



media action nepal

Media under Threat : Trends and Cases of Press Freedom in Nepal

Annual Press Freedom Report, 2024

May 3, 2024

Media Action Nepal

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Prepared by the Media Rights Violation Monitoring Desk (MRVMD) of the Media Action Nepal (MAN), this report highlights key media freedom trends and documents cases of press freedom violations covering the period of 4 May, 2023 to 3 May, 2024. Primary data were collected via MAN's dedicated online monitoring tool, eight coordinators stationed across the country, previous reports, consultations and interviews conducted with the rights advocates and experts, and victims.

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Cover Photo: *Journalist Padam Prasad Pokhrel on protest (March 14, 2024) seeking actions against his perpetrators outside of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Back on February 28, 2024, Pokhrel was brutally beaten and assaulted by city police while he was reporting in the Sundhara area of Kathmandu.*
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About us:

The first ever member and the Co-chair of the Media Freedom Coalition-Consultative Network (MFC-CN) from Nepal, the Media Action Nepal (MAN) is committed to developing plural, independent and accountable media and thus far has contributed greatly to change the course. Since its inception in 2015, the organization has been a torchbearer of freedom of expression, press freedom and media development in Nepal through research, policy dialogue, advocacy and capacity-building of journalists in collaboration with national, regional and international organizations. In addition, also the member of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) and the first ever signatory to the Freelance Journalist Safety Principles of the ACOS Alliance from Nepal, MAN works closely with the international media rights organizations to advocate for the rights of journalists, with an inclusive newsroom a top priority, and uphold their safety through evidence-backed interventions in Nepal and across South Asia through solid networks and partnerships.

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Abbreviations

CIEDP: The Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons

CPN-UML: Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)

DoIB: Department of Information and Broadcasting

ETA: Electronic Transaction Act

FNJ : Federation of Nepali Journalists

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

MAN: Media Action Nepal

NHRC: National Human Rights Commission

NRNA: Non-Resident Nepali Association International Coordination Council

MRVMD: Media Rights Violation Monitoring Desk

TIA : Tribbuvan International Airport

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

WJA: Working Journalists Act

WoJAN : Working Journalists Association Nepal

Executive Summary

In 1991, Nepal ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), demonstrating its commitment to individual civil and political rights. Also, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) protects right to freedom of expression. Articles 17, 19, 27, and 28 of Nepal's constitution protect citizens' fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression, communication, access to information, and privacy. Article 19 of the UDHR states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” Similarly, Article 17(a) of the Constitution of Nepal stipulates, ‘Freedom of opinion and expression.’ Press freedom is “the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety.”

On the other hand, journalists are people who cover news or comment on public affairs in print, in photographs, on radio, on television, or online. They are considered the chief component of exercising press freedom to bring crucial information to the people. However, they often feel intimidated while collecting information from power centers or state authorities. Nepal is one of the few countries that declares "total freedom of the press" in the preamble to its Constitution. This clause is expressed in a number of fundamental rights, such as right to privacy, public access to information, and freedom of speech. It is still necessary to enact legislation that would guarantee state-owned media's editorial autonomy and establish an independent Media Council. However, a number of rules included in the August 2018 amendment to the penal code restrict criticism of public figures and impede investigative journalism.

Media Action Nepal established the Media Rights Violation Monitoring Desk (MRVMD), which employs a dedicated team for observing media rights violations in Nepal, monitors and documents the situation of press freedom in Nepal based on authentic and adequate research and cross-verification of press freedom violation incidents from multiple sources, and classifies press freedom violations using seven indicators such as 1. Threat; 2. Killings; 3. Illegal Arrest; 4. Misuse of Law; 5. Seizure of Equipment 6. Newsroom Harassment and 7. Information Blockage.

This report examines the current status of constitutionally guaranteed rights such as press freedom and freedom of expression. The cases documented and data categorized based on Media Action Nepal's indicators clearly show that the year was unsatisfactory in terms of press freedom, **with nearly three dozen cases of press freedom violations reported**. It ranges from threatening to the seizure of equipment. Journalists were forced to change careers due to the Working Journalists Act (WJA)'s poor implementation, or they were subjected to censorship or content compromise. Nepal's WJA stipulates a minimum salary that media houses must pay their editorial staff. However, in reality, this salary table is rarely followed when paying journalists. Because of this, the profession is not financially rewarding, which puts pressure on journalists' independence and ethical standards. Several women journalists left the profession, although we got data on only 29 women journalists leaving journalism. Similarly, it has also been found that journalists reporting on the environment often face threats. A photo journalist was illegally arrested in Parbat district on charge of cybercrime, while the reason for the arrest was something else related to the *Savekaligandaki* movement. This year's World Press Freedom Day theme is *Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis*. It is crucial that the significance of journalists working in the environmental sector be enhanced and secured. Likewise, the report also examined the state of impunity. It found that so far, only five journalists, 39 from conflict era times, have gotten justice.

Furthermore, the ban imposed on TikTok in November, saying it was disrupting "social harmony" and goodwill and blaming it for a "flow of indecent materials." Authorities ordered the telecom company to block access to the app. Similarly, [the Social Media Bill \(SMB\)](#) of the Government of Nepal (GoN) tabled in the Upper House threatens the fundamental rights to freedom of expression (FoE) and online civic space guaranteed under the Constitution of Nepal. The bill, if implemented in its current form, could jeopardize these constitutional guarantees and is deemed incompatible with international human rights instruments that Nepal has ratified. As a result, although it seems that there were fewer incidents of press violations compared to last year, the violations kept occurring, especially from authorities curbing press freedom.

This report is important to understand the trend of press freedom violations and the major incidents. Furthermore, it focuses on impunity, environmental issues and labour rights violations. This report could be useful to every individual who wants to understand the media freedom landscape in Nepal. The trends analyzed and cases recorded cover the period of May 4, 2023 to May 3, 2024.

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Section 1

Indicators for Assessing Press Freedom in Nepal

In order to determine the extent to which press freedom issues in Nepal are covered in this study, seven indicators were established. It is widely recognized that definitions of press freedom are based on UN conventions and instruments. Nepal, as a party to such instruments, is required to implement relevant provisions through the enactment of appropriate domestic laws. Many of the fundamental rights provisions in Nepal's Constitution are aligned with international instruments. The indicators reflect the concerns and rights of journalists, communicators, and individuals.

Threat

Threat is one of Media Action Nepal's indicators for determining incidents of press freedom violations. Threats are most common types of encroachments that journalists encounter in different forms and scales. Our data gathered while preparing this report also indicates that threats have increased and continue to exist across the country. Threats have been observed in various ways such as physical or verbal abuse or any other type of retribution including attacks, abuse, causing injury, misbehavior, death threat, abduction and assault. However, there have been very few actions taken to address such violations of press freedom.

Killings

Journalists murdered or killed to refrain from news coverage or commentary are counted as killed or murdered. It also incorporates incidents that occurred during Nepal's insurgency period and the continued impunity against them.

Illegal Arrest

Journalists are frequently questioned, detained or arrested for covering news or remaining critical to government actions. These incidents have become increasingly common in recent years. As a result, illegal arrest was chosen as one of our indicators for this report.

Misuse of Law

Misuse of laws is a common occurrence in Nepal, impeding the work of media professionals. This includes official misinterpretation of laws, repressive and restrictive laws, as well as malicious libels and slanders.

Seizure of Equipment

Seizure of equipment refers to the confiscation of cameras, phones, or other types of journalistic equipment in order to prevent them from reporting on the news.

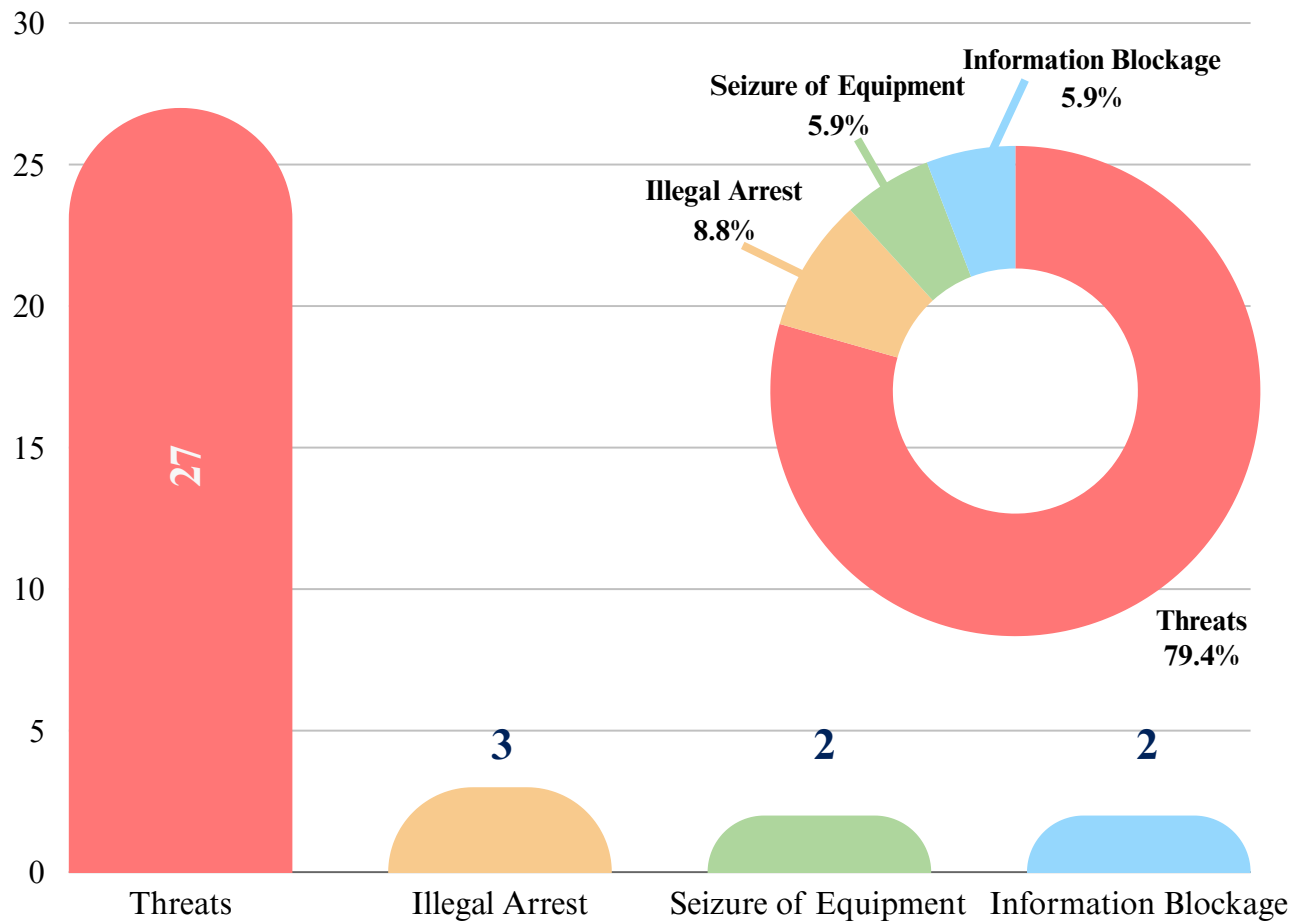
Newsroom Harassment

Incidents include a lack of supportive environments for female journalists and sexual abuse by senior colleagues such as editors, coordinators, and managers. This also includes incidents such as bullying of newcomer journalists.

Information Blockage

Spokespersons and authorities refuting verifications or providing information, imposing an embargo, or denying any information of public interest.

Total cases of press freedom violations : 34



Section 2

Major Trends of the Year

Impunity Continues even after 18 years of conflict period

Impunity for crimes against journalists means that unaccountable and abusive individuals and authorities continue to victimize journalists in post-conflict Nepal.

The armed conflict between Maoist insurgents and government forces in Nepal ended 18 years ago. Tens of thousands were subjected to enforced disappearances, torture, rape, and unlawful killings during the decade of fighting that lasted from 1996 to 2006. They are still seeking truth and justice, as this year the government could not make significant progress in delivering transitional justice.

Since the conflict's end, there have been very few successful prosecutions for serious violations. Courts have ordered investigations, but successive governments have generally failed to follow orders. Neither the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) nor the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP), which were ostensibly established in 2015 to expedite the legal system's delivery of justice, have been able to meet that responsibility. Victims and their families are devastated as a result of the justice system's failure. And journalists are no exception. According to a report by UNESCO (2015), 35 journalists were killed and four disappeared in Nepal during the decade-long Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006. However, as of February 2023, only five cases have been prosecuted, and many are not being investigated.

Non-implementation of the Working Journalists Act (WJA) led to increased self-censorship

The Working Journalists Act (WJA) of Nepal ensures all types of professional safety for journalists in Nepal. However, due to poor implementation, journalists have largely become victims of their own media outlets. As a result, labour rights violations have been identified as major contributors to bias, self-censorship, and a lack of professionalism, making them one of the most important indicators of press freedom violations.

The non-implementation of the WJA mainly within corporate media houses of Kathmandu valley has led to the victimization of a staggering 1,783 journalists this year. These violations encompass a wide range of injustices, from salaries being paid only after court orders to consensus between media owners and journalists regarding due clearance.

Additionally, many journalists have suffered through periods of unpaid salaries, some enduring as long as six months without compensation. The absence of an enabling environment further exacerbates these challenges, perpetuating a gender pay gap within the industry. These violations not only undermine the rights of journalists but also erode the integrity of the profession as a whole.

Media owners must give their editorial staff a minimum salary as per the WJA. However, in reality, this salary table is rarely followed when paying journalists. Because of this, the profession is not financially rewarding, which puts pressure on journalists' freedom and ethics. By awarding legitimate advertising contracts, the government contributes to the media's financial stability in part. However, this system also tends to encourage media bias because the government prefers to direct its advertising amount toward media organizations that uphold its policies.

Journalists and communicators face a number of threats that can be intimidating and lead to self-censorship, as journalists may prefer to remain silent rather than jeopardize their job or the safety of themselves and their families. On top of that crisis, invaded by COVID-19 pandemic, media houses created peculiar job security threats that compelled many journalists to change their professions, while the majority of them were victimized by their media houses.

A [study](#) (2021) disclosed that journalists in Nepal have been complaining of issues like lack of pay and career advancement prospects, hesitation to provide appointment letters, gender discrimination and sexual harassment for a long time.

According to Working Journalists Association Nepal (WoJAN) reports reviewed by Media Action Nepal and its conversation with WoJAN's president Janma Dev Jaishi, media owners and media organizations' irregularities and negligence in the poor implementation of the Working Journalists Act have resulted in a variety of intrinsic challenges, ranging from self-censorship to content compromise. According to him, the WJA was passed in 1994 and has been amended three times since. However, this act falls short of addressing the pressing issues that working journalists face, resulting in content compromise and, ultimately, infringing on Nepal's constitutionally protected press freedom as well as people's and the press's freedom of expression.

“It needs to be upgraded. Justice delayed is justice denied. They are deliberately lingering on it. Essentially, it is a compromise between media stakeholders and authorities. However, they have always admitted that this act is not timely and should be upgraded. But so far, they have only delayed,” he told MRVMD of MAN.

This has compelled journalists to compromise their professionalism. Because this does not lead to long-term solutions. The government must provide certain guidelines to media owners. Although the Act prohibits work without a contract, there have been cases where journalists are forced to work without a contract and then become victims after a few months of employment, law should be upgraded, and justice processes should be ramped up.

Stating that journalists in different media houses have been humiliated as a result of the state's ineffective role and the media owner's recklessness, Jaisi shared, "I have exerted pressure on 34 media outlets after receiving applications, but I have also acted quickly on my own, which has not been documented. The media owners admit that they have not paid for months, but journalists do not speak up due to their vulnerable circumstances."

According to the WoJAN, it led 17 media delegations to Rekha Sharma, the current Minister for Communication and Information Technology. During the meeting, journalists questioned the minister about her reluctance in the media, and she responded, "What would you have done if you were minister today?" Journalists then reminded the Minister about the Clause 33 of the WJA.

This clause has provisions of power to recommend restricting facilities:

"If any communication enterprise does any act in contravention of this Act or the Rules framed under this Act, the Press Registrar may make a recommendation to the concerned body to prevent the provision of the following facilities to such a communication enterprise: (a) If the communication enterprise is to publish newspapers, not to include such newspapers in the classification of newspapers pursuant to the laws in force; (b) To restrict or cut down grants or advertisements to be provided by the Government of Nepal; (c) To restrict the imports of communication materials or related raw materials; (d) Not to include in a team of government visit."

However, Shankar Nepal, Director General of the Department of Information and Broadcasting (DoIB), responded, "It would backfire on us." This statement depicts the weak role of the government apparatus. If the government is unable to carry out the implemented laws, who would do it then? That is what poses a threat to the labour rights of working journalists. According to the WoJAN, the majority of journalists have been victims of salary issues, lack of contract papers (including short and long contract papers), complex legal processes for justice, and groupism among the media owners.

Women and men journalists play a pivotal role in covering pertinent issues with similar diligence, dedication and perseverance, but women journalists face particular challenges and risks in carrying out their tasks. Furthermore, cases of sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, online harassment, and threats with sexist and misogynistic connotations frequently result in gender-based discrimination while performing their professional duties.

So far, as per internal assessment and interactions with experienced journalists, it has been observed that the trend of women journalists leaving the job is on the rise, while job insecurities, gender pay gaps, discriminations and harassment were the reasons found while conducting the research. As many as 29 women journalists have left their professions due to reasons mentioned above. Later, they couldn't join journalism due to expanding responsibilities and leaving for foreign employment and shifting career to other areas due to better opportunities. Furthermore, journalists were also found getting married and settling down with families in order to survive themselves and not be burdens on the parents.

Journalists face threats for being vocal about environmental issues



Image Courtesy: R.K. Adipta Giri

R.K. Adipta Giri, a photojournalist, was arrested for writing on social media about media workers' silence regarding Kali Gandaki exploitation. Giri raised serious concerns about political actors' indifference. Candidates from the region and their political parties are ignoring Kali Gandaki conservation efforts.

In an interview with Media Action Nepal, Giri asked, "What is the position and commitment of political parties and journalists on environmental issues? What are the conservation strategies? Unchecked human activity has pushed the rivers, including the Kali Gandaki, into crisis. Who will preserve this heritage? Kaligandaki is not only a river, but also a civilization, and its preservation should not be overlooked.

According to Giri, the river has seen uncontrolled human encroachment for the purpose of extracting stones and pebbles. Citizens should be concerned about the preservation of the Kali Gandaki civilization. For many years, exploitation of the Kaligandaki River was illegal and unforgivable. This has created a significant problem in our ecosystem. No one has the right to exploit our rivers. We cannot see this catastrophe. "Let us fight extremism at all levels, in civil society, and in every possible way. Let's save the civilization of Kaligandaki," Giri kept repeating. The Kali Gandaki is a major river system in central Nepal, flowing south through Damodar Kunda and Mukti Chhetra.

Six journalists based in Kushma, Parbat, filed a cybercrime complaint against Giri after he was accused of making slanderous posts about the journalists in Parbat on social media for several days. Giri expressed that journalists in the district were not using their pen to stop the exploitation of Kali Gandaki, and Giri kept speaking out against their silence.

Section 3

Cases of Press Freedom Violation in the Year

Journalists and communicators face a variety of threats that can be intimidating and lead to self-censorship, as journalists may prefer to remain silent rather than risk their job or the safety of themselves and their families. The major press freedom violation incidents that occurred from May 2023 to May 2024 are listed below:

S.N	Victims	Details of the incident (s)
1	Damodar Bhandari Editor of Sadabhav Daily and Setokhari online	Threatened Damodar Bhandari, editor of Sadabhav Daily and Setokhari Online , was threatened by police officer Subodh Bohara on April 6, 2024 in Banke of Lumbini province after publishing news about gold smuggling. Bhandari was also forced to remove the news from the online portal.
2	Dipak Aryal Editor of Khoj Mission News	Threatened On April 4, 2024, a person with an unidentified phone number threatened Aryal, the chief news editor of Khoj Mission News in Lalitpur of Bagmati province and demanded that the news article be taken down.
3	Krishna Bahab Bhattarai Correspondent of Shilapatra Misbehaved	Misbehaved A correspondent for Shilapatra.com, Krishna Bahab Bhattarai, was mistreated by the Itahari Sub-metropolitan city police. While covering the city safari driver protest on March 14, 2024 in Sunsari of Koshi province, journalist Bhattarai was shoved and removed by the city police.
4	Shiva Kumar Mahato Sarlahi's Dhadkan FM	Threatened and Abused The Madhesh province coordinator of Media Action Nepal verified with Mahato that on February 28, 2024, Birendra Singh, a minister and member of the Nepali Congress, had threatened to take down the article.

5	<p>Padam Prasad Pokhrel Editor-in-Chief of the news website Pranmancha.com</p>	<p>Attacked and Equipment Seizure</p> <p>The Metropolitan Police of Kathmandu, forcibly removed Padam Prasad Pokhrel while he was gathering news on 28 February 2024. Journalist Pokhrel produced his identity card, but the city police still attacked and took away his laptop, camera, cell phone, and other documents. Pokhrel got severe injury on his right leg.</p>
6	<p>Roshan Kumar Mishra Correspondent of Muluk Times Monthly Magazine</p>	<p>Abused and Attacked</p> <p>Speaking to Media Action Nepal, Mishra, a journalist based in Mahottari of Madehsh province stated that he was abused and attacked by an unknown group on February 13, 2024. In the evening, while he was returning from a program, a white car carrying a few people and a driver chased and stopped journalist Mishra's motorcycle. He fled to a nearby village to save himself and his friend. The incident was not taken seriously by the police.</p>
7	<p>Tek Man Shakya Executive Editor Nepalese Times</p>	<p>Abused</p> <p>During the news collection at the foreign employment department, Shakya was threatened by Kalimati Police on February 21, 2024 in Kathmandu of Bagmati province.</p>
8	<p>Sunita Gautam Reporter at Nepalese Times</p>	<p>Threatened</p> <p>During the news collection at the foreign employment department, Gautam was threatened by Kalimati Police on February 21, 2024 in Kathmandu of Bagmati province.</p>
9	<p>Photojournalists of various news media</p>	<p>Access Denied</p> <p>On February 19, 2024, photojournalists in Kathmandu protested outside the Nepal Army Pavilion in Tudikhel. On National Democracy Day, they demonstrated by placing their cameras on the road after being denied entry while covering the news. The state owned media were provided the pass, while private media were denied. Later, after the protest, the army came with pass card but journalists refuted and protested.</p>

10	Aishwarya Kunwar Reporter Nigrani Khabar	Arrested and harassed On February 10, 2024, Kanchanpur police in Sudurpashchim province detained Kunwar on suspicion of cybercrime, claiming that the Electronic Transactions Act of 2008's Section 47 is being abused.
11	Puskar Bhatta Reporter at Mountain Television	Arrested and harassed On February 10, 2024, Kanchanpur police in Sudurpashchim province detained Kunwar on suspicion of cybercrime, claiming that the Electronic Transactions Act of 2008's Section 47 is being abused.
12	Krishna Tiwari Reporter Madhyanha Daily	Attacked, Thrashed Talking to Media Action Nepal, he said he was beaten and injured while gathering news on February 6, 2024. On the same day, Tiwari went to the Baba Baiju Nath Sugar Mill in Rautahat of Madhesh province to get news, the mill owners and their sons severely beat and injured him. The beating left journalist Tiwari with severe chest and head injuries.
13	Rajendra Adhikari Editor at https://donnews.com	Threatened On November 18, 2023, Adhikari was threatened by Pokhara Metropolitan City-21 Ward Chairperson in Gandaki province, Deepak Prasad Subedi while talking about the news. During a telephone conversation to understand the news of the Mitramilan Savings and Credit Cooperative Society, Ward Chair Subedi verbally threatened Adhikari.
14	Om Sharma Editor at Chardisha Online	Attacked Sharma, was injured in a deadly attack at the Central Office of Non-Resident Nepali Association International Coordination Council (NRNA) in Kathmandu of Bagmati province during news collection on October 14, 2023.
15	Lanka Raj Dhamala Editor at Smartkarnali News	Threatened On October 29, 2023, Dhamala, received threats. A few days ago, after the release of a video of on-the-spot reporting on the service delivery of Rajkot Municipality, 12, Kalikot in Karnali province.

16	Samir Joshi Reporter at Himalaya TV	Abused Journalist Joshi working for Himalaya Television, was abused by Humnath Parajuli, Assistant Chief District Officer of Dhading, during news collection on October 4, 2023.
17	Jeevan Subedi Cameraperson at the Himalaya TV	Abused Cameraperson Subedi working for Himalaya Television, was abused by Humnath Parajuli, Assistant Chief District Officer of Dhading, during news collection on October 4, 2023.
18	Sanjeev Bikram Sah Radio Nepal	Assault On October 1, 2023, Sah, a journalist working for Radio Nepal, was attacked and mistreated in Saptari district of Madhesh province by Janmant Party members, who were in conflict with Agriculture University.
19	<u>Krsihna Singha</u> <u>Dhami</u> Ratopati	Attacked and Injured The attack left journalist Dhami of Ratopati.com with multiple injuries to his body. Journalist Dhami was attacked by a group of six people on his way back to the office on October 8, 2023, resulting in injuries to several parts of his body, including his head. News about a few educational programs offered by Tribhuvan University was published on Ratopati Online in relation to that Dhami was beaten.
20	Moti Ram Timilsina Nepal Samachar Patra Daily	Threatened On 17 September 2023, Timalsina received death threats. Threats of death were made against journalist Timalsina by supporters of Bagmati province minister Tirtha Lama.

21	<p><u>Namita Dahal</u> Reporter at Onlinekhabar.com</p>	<p>Assaulted and Misbehaved</p> <p>Journalist Dahal, working at Onlinekhabar.com, was assaulted and mistreated at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) on September 6, 2023 during news gathering.</p> <p>Journalist Dahal was physically and verbally abused by some of the attendees at the news conference held at TIA to welcome the Nepali national cricket team back from the Asia Cup. They reportedly asked her why she had come to such a place as a woman.</p>
22	<p><u>Shankar Tiwari</u> Reporter at Nitinews</p>	<p>Threatened</p> <p>Tiwari, a journalist working at Nitinews.com, received death threats from Lawmaker Gyanendra Shahi on August 15, 2023. He wrote a news about Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) spokesperson and member of the Lower House Shahi.</p>
23	<p><u>Gaurav Adhikari</u> Bagmati TV Correspondent</p>	<p>Death Threats</p> <p>Under the influence of Ramji Kandel, the Chairperson of the Bhotewodar Creative Savings and Credit Cooperative Society, which is situated in Lamjung Municipality-9, Adhikari received death threats while he was gathering news on July 30, 2023.</p> <p>From Kathmandu, journalists Adhikari and Niraula visited the Lamjung cooperative to obtain information and ask that President Kandel make a statement about the irregularity.</p>
24	<p><u>Suman Niraula</u> Bagamati TV Correspondent</p>	<p>Death Threats</p> <p>On July 30, 2023, Suman Niraula received death threats during his news gathering with the involvement of Ramji Kandel, Chairman of Bhotewodar Creative Savings and Credit Cooperative Society located in Lamjung Municipality-9. Niraula traveled from Kathmandu to the Lamjung cooperative to gather information.</p>

25	R.K. Adipta Giri Photojournalist	<p>Arrested on the charge of cybercrime</p> <p>On August 9, 2023 Giri, an activist and photojournalist, was arrested by District Police, Parbat, Gandaki for posting critical social media content and conducting the movement, Save Kaligandaki.</p>
26	Manohar Kumar Pokhrel District Coordinator at Annapurna Post	<p>Threatened/assaulted</p> <p>Speaking to Media Action Nepal, Manohar Kumar Pokharel, journalist and activist, said that on July 31, 2023 he was beaten and assaulted by Police Assistant Sub-Inspector Rajeshwar Mahato. Mahto thrashed him while he went to inquire about a case in Rajbiraj, Saptari of Madehsh province.</p>
27	Sunil Mandel Reporter at Radio Khaptad and Nepal Angel Online Community Khaptad Awaz and Nepal Angle Online	<p>Abducted and Attacked</p> <p>Sunil Mandel, who works for Community Khaptad Awaz and Nepal Angle Online, was taken from his home on July 24, 2023.</p> <p>According to the FNJ Bajhang Branch, journalist Mandel was abducted from his home on the orders of Nagendra Khadka, the owner of Hotel Holiday Inn and the Rastriya Swatantra Party's Bajhang district coordinator.</p>
28	Ram Krishna Paudel Editor at www.biskashnews.com	<p>Threatened to kill</p> <p>On July 14, 2023, Medical entrepreneur Durga Prasai threatened Paudel of BikashNews.com with death. Prasai called from 9801052222 and used foul language to threaten journalist Poudel. Prasai had also texted multiple times on WhatsApp.</p>
29	Geeta Rana Correspondent of ABC Television Pokhara	<p>Threatened and misbehaved</p> <p>Reporter Rana was mistreated on June 27, 2023 by the chief Administrative Officer Dharmaraj Dhungana of Bhirkot Municipality in Syangja district of Gandaki province.</p> <p>She was misbehaved while filming an officer for a documentary.</p>

30	Shanti Gharti Magar Golokhabar.com	Abused and attacked Reporter Magar of golokhabar.com was attacked on August 3, 2023 while she was in Kathmandu covering a protest. The incident took place at Teku's Metropolitan Police Circle.
31	Sivendra Rohita Head of Madesh Bureau at makalukhabar.com	Attacked and injured Rohita was attacked and injured by an unidentified group on July 10, 2023 at Bhanuchowk in Janakpurdham, a sub-metropolitan city in Madhesh province.
32	Sambhu Dungal Ratopati.com	Access Denied On June 13, 2023, journalist Dungal, who was invited to attend the meeting of the subcommittee formed by the House of Representatives' Law, Justice, and Human Rights Committee, was grabbed by security personnel while gathering information from the dignitaries.
33	Rajendra Nath Chief editor at seemarekha.com	Equipment Seized and Tortured Nath was beaten and detained by the Kanchanpur police on May 17, 2023.
34	Phurpa Sherpa Reporter at Corporatenepal.com	Threatened Yuwantika Tamang threatened Phurpa. Tamang, called her at the office's landline number. She inquired about her details. Then she threatened her managing editor for writing news. The news was published on May 11, 2023.

Section 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

Despite the end of the conflict in Nepal 18 years ago, impunity for crimes against journalists and other victims persists. The lack of accountability for past atrocities allows authorities to continue victimizing journalists. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) have failed to deliver justice effectively. Limited progress has been made in prosecuting perpetrators of serious violations during the conflict era, leaving victims and their families disillusioned.

The non-implementation of the Working Journalists Act (WJA) has resulted in widespread victimization of journalists, including unpaid salaries, lack of contracts, and gender discrimination. Media owners' negligence and irregularities contribute to an environment of self-censorship and compromise journalistic integrity.

Despite legal provisions to safeguard journalists' rights, the government's failure to enforce laws effectively exacerbated the challenges faced by media professionals. The reluctance to hold media organizations accountable for violations has further undermined press freedom.

Women journalists' encountered specific challenges, including sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and online abuse, which contributed to a hostile work environment as a result many women journalists left the profession. Journalists advocating for environmental issues faced threats and harassment, as seen in the case of R.K. Adipta Giri, highlighting the risks associated with reporting on sensitive topics.

The incidents of press freedom violations continued in the year. The majority of press freedom violations were committed by state authorities using excessive forces, and were accompanied by laws that violated constitutionally protected rights.

The number of threats involving abuse, attack, assault, and misbehavior increased throughout the year, indicating that press freedom is still under threat. Similarly, incidents of information blockage, illegal arrest and seizure of equipment by the authorities remained steady. Such incidents and their continuation endanger constitutionally protected fundamental freedoms.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen mechanisms for transitional justice to hold perpetrators accountable for past atrocities, including crimes against journalists, and expedite pending cases to provide closure to victims and their families.
- Strictly enforce the Working Journalists Act to protect journalists' rights, ensure fair remuneration, and prevent labour rights violations within media organizations.
- The government should actively monitor media organizations' compliance with labour laws and provide support to create an enabling environment for journalists to work without fear of reprisal.
- Implement measures to address gender-based discrimination and harassment in the workplace, including providing training and support services for women journalists and holding perpetrators accountable.
- Ensure the safety and security of journalists reporting on environmental issues by investigating threats and harassment, prosecuting perpetrators, and fostering a conducive environment for investigative journalism.
- Uphold press freedom and freedom of expression as constitutional rights, and refrain from actions that undermine independent journalism, including arbitrary restrictions on media outlets and journalists.
- Hold sufficient stakeholder consultation before proposing any laws related to the media.
- Literate authorities mainly security forces on the importance of freedom of expression and the rights of journalists

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