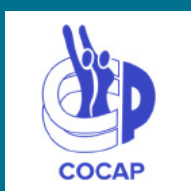
The Nepal Peace Monitoring Project (PMP) is a joint initiative by Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) | NepalMonitor.org and The Asia Foundation, with the support of Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC). Building on the NepalMonitor.org platform, the PMP focuses on violence and 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 to violence dynamics in Nepal. This includes strikes (bandh), hunger strikes, padlocking and other forms of political protest. Incidents involving intimidation and threats but no direct physical violence are also tracked.

The PMP uses a broad range of information sources, including national and district-level newspapers (from 18 districts), and reporting from police, human rights organizations, international agencies, civil society organizations, and citizens directly. 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.



ENDNOTES

1. See: 21 Political Parties Stage Demonstration Against Government
2. See: Kidney Patients Stage a Protest in Chitwant Demanding Regular Dialysis
3. See: Nurses of BP's COVID Hospital Boycott Duty for 3 Hours
4. See: Locals And Police Clash in Pulchowk Over Pulling of Rato Machhindranath Chariot
5. Ibid
6. See: Traffic Policeman Thrashed by Mob in Pulchowk
7. See: Hindu Devotees organized a Sit-in Demanding Re-Opening of Temples in Pokhara, Hindu Federation Protests in Kapilbastu Against ban on Durga Puja Festival
8. See: Sit in Staged in Sarlahi Demanding Opening of Nepal-India Border, Demonstrations to Open the Border Indian Market in Rautahat, Local Civil Society Leaders Stage Sit-in at Birgunj Demanding Opening of Nepal-India Border
9. See: Janata Samajwadi party Observed Constitution Day As Black Day
10. See: Decision to Designate Deukhuri As Capital of Province 5 Sparks Protests
11. Ibid
12. See: Man Arrested on The Charge of Subjecting Daughter in Law to Domestic Violence Over Dowry, Woman Beaten by the In-Laws Since 13 Years Over Dowry, In-Laws Accused of Murdering Daughter In-Law Over Dowry in Rautahat
13. See: Child Burnt With Hot Spatula At Chivar on the Allegation of Removing the Spell from Witchcraft
14. See: Dalit Woman Tortured by Shaman in Kavre in Allegations of Witchcraft
15. See: Dalit Girl Beaten for Entering a House in Urlabari, One Arrested, Atrocities Against Dalits in Mahottari: Brutal Beating on Theft Charges
16. See: Dalit Woman Assaulted Over land Related Dispute in Kapilbastu

