





**VIOLENCE TREND AND CIVIC
SPACE ANALYSIS AMID
COVID-19 IN NEPAL**

A MONTHLY BRIEF: 16 APRIL - 15 MAY 2021



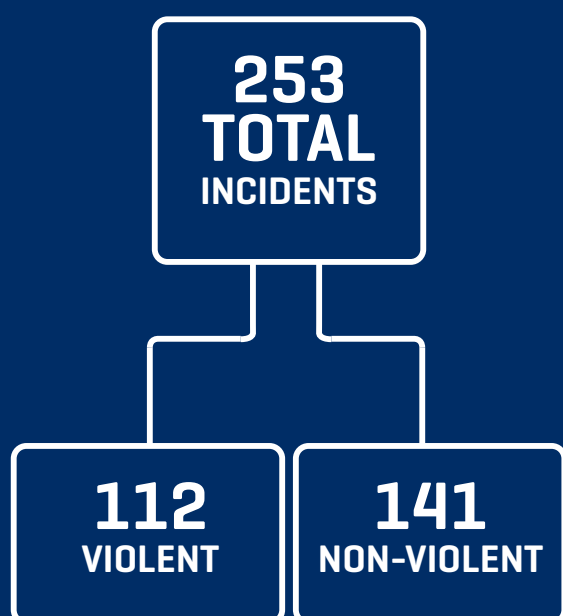
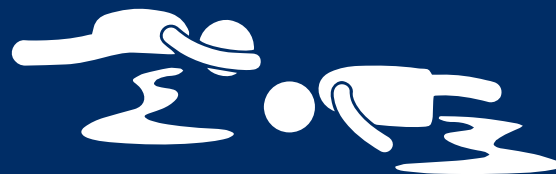
This report from Violence Monitoring and Shrinking Civic Space in Nepal amid Covid-19 [VMSCS] Project evaluates the trends of violent and non-violent contestation with the objective of presenting their impact on civic space in Nepal from 16 April to 15 May 2021. Data of violent and non-violent incidents are compiled from reports mapped by NepalMonitor.org, which uses a broad range of information from all major online news portals, national and local newspapers, Nepal Police, Civil Society Organizations [CSOs] working for human rights, and incident reports directly submitted to the Collective Campaign for Peace [COCAP].



OVERVIEW OF INCIDENTS

From 16 April to 15 May 2021, a total of 253 incidents were recorded. Compared to the previous month [16 March-15 April 2021 having 264 total incidents], there was a decrease of incidents by 4.35%. Among the total incidents reported, 141 incidents were non-violent and 112 were violent incidents, which injured 62 and claimed the lives of 28 people this month.

28 KILLED



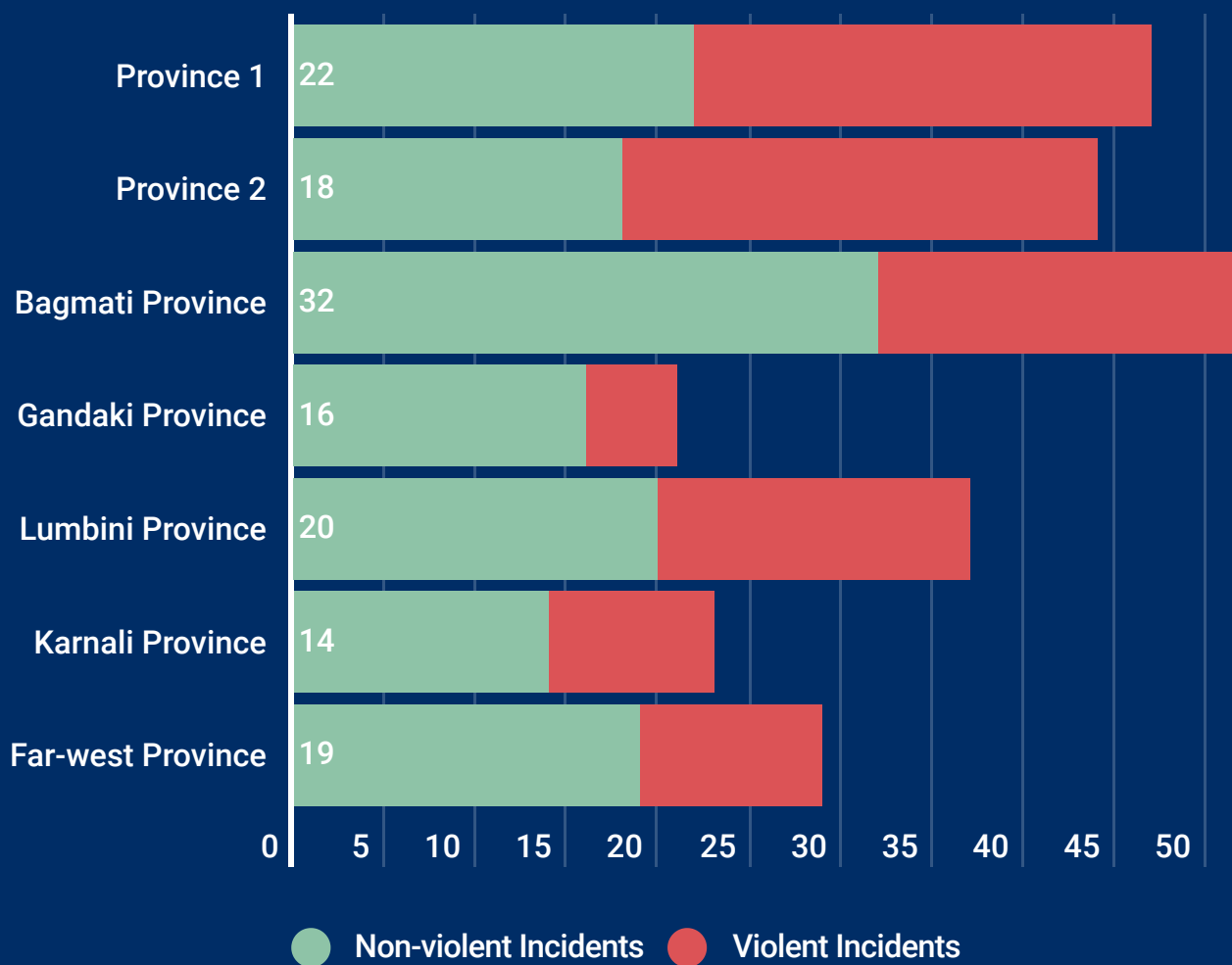
The **violent incidents** mainly involved sexual assault, small group assault, murder/attempted murder, group clash, vandalism, arson, fight, robbery, and symbolic violence [suspicious IED object, and a socket bomb was defused in Damak and Panchthar].

The **non-violent incidents** included curfew/prohibitory order issues by the state in order to contain the spread of the coronavirus, incidents of sit-ins/padlocking, black marketing, demonstrations, road blocks, program interference/obstruction, arrests, threat/intimidation, strikes, and public humiliation.

Bagmati Province recorded the highest number of incidents, counting 52, followed by Province 1 and Province 2, having 47 and 44 incidents. Similarly, Province 2 recorded the highest number of violent incidents, followed by Province 1 and Bagmati Province, which were 26, 25, and 20 respectively, whereas Gandaki Province recorded 5 incidents ranking the lowest, during this reporting period. [See Fig 1]

62 INJURED

Fig 1: Nature of Incidents by Province



This reporting period also witnessed 4 incidents directly linked to civic space, of which 3 non-violent incidents were around freedom of expression, and 1 violent incident report was around freedom of assembly. Likewise, 6 incidents were related to Human Rights Defenders [HRDs] issues, representing 2 of them as violent in nature.

CIVIC FREEDOMS UNDER THREAT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This reporting period observed threats, attacks, arrests and the cases of vandalism against the Journalists, author, and media houses. 9 media personnels faced such incidents during this reporting period, and 2 cases of violent vandalism at a local Radio station in Kailali and Humla, and 1 case of attack against the author in Dolpa was witnessed. Similarly, the protests were seen disrupted by the police forces, resulting in the violent form, leaving both the locals and policemen injured, and arresting of the students during the protests.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION UNDER THREAT

2 Journalists, covering the incident of inhumane treatment towards a woman on the charge of witchcraft, have been verbally abused, mistreated, and threatened of being beaten by a local while covering news in Siraha. Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) Siraha has condemned the incident. FNJ Siraha president has demanded action against the accused of attacking the independent press.¹

A group of 9 local people vandalized local FM and assaulted 2 people including the managing director of a local FM in Kailali, leaving the managing director with sustained injuries in the ear and hand.²

Another Journalist in Kalikot received death threats for publishing a news article, and accused two Akhil [Revolutionary] cadres, of giving death threats to kill him over the issue of news he published regarding the use of children in the program of Akhil [Revolutionary] at a school in Kalikot.³

Police arrested Ujyalo Network's executive editor and General Manager on April 26 for publishing fake news on its news portal about Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. Both of them have been charged with a crime against the state and an offence related to forged documents. Crime against the state is a criminal offence, Nepal's press freedom law, however, prevents the police from arresting journalists in relation to their journalistic work. Meanwhile, Kathmandu District Court has remanded them to three days of judicial custody, the time provided for the police to investigate the case.⁴

Ward chairperson of Rukum East, allegedly attempted to assault 2 journalists of the district working at Radio East Rukum and tried to attack them twice while trying to find out the information regarding a dispute between the ward chairperson and rural municipality accountant over the payment of the Ghumrigad Khola Micro Hydropower Project.⁵

Local youths vandalized Radio Srinagar Station of Humla on April 16, the battery of the radio and ladder was broken, the wires were snapped, other materials kept there were also vandalized, for not giving free access to the internet service subscribed by the radio station to them. World Link Communication had provided free internet service to rural municipality offices, community schools and health posts but not to Janata bank and radio stations.⁶

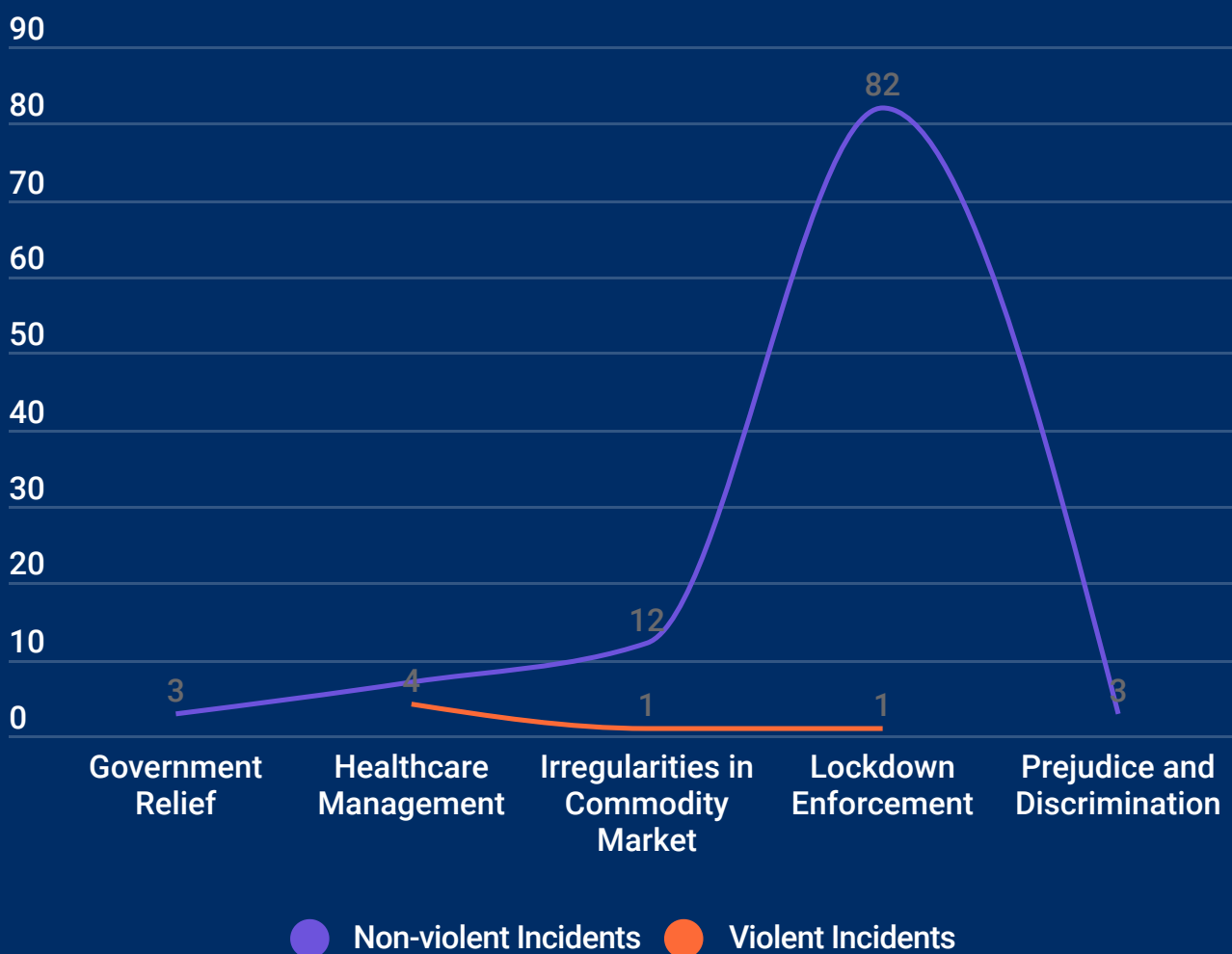
Prem Bohara, an author of the recently published book 'Kogle', who was campaigning for youth awareness and anti-corruption campaigns in different places of Dolpa, was attacked by the Ward Chairperson relatives and youths attacked him with the intention of killing him under the instruction of a chairperson. Bohara had sustained head injuries in the attack.⁷

SITUATION AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As the second wave of Covid-19 outbreak hit Nepal, the Government imposed a second phase of lockdown from 29 April 2021 in Kathmandu valley, as a consequence, a maximum number of Covid-19 related incident reports are seen this month.

During this reporting period, VMSCS recorded a total of 113 incidents directly related to Covid-19, of which 83 incident reports were mapped and monitored around lockdown enforcement, 1 such incident involving violence. 11 incidents were reported under healthcare management, 3 around government relief, and other 3 around prejudice and discrimination, during covid crisis. As covid restrictions was in place, 13 incidents were reported under irregularities in the commodity market mostly including incidents of black marketing in the medical supplies like masks, sanitizers, surgical gloves, oximeter, hiding oxygen cylinders, and charging high bus fare with the people travelling to their respective places out of Kathmandu. [See Fig 2]

Fig 2: Covid Related Incidents



PROTESTS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

7 students and 2 policemen were injured in a clash between police and students at Sarlahi on April 20, that occurred when the students went to picket the municipality office over the issue of political pressure on the appointment of the technical teachers. The agitated students vandalized the municipal office and a police station. According to the municipality, the students had damaged the drawers, tables, chairs, CCTV, laptops, and documents of the municipality office. Police have arrested 6 students on the charge of involvement in vandalism.⁸



Police used force after state assembly members, consisting of UML and non-UML parties staged a sit-in at the state chief's office at noon. The assembly members surrounded and blocked the state chief from letting the Chief Minister Pokharel take the oath, and chanted slogans alleging police of repressing them.⁹



GOVERNANCE RELATED INCIDENTS SURROUNDING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This month reported a remarkable number of governance related incidents which triggered 118 incidents this month, of which 6 incidents were violent in nature.

The violent incidents included; clash between service recipient and ward chairperson in Tanahun, joint resignation of 44 people including Bardiya Congress president, employees of Brick industry beat NEA employees in Kapilbastu, disputes between police and locals in Jhapa, 9 injured in the clash between students and police in Haripurwa, and Dolpa's ward chairperson accused of attacking the author Prem Bohara.¹⁰

The non-violent incidents included; 82 prohibitory order issues by the state in the districts after the surge of covid cases were observed in the country, 8 incidents of black marketing, 7 demonstrations, 6 sit-ins/ padlocking, 3 each incidents of program interference/obstruction, and threat/intimidation, 2 incidents of arrests, and 1 incident of strike. [See Table 1]

Table 1: Forms of Governance Related Incidents

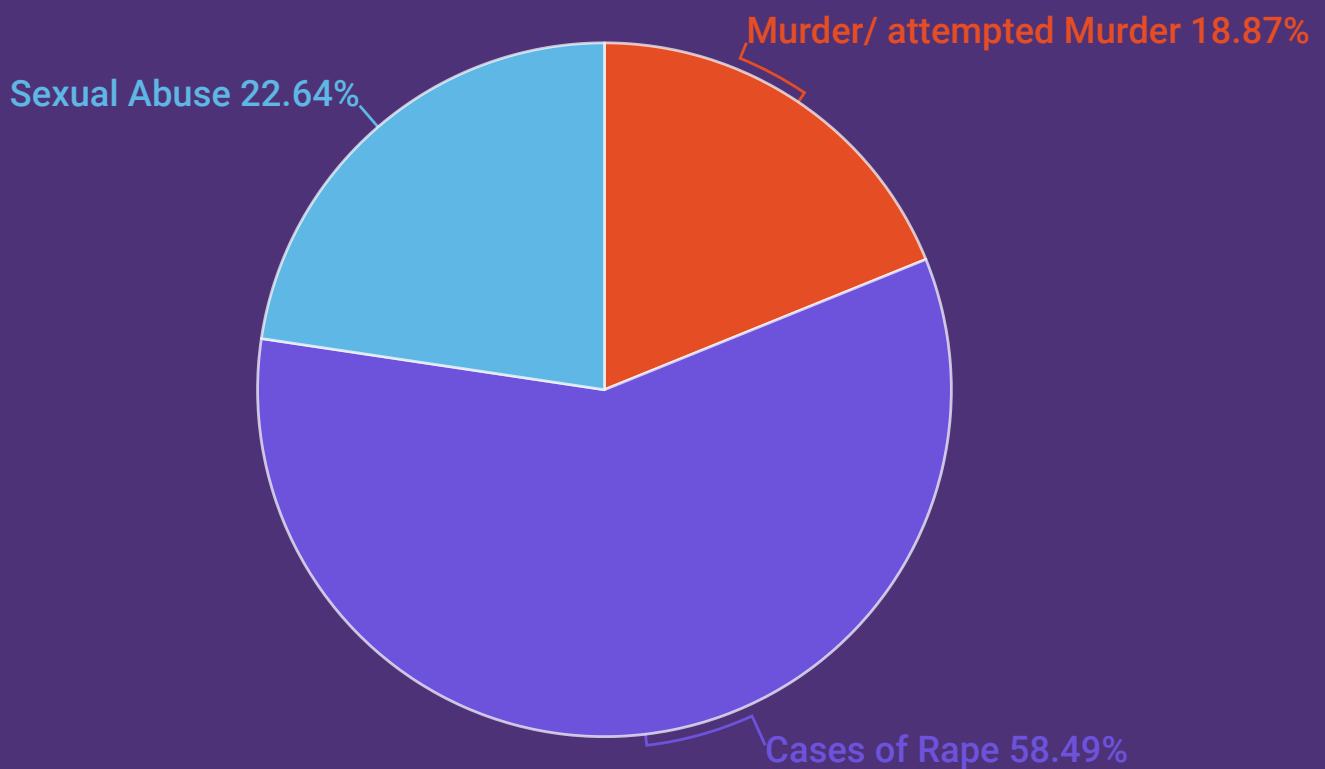
Forms	Non-violent Incidents	Violent Incidents
Arrests	2	
Black Marketing	8	
Prohibitory order by the state	82	
Demonstration	7	
Sit-in/ Padlocking	6	
Program obstruction	3	
Strike	1	
Threat/ Intimidation	3	
Large group assault		3
Small group assault		2
Group clash		1



GBV RELATED INCIDENTS CONTINUE TO UPSURGE

The gender-based violence was another trigger for witnessing the violent incidents, out of 53 GBV related incidents, 10 were of domestic violence, and 43 of rape and sexual assault. The domestic violence incidents included; Son killing father in Dailekh, arrests of husbands on charge of wife's murder in Rupandehi, Dang, Nawalparasi west, Sarlahi, and Bara, elder brother killing younger brother over domestic dispute, woman murdering husband in Dhanusha, and grandson killing his 90-year-old grandmother. [See Fig 3]

Fig 3: Forms of GBV Related Incidents



ENDNOTES

1. See: HRD Issues / Siraha Two journalists mistreated while covering news in Siraha
2. See: Locals assaulted managing director of Red Star FM in Kailali
3. See: Journalist in Kalikot received death threats for publishing a news article
4. See: Ujyalo Network editor, publisher arrested for crime against state
5. See: Ward chairperson accused of attempted assault on two journalists in Rukum East
6. See: Local youth vandalize Humla's Radio Srinagar
7. See: Dolpa's ward chairperson accused of attacking the author Prem
8. See: Nine injured in the clash between students and police in Haripurwa
9. See: State assembly members and police clash in Lumbini
10. See: <https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/view/34252>, <https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/view/34269>, <https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/view/34355>, <https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/view/34499>, <https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/view/34229>, <https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/view/34444>

VIOLENCE MONITORING AND SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE IN NEPAL AMID COVID-19 PROJECT

The Violence Monitoring and Shrinking Civic Space (VMSCS) is a joint initiative by Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) and Innovation for Change (I4C) - South Asia Hub. The project aims to focus on violence and contestation, with a view toward improving our understanding of, and response to, violence and shrinking civic-space incidents in Nepal amid Covid-19. The VMSCS also provides as an instrument to measure progress against Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Targets 5.2 (elimination of violence against women) and 16.1 (reduction of all forms of violence and related death rates) in Nepal.



