



media action nepal

2026



PRESS FREEDOM IN PERIL RISING VIOLENCE AGAINST MEDIA IN NEPAL



Press Freedom Report 2026

This report presents an in-depth analysis of press freedom trends and violations in Nepal covering the period from 4 May 2025 to 2 May 2026. Drawing on primary data collected through Media Action Nepal's dedicated online monitoring tool, monitoring from coordinators across provinces, and inputs from previous documentation, the findings are further substantiated by interviews and follow ups with affected journalists, media houses. This documentation aims to provide an evidence-based overview of media freedom landscape.

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Photos on cover page: Top: Dipendra Dhungana, a journalist injured by police gunfire on September 8, receiving treatment at Patan Hospital (Photo: Janmadev Jaisi/WOJAN), Center: The charred remains of a building of Kantipur TV resulted from coordinated attacks on September 9, Bottom: OB vans inside the PSB/NTV premises at Singha Durbar, damaged in the September 9 attacks (Photos: Media Action Nepal).

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ABBREVIATIONS

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CIAA: Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority

CPN-UML: Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist and Leninist

ETA: Electronic Transaction Act

KMG: Kantipur Media Group

MAN: Media Action Nepal

NC: Nepali Congress

NHRC : National Human Rights Commission of Nepal

NTV: Nepal Television

OB: Outdoor Broadcasting

PCN: Press Council Nepal

PSB: Public Service Broadcasting

RM: Rural Municipality

RSP: Rastriya Swatantra Party

WOJAN: Working Journalists Association of Nepal



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on violations documented by the Media Rights Violations Monitoring Desk of Media Action Nepal between 4 May, 2025 and 2 May, 2026, Nepal's press freedom shows a strong opposition to independent journalism and free expression.

Media Action Nepal documented a total of 71 incidents of press freedom violations using the indicators. The vast majority of incidents occurred in Kathmandu (Bagmati Province) and Madhesh Province (specifically Saptari, Dhanusha, and Rautahat districts), indicating that these are high-risk areas for media professionals. A significant increase in high-intensity violations occurred in September 2025 (coordinated attacks on media outlets) and March 2026 (violence linked to political unrest).

The documented cases of violations show a multifaceted assault on the press, including physical attacks and arson, state-led criminalization, judicial overreach, and institutional interference. Journalists were brutally assaulted with knives, belts, and helmets, and major media outlets (KMG, NTV, and Radio Nepal) suffered 'billions' of rupees in damage as a result of coordinated arson in September 2025. The Electronic Transactions Act (ETA), specifically Article 47, has been used to arrest and prosecute journalists for their reporting and social media postings. Journalist Dil Bhushan Pathak is a prime example, having received a clean chit from the court on April 1.

The courts issued temporary interim orders for news takedowns, and the Press Council Nepal (PCN) ordered the deletion of archived critical content, which violated standard self-regulation procedures. Direct attempts at censorship were also documented and reported, such as the Election Commission's attempt to remove a BBC documentary and the government's blanket ban on 26 social media platforms.

The violations were primarily committed by state actors, political forces, and government officials. The monitoring desk received numerous complaints about police and municipal authorities using physical violence, deleting video footage, and detaining people arbitrarily. Politicians and their cadres (mostly from the UML, NC, and RSP) were responsible for death threats, verbal abuse, and physical obstruction at party events. Similarly, city mayors and chairs of municipalities used their power to intimidate reporters looking into local corruption and irregularities.

Gender-based harassment of female journalists has also been widely reported. Female journalists were subjected to specific verbal and online abuse, often without institutional support and under threat from local officials.

Another issue that major media outlets have yet to address is the workplace safety of journalists. Journalists who spoke with Media Action Nepal reported that they are not paid on time and are frequently terminated without adequate compensation.

Overall, the period from 4 May, 2025, to 2 May, 2026, marked a decline in Nepal's press freedom situation. There were no journalist killings in Nepal during this period, which is an improvement over previous years. Threats continued, though, with a number of journalists receiving death threats in the midst of more issues which directly impact press freedom. There were two arrests, one equipment seizure, eight information blockages, 50 threats, six harassment cases, and ten instances of misuse of laws, affecting 78 journalists and 10 media outlets or news platforms.



Physical violence, the use of cyber laws, particularly the ETA to criminalize reporting, and systematic digital censorship have all contributed to a 'chilling effect' that undermines journalists' constitutional rights to information and their safety.

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. Although zero incidence of killings of the journalists was reported between 4 May, 2025, and 2 May, 2026, several journalists received death threats.

Arrests: Two journalists were arrested as a result of two incidents, both of which involved ambiguous charges.

Equipment Seizure: In one case, journalists had their equipment confiscated by both government officials and mobs, limiting their ability to report and disseminate information.

Information Blockage: In eight distinct cases, eight journalists faced information blockages, including denial of access to public events or sources and pre-censorship attempts, which directly undermines the right to information and the public's ability to stay informed.

Threats: Threats and intimidation were the most common type of violation, with 50 cases involving 78 journalists and 10 media outlets. These ranged from verbal threats to more serious forms of harassment, indicating an environment where intimidation was widespread and frequently went unpunished.

Harassment: Six journalists were harassed by authorities and security personnel while performing their duties.

Misuse of Laws: Ten journalists were targeted and arrested as a result of the misuse of laws, particularly by ETA. These incidents were accompanied by judicial overreach and misinterpretation of laws.



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SECTION 1: INDICATORS TO 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 United Nations (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.

Illegal Arrest: Journalists are frequently questioned, detained, or arrested for covering news or remaining critical of 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.

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

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.

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.

Misuse of Laws: 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 libel 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.

Threat: Threat is one of Media Action Nepal's indicators for determining incidents of press freedom violations. Threats are the most common type of encroachment 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 threats, abduction, and assault. However, there have been very few actions taken to address such violations of press freedom.



SECTION 2: TREND ANALYSIS : PRESS FREEDOM IN PERIL

Press freedom in Nepal has significantly deteriorated between 4 May, 2025, and 2 May, 2026. A total of 71 violations were recorded during this period, indicating a sharp rise compared to previous years. Journalists continued to face occupational insecurity, particularly in the form of financial instability, including delayed salary payments and the lack of benefits such as social security contributions.

The violations were carried out by both state and non-state actors. Among state actors, institutions such as the police, courts, and various ministries were identified as key perpetrators, while non-state actors included political cadres and organized mobs. Multimedia journalists and those working in online media were the most frequently targeted, followed by professionals in television and print sectors.

Geographically, Bagmati Province mainly Kathmandu and Madhesh Province emerged as the most affected regions, recording the highest number of incidents. Overall, the data reflects a concerning decline in press freedom, highlighting increasing risks and challenges faced by journalists across the country.

Online and Offline Violence: The incidents of violence against journalists have jumped sharply in comparison to last year. Coordinated online assaults and bullying were often carried out by politically motivated groups, with a worrying number of incidents involving political cadres mainly in pre-election period in March, 2026.

State Actors as Perpetrators: The perpetrators revolved around police, courts, ministries, political cadres and mobs.

Online Media Targeted: Digital journalists and online media were most targeted, followed by TV and print media.

Failure of State Accountability: Perpetrators of violence against journalists largely evaded justice, fueling impunity.

Advocacy and Recommendations: Media Action Nepal consistently condemned violations and called for urgent action, but government responses were ineffective. Key recommendations include strengthening legal protections, professional safety, ending impunity, and promoting overall safety of journalists.

Media Action Nepal's analysis reveals that press freedom in Nepal regressed significantly during this period, with increased risks to journalists' safety, growing suppression of critical voices, and the encroachment of state power over independent journalism.



2.1 Rise in Physical Violence and Targeted Attacks

The year could be described as a 'terrible year' for journalists and media houses as physical attacks and arson remained a dominant trend:

2.1.1 Coordinated Infrastructure Damage

During the 'Gen-Z' protests in September 2025, major media houses, including Kantipur Media Group, Annapurna Post, and the PSB/Nepal Television (NTV), were vandalized, arsoned, and looted, causing an estimated NPR 600 million in institutional losses. Through a ground visit and interaction with the impacted media houses, Media Action Nepal determined that the attacks were intentional and coordinated in a vengeful manner. Such a kind of attacks on independent media is extremely dangerous to democracy and independent journalism. Despite the attack on media houses, the state remains reluctant in booking the perpetrators. The National Human Rights Commission mechanism and the Gauri Bahadur Karki-led probe commission failed to make public the reports thus excluding the records of damages caused to the media sector.

2.1.2 Violent Assaults on the Ground

Journalists faced severe physical harm while reporting. For instance, Arjun Acharya was violently attacked with his phone confiscated in February 2026, and many journalists were beaten by CPN-UML cadres in March 2026 following the arrest of the former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. This shows tendencies of politically affiliated individuals' nature toward media houses and journalists.

2.1.3 Impunity for Crimes against Journalists Continues

Two decades after the end of Nepal's armed conflict (1996–2006), impunity for crimes against journalists remains widespread. Despite court orders for investigations, successive governments have failed to pursue justice. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP), both established in 2015, have yet to make meaningful progress.

A UNESCO report (2016^[1]) revealed that 35 journalists were killed and four went missing during the insurgency. Yet by April 2025, only five cases had been prosecuted. The impunity persists. In 2025, two journalists were killed, but justice remains elusive, underscoring the ongoing risks faced by Nepali journalists and the urgent need for accountability. Specifically, Suresh Rajak was killed during a pro-monarchy protest on March 28, 2025. Though the incident occurred before May 2025, this case is a stark indicator of the impunity of journalist murder. A photojournalist for Avenues TV, he died from burns while reporting on pro-monarchy protests in Tinkune.

On November 18, 2025, Jagdish Kharel, the then-minister of information and communication technology, arranged for a government job for Rajak's spouse. While this move may be interpreted as prompt action to provide relief to the victim's family, it does not bring justice to a journalist's death.

[1] Adhikary, N.M. & Pant, L.D. (2016). Supporting Safety of Journalists in Nepal: An assessment based on UNESCO's Journalists' Safety Indicators. UNESCO: Paris.



2.2 Legal Harassment and Criminalization of Journalism

2.2.1 Misuse of ETA

The trend shows that the state has increasingly weaponised the Electronic Transaction Act (ETA) to suppress critical reporting. The ETA has been used to arrest journalists for making social media posts or providing online commentary. Cases include the arrest warrant and cybercrime case filed against Dil Bhusan Pathak for his multimedia report in 'Tough Talk'.

On June 19, the Patan High Court ruled that Pathak should not be arrested. The court ruled that because complaints about journalistic content can be filed with the Press Council, there was no need to investigate Pathak for ETA offences. He received a clean chit from the Kathmandu District Court on April 1.

Since April 17, Basudev Dhimi (Bimal), a journalist and publisher of Paschim Samachar, has been facing similar and more severe harassment from state authorities working with the local government. Authorities issued arrest warrant against him for merely writing news. Journalist Dhimi told Media Action Nepal that police and goons were after him after he reported on irregularities by local authorities.

2.2.2 Criminal Charges for Newsgathering

In a dangerous precedent, on May 25, 2025 journalist Prakash Chandra Dahal was charged with 'organized crime' simply for being present to document a protest in March 2025.

2.2.3 Judicial Overreach

Courts have issued 'takedown orders' directing news portals Bizmandu and Nepal Khabar to remove reports and stop covering corruption suspects. The Kathmandu District Court ordered online news portals Nepal Khabar and Bizmandu to remove articles allegedly defaming a government official on June 10, the same day that journalist Dil Bhusan Pathak was arrested on similar defamation charges.

On June 10, the Kathmandu District Court issued an interim order directing online news portals Nepal Khabar and Bizmandu to immediately delete articles allegedly defaming Santosh Narayan Shrestha, chairperson of Nepal's Securities Board, and to refrain from reporting on the matter.

2.3 Systematic Suppression of Digital Expression

The government attempted to restrict the digital sphere, which has become the primary space for independent media.

2.3.1 Blanket Platform Bans

In September 2025, the government imposed an arbitrary administrative ban on 26 social media platforms, including Facebook, without a specific law in place. This move by the government later triggered Gen-Z protests on September 8, 2025.



2.3.2 Repressive Legislation

Media Action Nepal has deemed and identified the Media Council Bill and the Social Media Bill as ‘flawed legislation’ that seeks to curtail independent journalism through regulation. Although the Social Media Bill was withdrawn by the interim government in February 2026, this sort of legal mechanism should be discouraged by any democratic state.

2.4 Threats from State Actors

2.4.1 Political Intimidation

High-ranking officials, including the then Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba threatened media owners (Nepal Republic Media) with the disruption of international partnerships over critical reporting.

2.4.2 Local Government Abuse

Mayors and local officials, including Siraha mayor Navin Kumar Yadav, have frequently threatened journalists for reporting on corruption. Journalist Basudev Dhimi (Bimal) is another example of facing threats from local governments for merely reporting. Shanti Nath, Vice-Chair of Beldandi Rural Municipality, and the District Police Office, Kanchanpur, registered a case under ETA and issued an arrest warrant against him. This represents a troubling misuse of legal provisions to criminalise journalistic work.

On April 28, Namo Narayan Majhi the chairperson of Gramthan Rural Municipality threatened a group of eight journalists who had gone to report on illegal excavations in Koshi's Morang district. Journalist Mohan Dhakal told Media Action Nepal that a group under Chairperson Majhi's protection had threatened to kill them when they arrived to gather news. This trend demonstrates the local level's intolerance towards the press. The government must invest and increase its vigilance in this sector to promote and protect press freedom.

2.5. Gender-Specific Vulnerabilities

Media Action Nepal recorded disturbing incidences such as targeted harassment against female reporters. They faced gender-based verbal abuse and online harassment. Such a trend was explicitly seen in the case of Chandani Jha, who faced coordinated religiously tinged and gender-sensitive abuse. Jha was trolled on social media by a group of religiously motivated people.

Journalist Rama Chand was harassed by a male on the site of reporting while she was covering an incident. The incident was explicitly captured in the video. Chand experienced deliberate physical harassment while she was reporting during the Sudurpaschim fest in Dhangadhi on December 13, 2025.



SECTION 3: CASES OF PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS

Press freedom in Nepal significantly deteriorated between 4 May, 2025, and 2 May, 2026, with 71 documented violations. These incidents reveal recurring patterns of abuse across several major categories, illustrated by the following representative cases. The violations were carried out by both state and non-state actors, with state actors emerging as the leading perpetrators.

3.1 Violations and Victims

- ➡ A large number of journalists received death threats, verbal abuse, and online harassment. For instance, journalist Pradip Bhattarai was issued death threats via social media and phone calls by a ruling-party youth cadre. Similarly, Nabin Dhungana was threatened with violence, including threats to burn his office, following a report linked to political leadership. In another case, Tekman Shakya received threats from individuals claiming a group had been mobilized to kill him over his reporting.
- ➡ Numerous journalists were physically assaulted while reporting. Angaraj Pariyar and Prajwal Chunara were beaten by police while covering a High Court sit-in, and their footage was forcibly deleted. Rajkumar Yadav was seriously injured after being attacked by a group linked to a political figure. During the 8 September, 2025 protests, journalists including Dipendra Dhungana, Umesh Karki, and Shyam Shrestha were attacked and injured by police while reporting.
- ➡ Laws were frequently used to suppress journalists. Sujit K.C. was arrested under the Electronic Transaction Act (ETA) for social media posts critical of a former prime minister. Dil Bhusan Pathak faced a cybercrime case carrying potential imprisonment for reporting. Similarly, Rama Basnet, a content creator, was arrested under ETA provisions for a video deemed defamatory toward political leaders. Courts also issued orders to remove published content from outlets such as Bizmandu and Nepal Khabar.
- ➡ Journalists were repeatedly obstructed from reporting. In several cases, police and authorities forced journalists to delete photos and videos, including incidents involving Monika Waiba and Daya Dudhraj. The Press Council Nepal ordered the removal of a three-year-old news story, raising concerns about regulatory overreach. Additionally, the government imposed a blanket ban on 26 social media platforms, significantly restricting information flow.
- ➡ Journalists faced ongoing harassment and professional instability. Raju Baitha was harassed at his home following investigative reporting, while Chandani Jha faced verbal abuse and incitement to violence by a local official. Women journalists also reported mistreatment in public reporting spaces. Alongside these incidents, broader financial insecurity such as unpaid salaries and lack of benefits further weakened journalists' ability to work safely and independently.
- ➡ Beyond individuals, media organizations were also targeted. During the September protests, coordinated arson and vandalism attacks were carried out against major outlets, including Kantipur Media Group, Annapurna Media Network, Thaha Khabar, and PSB/Nepal Television. These incidents caused significant physical and financial damage, highlighting escalating hostility toward the media.
- ➡ Multimedia and online journalists were the most affected, followed by those in television and print. Bagmati Province (including Kathmandu) and Madhesh Province recorded the highest number of incidents, making them the primary hotspots of violations.



| SN | Date | # of Victim (s) | Media/Location | Violations | Perpetrator/ Description of Violation |
|----|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 | May 8, 2025 | Angaraj Pariyar | Khulanajar.com Surkhet, Karnali | Threat/Assault & Information Blockage <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | Beaten by police led by Assistant Inspector N.B. Rana while covering a High Court sit-in; footage was forcibly deleted. |
| 2 | May 8, 2025 | Prajwal Chunara | Janachaso Sanchar | Threat/Assault/ & Information Blockage <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | Beaten by police led by Assistant Inspector N.B. Rana while covering a High Court sit-in; footage was forcibly deleted. |
| 3 | May 16, 2025 | Sujit K.C. | Rastriya Samachar Online Kathmandu, Bagmati | Arrest and Misuse of Law <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | Arrested by Cyber Bureau under ETA Section 47 for social media posts critical of a former PM; later released by SC order. |
| 4 | May 18, 2025 | Raju Baitha | BirgunjCity.com Birgunj, Parsa | Harassment <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | Harassed at his home at night by a group led by Tait Yadav following reports on land misuse and fraud. |
| 5 | May 18, 2025 | Amarkant Thakur; Badrinath Jha | Kantipur TV; Muluk Times Dhanusha, Madhesh | Seizure of Equipment and Assault <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | Assaulted by the RM Chairperson inside his office; mobile phones were seized by security personnel. |
| 6 | May 25–30, 2025 | Prakash Chandra Dahal | Nepal Pukar Kathmandu, Bagmati | Misuse of Law <u>Withdraw charges against journalist Dahal</u> <u>Media Action Nepal welcomes court orders upholding press freedom</u> | Charged with organised crime for documenting a pro-royalist protest. |
| 7 | May 26, 2025 | Mayor Navin Kumar Yadav | Mayor, Siraha Municipality, Madhesh | Threat <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | Issued public online threats against journalists following reporting on a CIAA corruption probe. |

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| 8 | May 28, 2025 | Press Council Nepal (PCN); Diyopost | PCN: Diyopost online | Misuse of Law Kathmandu, Bagmati <u>Escalating intimidation of journalists raises alarms across Nepal</u> | The PCN ordered the deletion of a three- year-old story critical of the PCN chair, viewed as regulatory overreach. |
| 9 | June 5, 2025 | Shambhu Thapa; Umesh Karki | Nepal Press Kathmandu, Bagmati | Attack/Assault <u>Media Action Nepal slams senior advocate for assaulting journalist, seeks public apology.</u> | Senior Advocate Shambhu Thapa physically attacked photojournalist Karki and his camera during corruption case coverage. |
| 10 | June 10, 2025 | Bizmandu | Bizmandu Kathmandu, Bagmati | Misuse of Law <u>Media Action Nepal concerned over court order against news portals, journalist's arrest warrant</u> | The court issued news takedown orders |
| 11 | June 11, 2025 | Nepal Khabar | Nepal Khabar | Misuse of Law <u>Media Action Nepal concerned over court order against news portals, journalist's arrest warrant</u> | The court issued news takedown orders |
| 12 | June 11-30, 2025 | Dil Bhusan Pathak | Tough Talk/YouTube Kathmandu, Bagmati | Misuse of Law <u>Media Action Nepal concerned over court order against news portals, journalist's arrest warrant</u> <u>Drop Charges against Pathak, stop misusing ETA</u> | Cybercrime case registered under ETA Section 47(1) seeking up to five years' imprisonment for investigative commentary. |
| 13 | June 12, 2025 | Narayan Aryal | Journalist (with Pathak) Kathmandu, Bagmati | Threat <u>Journalist Narayan Aryal released</u> | Faced a full day of police intimidation and surveillance linked to the warrant against Dil Bhusan Pathak. |
| 14 | June 12, 2025 | Shova Gyawali | Foreign Minister and NRM Director Shova Gyawali Kathman du, Bagmati | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal slams Foreign Minister Rana's threat to NRM Director Gyanwali</u> | FM Deuba allegedly made a threatening call to Gyawali to "bring down" NRM over reports linked to Dil Bhusan Pathak. |



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| 15 | June 13, 2025 | Anil Dhakal and others | Group of Journalists Bharatpur, Chitwan | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal condemns police complicity in intimidation against journalists</u> | Physically attacked by individuals inside a press conference venue while police reportedly stood by. |
| 16 | June 14, 2025 | Jhalak Pali | Najar OnlineDoti, Sudurpashchim | Harassment <u>Media Action Nepal condemns police complicity in intimidation against journalists</u> | Pressured and harassed by police to issue a public apology over reporting sourced from a police Messenger group. |
| 17 | June 15–25, 2025 | Rama Basnet | TikTok Creator Kathmandu / Bhaktapur | Misuse of Law <u>Media Action Nepal denounces threats to women journalist, content creator</u> | Arrested under ETA for a TikTok video allegedly defaming PM Oli and Minister Lekhak; released on bail by SC. |
| 18 | June 21, 2025 | Chandani Jha | TV Today/ Dhanusha, Madhesh | Threat/Abuse <u>Media Action Nepal denounces threats to women journalist, content creator</u> | Verbally abused by Ward Chair Jaynarayan Yadav, who allegedly incited cadres to attack her and her equipment. |
| 19 | June 24–25, 2025 | Himalmedia | Himal Khabar Kathmandu | Misuse of Law <u>Media Action Nepal welcomes court orders upholding press freedom</u> | On June 2, the Supreme Court ordered Himalmedia to submit a written response. |
| 20 | June 24–25 2025 | Drishti Weekly | | Misuse of Law <u>Contempt charges undermine investigative journalism</u> | On June 24, the Special Court took <u>action</u> against Drishti Weekly and DrishtiNews.com over a news report published on June 22 titled “Middlemen’s Influence in the Special Court.” |
| 21 | July 3, 2025 | Dil Bhusan Pathak | Tough Talk Kathmandu, Bagmati | Misuse of Law | Released on NPR 25,000 bail by KDC in the ongoing cybercrime case. |



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| 22 | July 8, 2025 | Diwakar Sah | HTP Khabar Mahottari, Madhesh | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal condemns assault on Journalist Sah</u> | Mistreated by a group inside a government office while reporting on infrastructure irregularities. |
| 23 | July 24, 2025 | Rajkumar Yadav | Rautahat journalist Rautahat, Madhesh | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal condemns attacks against journalists</u> | Beaten and seriously injured by a group including the son of lawmaker Prabhu Sah. |
| 24 | July 27, 2025 | Pradip Bhattarai | Post Khabar Kathmandu, Bagmati | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal condemns death threat to journalist Bhattarai</u> | Received death threats via Facebook and phone from a ruling-party youth cadre (NYFN). |
| 25 | August 2, 2025 | Rakesh Nepali | Kantipur, Udayapur | Information Blocakge <u>Media Action Nepal condemns attacks against journalists</u> | Nepali was obstructed and misbehaved during the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)'s city convention on August 2, at the Hotel Empire Inn in Triyuga Municipality-3 of Udayapur district of Koshi province. |
| 26 | Aug 12, 2025 | Baidyanath Yadav | Avenues Television Saptari, Madhesh | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal condemns attacks against journalists</u> | Attacked by protesters and reporting obstructed during coverage of a police shooting incident. |
| 27 | Aug 12, 2025 | Hari Prasad Joshi | Gatishil News Darchula, Sudurpashchim | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal condemns attacks against journalists</u> | Threatened by rural municipality employees following a news post based on a public hearing. |
| 28 | Aug 12, 2025 | Shyam Banjara, Jyoti Jha, Shailendra Mahato, Diwakar Ray and Binita Yadav and others.* | Group of Journalists in Janakpur, Madhesh | Threat/Attack <u>Janapur Media Action Nepal condemns attack on journalists by NBA members</u> | Journalists were brutally beaten in large numbers, and six of them were admitted to the hospital in Janakpur following attack by lawyers in Janakpur. |



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| 29 | Aug 15, 2025 | Saurabh Yadav | Naya Patrika Daily Saptari, Madhesh | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal deploras deadly attack, death threats against journalists</u> | Violently assaulted with knives, belts, and helmets; hospitalised with head injuries. |
| 30 | Aug 15, 2025 | Indra Baniya | ArthikNews.com Kathmandu, Bagmati | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal deploras deadly attack, death threats against journalists</u> | Received death threats from a Trauma Centre staffer after exposing irregularities. |
| 31 | Sept 4, 2025 | Government of Nepal | 26 Social Media Platforms National, Nepal | Threat/Attack <u>Nepal's arbitrary social media ban undermines democracy and freedom of expression</u> <u>19 killed in GenZ's peaceful protest against digital coup, journalists among the injured</u> | Blanket administrative ban imposed on 26 social media platforms without parliamentary process by KP Oli led government. |
| 32 | Sept 8, 2025 | Dipendra Dhungana | Naya Patrika, Kathmandu | Attack <u>19 killed in GenZ's peaceful protest against digital coup, journalists among the injured</u> | Dhungana was shot in neck by police during the Gen Z protest. |
| 33 | Sept 8, 2025 | Barsha Shah | Deshsanchar | Attack <u>19 killed in GenZ's peaceful protest against digital coup, journalists among the injured</u> | Photojournalist Shah sustained injuries after she was struck by stones. |
| 34 | Sept 8, 2025 | Umesh Karki | Nepalpress, Kathmandu | Attack <u>19 killed in GenZ's peaceful protest against digital coup, journalists among the injured</u> | Karki, a photojournalist, was injured by a police bullet while taking photographs in New Baneshwor. He was treated at Civil Hospital and later returned to the field. |



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| 35 | Sept 8, 2025 | Shyam Shrestha | Kantipur, Kathmandu | Attack <u>19 killed in GenZ's peaceful protest against digital coup, journalists among the injured</u> | Shrestha was shot while filming the protest in Baneshwor. He is currently undergoing treatment at Civil Hospital. |
| 36 | Sept 8–9, 2025 | KMG | Kantipur Media Group Kathmandu, Kavre | Attack/Arson <u>Media Action Nepal condemns attack on media houses during protest</u> | Coordinated attacks and arson during Gen-Z protests; infrastructure vandalised and journalists injured. |
| 37 | Sept 8–9, 2025 | AMN | Annapurna Media Network Kathmandu | Attack/Arson <u>Nepali Media Under Siege: Journalists Injured, Billions in Damage</u> | Coordinated attacks and arson during Gen-Z protests; infrastructure vandalised and journalists injured. |
| 38 | Sept 8–9, 2025 | Thaha Khabar | Thaha Khabar Kathmandu | Attack/Arson <u>Nepali Media Under Siege: Journalists Injured, Billions in Damage</u> | Coordinated attacks and arson during Gen-Z protests; infrastructure vandalised and journalists injured. |
| 39 | Sept 8–9, 2025 | NTV | Nepal Television Kathmandu | Attack/Arson <u>Nepali Media Under Siege: Journalists Injured, Billions in Damage</u> | Attacked NTV situated within Singha Durbar Boundry |
| 40 | Sept 21, 2025 | Tekman Shakya | NepaleseTimes.com Kathmandu | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal condemns death threat against journalist Shakya</u> | Threatened by a caller stating 20–22 men were sent to kill him following critical news on a UML leader. |
| 41 | Sept 25, 2025 | Nabin Dhungana | Sidhakura.com Kathmandu, Bagmati | Threat <u>Journalist threatened with death over story on charred millions linked to Deuba</u> | Received death threats and threats to burn the office over a story linked to Sher Bahadur Deuba. |
| 42 | Oct 1, 2025 | Priya Karn | Janakpurdham, Madhesh | Harassment <u>Media Action Nepal denounces assaults on journalists in Madhesh province</u> | Harassed and beaten by workers at Hansraj Sweet Shop in a public space. |



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| 43 | Oct 1, 2025 | Dhruv Jha | Janakpurdham, Madhesh | Threat/Assault <u>Media Action Nepal denounces assaults on journalists in Madhesh province</u> | Assaulted and phone nearly snatched by shop staff while reporting on footpath encroachment. |
| 44 | Oct 7, 2025 | Najar Ram Maharjan | Sandesh Weekly Kathmandu, Bagmati | Threat/Abuse <u>Media Action Nepal deplores escalating threats and assaults on journalists</u> | Verbally abused and received death threats from a group over a published report. |
| 45 | Oct 8, 2025 | Parbatraj Ghimire | Kathmandu | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal deplores escalating threats and assaults on journalists</u> | Threatened with an abusive video by an individual identifying as the mayor's brother-in-law. |
| 46 | Oct 13, 2025 | Manoj Kumar Majhi | Saptari, Madhesh | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal deplores escalating threats and assaults on journalists</u> | Verbally and physically assaulted while covering police implementation of a court verdict. |
| 47 | Oct 13, 2025 | Anish Sheikh | Saptari, Madhesh | Information Blockage <u>Media Action Nepal deplores escalating threats and assaults on journalists</u> | The mayor of Kanchanrup ordered municipal police to forcibly delete footage from his device. |
| 48 | Oct 29, 2025 | Keshab Bhul | Nepalpress.com Kathmandu | Threat <u>Media Action Nepal deplores death threats to journalist Bhul</u> | Received multiple threatening calls and explicit online death threats after an article on "Biplab". |
| 49 | Oct 29, 2025 | Kishor Shrestha | Janastha Weekly Kathmandu | Threat | Public death threat issued by a UML leader/ex-minister via social media. |
| 50 | Oct 30, 2025 | Ganesh Pandey | Lamjung, Gandaki | Threat/Attack | Stones pelted at his house at night, causing property damage linked to his journalism. |
| 51 | Nov 2, 2025 | Rajesh Kumar Karn | Janakpur, Madhesh | Threat/Assault | Physically assaulted near his residence by a local individual. |



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| 52 | Nov 4, 2025 | Prakash Bam | Kantipur TV Kathmandu, Bagmati | Threat/Abuse <u>Media Action Nepal deplores death threats to journalist Bhul</u> | NC Deputy General Secretary Kishor Singh Rathore verbally abused and attempted to assault him. |
| 53 | Dec 1, 2025 | Shivdayal Yadav | Mithila Ratna; Avenues TVSiraha, Madhesh | Threat <u>Editor receives death threats over news story.</u> | Received death threats and vulgar abuse from a fraud suspect following an investigative report. |
| 54 | Dec 13, 2025 | Rama Chand | Naya Sandesh Online Kailali, Sudurpaschim | Attack/ Harassment <u>Women Journalists face harassment, mistreatment in Kathmandu and Dhangadhi</u> | Deliberately pushed while reporting at Sudurpaschim Fest, causing physical harm. |
| 55 | Dec 16, 2025 | Barsha Shah | Deshsanchar Kathmandu, Bagmati | Arrest <u>Women Journalists face harassment, mistreatment in Kathmandu and Dhangadhi</u> | Briefly detained and phone confiscated by police; pressured to delete protest photos. |
| 56 | Feb 26, 2026 | Arjun Acharya | RatoPati, Hamromat Jhapa, Koshi | Attack <u>Media Action Nepal denounces the violent attack on journalist Acharya</u> | Violently attacked while filming a protest; suffered face/eye injuries and equipment damage. |
| 57 | Feb 26, 2026 | BBC World Service | BBC National | Information Blockage <u>Media Action Nepal condemns ECN interference in media coverage</u> | The Election Commission requested the removal of a Gen-Z protest documentary. |
| 58 | March 1, 2026 | Raju Subedi | Tvannapurna.co m Baglung, Gandaki | Threat <u>Journalists targeted as Election Day nears</u> | Received death threats and online abuse regarding election coverage and citizenship reporting. |
| 59 | March 2, 2026 | Sudip Thapa | Sunrisetvnews.co m Dhangadhi, Sudurpashchim | Threat/Assault <u>Journalists targeted as Election Day nears</u> | Physically assaulted while walking home in a tense pre-election environment. |
| 60 | March 28, 2026 | Daya Dudhraj | Kantipur Lalitpur, Bagmati | Threat/Assault <u>Media Action Nepal condemns UML attack on journalists following arrest of KP Oli</u> | Assaulted by UML cadres while covering a party meeting and protests. |



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| 61 | March 28, 2026 | Kaushal Kaphle | Onlinekhabar Lalitpur, Bagmati | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal condemns UML attack on journalists following arrest of KP Oli</u> | Beaten by cadres while photographing protest activities. |
| 62 | March 28, 2026 | Prasun Sangraula | Onlinekhabar Lalitpur, Bagmati | Threat/Attack <u>Media Action Nepal condemns UML attack on journalists following arrest of KP Oli</u> | Harassed and nearly assaulted while covering the same UML event. |
| 63 | Mar 30, 2026 | Sanjay Mishra | Online/Facebook | Threat/Abuse <u>Attention drawn to abuse of journalists on social media</u> | Journalist Sanjay Mishra was subjected to targeted abusive language and online harassment |
| 64 | Apr 7, 2026 | Journalists/Narayan Prasad Regmi (CIAA Joint Secretary) | Pokhara, Tanahu | Information Blocakge | Prohibited journalists from taking videos at a public commission event, obstructing the right to information. |
| 65 | Apr 13, 2026 | Government of Nepal | National | Threat | Symbolic nationwide strike by private media against the advertising ban. |
| 66 | April 25, 2026 | Kamal Prasai | Onlinekhabar.com Kathmandu | Threat/Attack | Physically attacked by local residents while reporting on the demolition of informal settlements; sustained injuries to his nose and his camera's memory card was seized. |
| 67 | April 23, 2026 | Ajay Kumr Sah Ratopati.com | Bardibas, Mahottari | Threat/Attack | Subjected to abuse and death threats by a local official (Treasurer of the BDWSUC) regarding a news report. |

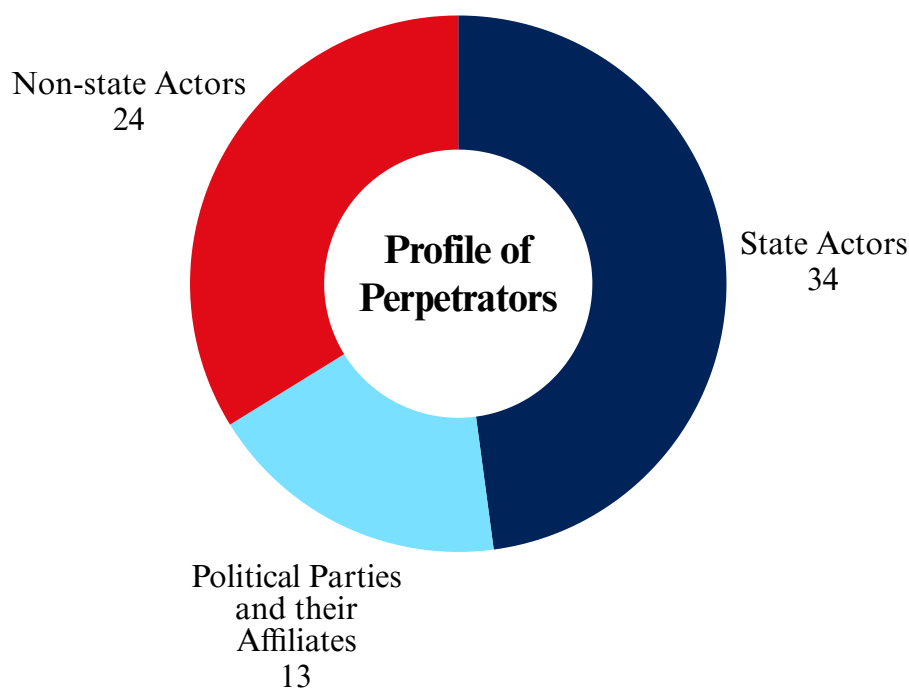


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| 68 | April 17, 2026 | Basudev Dhami (Bimal) | Paschim Sanchar Kanchanpur | <u>Misuse of Law</u> | Facing legal action and an arrest warrant under the Electronic Transaction Act (ETA) following a complaint by a local rural municipality official over reporting on governance issues. |
| 69 | April 28, 2026 | Mohan Dhakal, Dumarlal Mehta, Santosh Mehta, Nagendra Khadka, Prabhesh Timsina, Brahmadev Mahato, and Dipendra Kumar Sah | Group of Journalists in Koshi | <u>Threat</u> | A group of journalists in Morang were threatened by Gramthan Rural Municipality Chairman Namo Narayan Majhi during their reporting work. |
| 70 | April 29, 2026 | Monika Waiba | Ukeraa, Kathmandu | <u>Harrasment and Information Blockage</u> | Waiba was barred from reporting, and videos and photos were deleted in front of her. Police surveillance and reporting. |
| 71 | April 29, 2026 | Daya Dudhraj | Kantipur | <u>Harrasment and Information Blockage</u> | Daya was forcibly removed by police from reporting site and deleted photos and videos from his cell phone. |



3.2 The Profile of Perpetrators

- Out of the 71 incidents, 34 were attributed to state actors, including police, government officials, ministers, and judicial bodies. Their involvement ranged from direct physical violence such as police assaults on journalists during protests to legal harassment through arrests, court orders, and misuse of laws like the ETA. These actions reflect a serious institutional failure to uphold press freedom and demonstrate active participation in its suppression.
- Non-state actors were responsible for 24 incidents, including attacks and threats by organized groups and mobs. These actors frequently targeted journalists reporting on corruption, local governance issues, or political activities, contributing to a broader climate of fear and intolerance toward the media.
- Political parties and their affiliates were involved in 13 cases. Individuals linked to major parties such as the RSP, NC, and CPN-UML were implicated in threats, assaults, and obstruction of reporting. This highlights how political influence and partisan interests continue to play a significant role in undermining press freedom.



Overall, the pattern of perpetrators shows a dangerous overlap between state power, political influence, and societal hostility, sustained by weak accountability and widespread impunity.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

The period between 4 May, 2025 and 2 May, 2026 marks a serious deterioration of press freedom in Nepal, characterized by a rise in both the frequency and severity of violations. The 71 documented incidents reveal a pattern of systematic threats, violence, legal harassment, and censorship, affecting journalists across all platforms, particularly those in online and multimedia sectors.

A concerning issue is the prominent role of state actors, who were responsible for the highest number of violations. Their involvement ranging from physical assaults and arbitrary arrests to misuse of laws and content restrictions, signals a deep institutional failure to uphold constitutional guarantees of press freedom. At the same time, the participation of non-state actors and political party affiliates reflects a wider culture of intolerance toward independent journalism.

The situation is compounded by economic insecurity within the media sector, where irregular salaries and unsafe working conditions undermine journalists' independence and resilience. Repeated attacks against media during political protests highlights the growing risks associated with public-interest journalism.

The findings point to a shrinking democratic space, where press freedom is increasingly under pressure from legal, political, economic, and physical threats. Without urgent reforms, these trends risk becoming deep-rooted, further weakening Nepal's democratic foundations.

4.2 Recommendations to Enhance Press Freedom in Nepal

Government of Nepal

- ➡ Strengthen and ensure the effective functioning of journalist safety mechanisms, particularly by operationalizing the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) led framework, which, despite being envisioned since 2012 and formalized in 2019, remains largely inactive and ineffective^[2].
- ➡ Refrain from repressive legislations such as provisions under the Electronic Transaction Act that can be misused to criminalize journalism and media content.
- ➡ Conduct independent and transparent investigations into all reported violations to end impunity for crimes against journalists.
- ➡ Prevent arbitrary content takedowns, platform bans, and administrative censorship from media regulatory bodies such as Press Council Nepal, and uphold the public's right to information.

[2] Bhattarai, K.D. (2023). Journalists' safety mechanism still elusive. <https://theannapurnaexpress.com/story/45500/>

Political Parties

- ➡ Publicly affirm and respect the role of independent media and refrain from threats, intimidation, or interference.
- ➡ Take disciplinary action against party members and cadres involved in attacks or harassment of journalists.

Law Enforcement Bodies & Judiciary

- ➡ Ensure that arrests, investigations, and court orders respect constitutional protections for press freedom.
- ➡ Review and reform legal provisions that are frequently used to target journalists, particularly those enabling broad or vague interpretations.

Publishers, Media Owners

- ➡ Provide regular and fair salaries, social security contributions, insurance, and safe working conditions for journalists.
- ➡ Reduce political and business pressures that may compromise journalistic values.

Regulatory Bodies

- ➡ Avoid overreach in content regulation and ensure decisions are consistent with international standards on press freedom.
- ➡ Investigate and address practices within the media industry that contribute to job insecurity.



MEDIA ACTION NEPAL

Media Action Nepal is working to promote freedom of expression, safety of journalists, right to information and media development. Our core working areas include media and journalism, human rights, media research, right to information, communication and policy advocacy. We are committed to making the media independent and accountable. Our goals: inclusive, independent and responsible media, and professional journalism, protection of human rights, strengthening of democracy.

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 first ever signatory to the Freelance Journalist Safety Principles of the ACOS Alliance from Nepal, founding member of the Digital Freedom Coalition and a member of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD). Our founding chair Dr. Laxman Datt Pant serves as the deputy chair of GFMD.


Media Action Nepal 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. In March 2025, Media Action Nepal joined the Civil Society Coalition of the Forum on Information and Democracy (FID), a global network of civil society organizations (CSOs) dedicated to safeguarding democracy, press freedom, and human rights in the digital age.



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