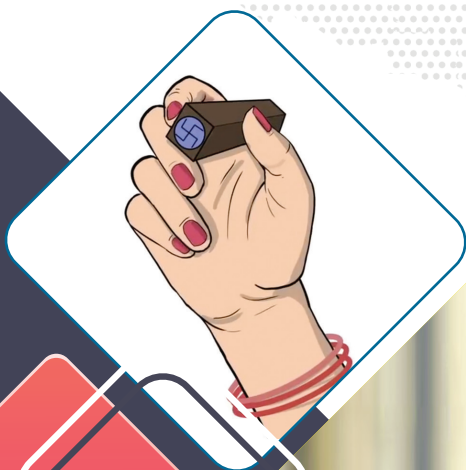



# NEPAL ELECTION-2022

An overview of Electoral Process and Contestations



An illustration of a hand holding a magnifying glass over a document. The hand is light-skinned with a teal cuff. The magnifying glass is positioned over a document that has a red stamp on it. The background is white with a pattern of small grey dots.

This report is prepared as a part of Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP)'s electoral violence monitoring initiative that aimed to monitor, analyze, and report trends of electoral contestation during the local, provincial and federal elections in Nepal in 2022 with the objective of understanding and informing different stakeholders about the dynamics of electoral violence. We are grateful to National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for supporting this initiative.

COCAP is a national network of 43 Peace and Human Rights based non-governmental organizations working in Nepal. COCAP aims to contribute to the peace process in Nepal by promoting the social security system, strengthening democratic practices, and developing a culture of human rights in collaboration with socially committed and transparent civil society actors throughout the country.

[Nepalmonitor.org](http://Nepalmonitor.org) is a COCAP protection and conflict prevention initiative.

# FOREWORD



As the chairperson of the **Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP)**, I'm pleased to share our '**Nepal Election 2022 - An overview of Electoral Contestation and Process**' report with you. Since COCAP's establishment in 2002, we've been dedicated to supporting peace, human rights, justice and inclusive democracy in Nepal. This report is a testament to our commitment, reinforcing our belief in the importance of free, fair, and peaceful elections for a thriving democracy.

Over the past 20 years, COCAP has consistently stood for peaceful and democratic values. Our role in strengthening the civil society, observing elections and monitoring violence has given us an understanding of the challenges faced, and allowed us to actively participate in refining Nepal's democratic process.

Our report provides a detailed analysis of Nepal's 2022 elections, exploring the electoral process and the nature and trend of the contestations that were observed throughout the election of the Local Level and the Federal and Provincial parliaments. Thanks to our dedicated team, network members and partner organizations, we've gathered and documented data from variety of sources, accounted for electoral violence to the best of our abilities, and examined the political atmosphere before, during, and after the elections.

We believe the knowledge from this report will guide strategies for ensuring future elections that are more peaceful and democratic. We aspire to eradicate electoral violence entirely and to establish a fair and peaceful electoral process. This report highlights areas needing urgent attention and suggests steps towards resolution.

In closing, I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in this project - our hardworking volunteers, committed staff, and generous donors who share and support our mission. Your contributions drive our pursuit of a peaceful and democratic Nepal.

The future is hopeful. This report doesn't only assess the past; it lays out a path towards a more peaceful, democratic, and inclusive future. With continued dedication, teamwork, and informed decision-making, we're confident that we can contribute substantially to Nepal's democratic journey.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to peace, justice, and democracy in Nepal.

Warm regards,

**Puspa Bhusal**

Chairperson, COCAP

# CONTENTS

■ Executive Summary	1
■ 1. Political Background	3
■ 2. Legal Framework of the Election	5
A. The Constitution of Nepal	5
B. Election Commission Act 2017	7
C. Other important laws relating to elections in Nepal	7
■ 3. Local Election 2022	9
3.1 General Overview of Local Elections-2022	9
3.2 Trends of Violent Contestations during Local Election 2022	10
3.3 Pre-candidacy registration (April 3 to April 24, 2022)	11
3.4 Candidacy Registration (April 24 to 30, 2022)	12
3.5 Campaign Period (May 1 to 10, 2022)	12
3.6 Silence Period (May 11 to 12, 2022)	13
3.7 Election Day (May 13, 2022)	14
3.8 Post Elections (May 14 to 30, 2022)	15
3.9 Province wise analysis of Electoral Violence during Local Elections	15
■ 4. House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) Election 2022	17
4.1 General Overview of HoR and PA Election 2022	17
4.2 Pre-Campaign phase of the HoR and PA Election	18
4.3 Campaign Period of HoR and PA Election	23
4.4 Silence Period of HoR/PA Election (November 18 - 19)	32
4.5 Election Day	33
4.6 Post Election Phase of HoR & PA Election	35
■ 5. By-Election	41
5.1 Overview of By-election 2023	41
5.2 Electoral process characterized by peaceful environment and efficient execution	41
5.3 Result of By-Election validates disillusionment towards traditional parties	42
■ 6. Overall Trend of Electoral Contestation in Nepal Election-2022	43
■ 7. Participation of Voters in Nepal Election-2022	47
■ 8. Outcome of the Nepal's 2022 Election and its Implication	49
■ 9. Conclusion and Recommendations	51
■ Endnote	53





## Executive Summary

This report presents an overview of Nepal's 2022 elections for local level, provincial and federal parliament with specific focus on the patterns of electoral contestations observed during different phases of elections. The report also provides a broad assessment of the overall electoral process, the outcome of the elections and its broader political implication.

Data on incidents of electoral contestations were collected throughout the election cycle from various sources including national and local online news portals, national dailies, COCAP's focal persons and member organizations in provinces through Nepalmonitor - a COCAP online platform for violence monitoring. To ensure the reliability of collected data, each reported incident was triangulated with reports of the same incident from at least two other sources.

Throughout this report, the terms "election-related incident" and "contestation" have been used interchangeably to denote events linked to the election that instigated a dispute, protest, or conflict. The term "**Violent**" used in the report refers to use or attempted use of physical force with the intention of inflicting harm to person or property. "**Non-violent**" on the other hand has been used to denote incidents wherein peaceful means were used to express discord, disagreement or dissatisfaction. These include, but not limited to, peaceful protests, demonstrations, padlocking, sit-in, strikes or other kinds of symbolic forms of protests.

Nepalmonitor, recorded a total of 393 incidents

during the complete election period, comprising Local and House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly elections. While a higher number of incidents were recorded during the local elections (252 nos.) than during the HoR and PA elections (141 nos.), the nature and general trend of electoral contestations observed were similar throughout different phases of both elections.

The election-related contestations were recorded across all phases of the election cycle but remained mostly concentrated towards the campaign period and the polling day. The contestations during pre-candidacy and candidacy registration phases were mostly of intra-party nature marked by disputes over candidacy in executive positions by aspirants. The incidents during the campaign period were mostly of inter-party nature in which incidents of violence ranged from arson and vandalism of vehicles used by rival parties for election campaigning, to issuing death threats, pelting stones as well as assaulting the candidates physically.

There was a significant increase in violent encounters on polling days relative to other stages of the election. The primary catalysts for these incidents included conflicts between political party cadres at polling centers, purported attempts to seize polling booths, and accusations of vote rigging. Claims of party representatives manipulating and influencing the votes of elderly and people with disability also sparked disputes and altercations at several polling sites. Notably, incidents persisted even after polling day, during vote counting, and throughout victory rallies,

illustrating that the potential for electoral contestation extends beyond polling day.

Geographically, incidents of electoral contestation were found scattered across all terrains, with localization in central hills (Dolakha, Sindupalchowk districts), Southeastern terai, and far-western hills (Bajura district) in both the elections. Despite these incidents, the electoral program ran smoothly with successful polling in over 99.9% of the total polling centers, with timely and successful resolution of disputes.

In contrast to the 2017 Local, House of Representatives (HoR), and Provincial Assembly (PA) elections, the 2022 elections experienced a significantly reduced level of anti-election activities. In 2017, entities opposing the elections engaged in arson, vandalism, and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), targeting electoral activities. The 2022 elections, however, witnessed a dramatic decrease in such anti-election actions, which enhanced electoral security and fostered a more favorable environment for the elections.

The results of the local elections were largely dictated by established parties, with the Nepali Congress securing the most positions for the local level leadership. They were closely followed by other traditional parties like the CPN-UML, CPN (Maoist Centre), Janata Samajwadi Party, and several minor parties. However, in a striking shift from the usual electoral pattern, independent candidates emerged victorious in major urban areas such as Kathmandu, Dharan, and Dhangadi, securing the topmost posts.

This indicated a new willingness among urban voters to explore options beyond the conventional political parties. This signaled a transformative shift in the political landscape, suggesting that urban constituents were becoming increasingly open to non-traditional political alternatives that could challenge the

established status quo which was further demonstrated by the emergence of new political forces and their noteworthy performance during the parliamentary election held in November 2022. Among the new parties, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party won 20 seats in the election of the federal parliament, while Janamat Party, and Nagarik Unmukti Party won 6 and 3 seats respectively.

These results indicated not only an increasing attraction towards new political groups, but also suggested potential change in the country's political environment as people voiced their discontent with conventional parties and their inability to deliver on their commitments of good governance, development and prosperity. Additionally, this was a reminder for established parties to reflect on themselves, identify the reasons for their detachment from the people, and re-evaluate their strategies.

The timely and successful completion of the election in a manner generally accepted as peaceful, free and fair by both national and international observers can be seen as a significant step forward consolidating Nepal's democratic electoral process. The 2022 election marked a crucial milestone in the country's political journey, as it was conducted against the backdrop of a myriad of challenges, including economic uncertainties, social unrest, and the Covid-19 global pandemic. The peaceful conduct of the election under these circumstances reflects the resilience of Nepal's democratic institutions and the commitment of its citizenry to democratic governance. The downward trend in electoral violence in each subsequent election since the 2017 elections illustrate that the culture of peaceful and democratic conduct is taking root in Nepal.



# I. Political Background



The successful completion of local, provincial, and federal assembly elections in 2017 marked a significant milestone in implementing Nepal's 2015 Constitution, which established the nation as a Federal Democratic Republic. These elections, the first to be held following the promulgation of the constitution, represented a major step in Nepal's transition towards federalism.

In 2017, Nepal was grappling with the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake, which had severely damaged the country's infrastructure and impacted thousands of lives. The political environment was fraught with challenges, including ongoing disputes over local level restructuring and protests from the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF), an alliance of Madhes-based parties demanding constitutional amendments. Despite these obstacles, the successful completion of elections at all three levels of the state's structure laid the groundwork for the implementation of federalism.

As the five-year term of the House of Representatives elected in 2017 drew to a close, Nepal was constitutionally mandated to hold Local, Provincial Assembly (PA), and House of Representatives (HoR) elections in 2022. This five-year period tested the nation's transition to federalism, as local governance, law formulation, institution-building, political power distribution, and public service delivery were still in their early stages.

Consequently, the 2022 elections were viewed as pivotal in consolidating Nepal's federal structure and

reinforcing democratic institutions. In the lead-up to the 2022 elections, Nepal saw some important political, social and governance related challenges.

In 2020, an intense power struggle over control of the government and the party unfolded between two factions within the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP), which had been established after the merger of CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist Center in 2018. One faction was led by Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, while the other was led by former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal. Amid the rising intra-party conflict, Oli recommended the dissolution of the House of Representatives to the President to prevent a vote of confidence against the government. The President approved the recommendation but it sparked widespread protests and was challenged in the Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup>

On February 23, 2021 the Supreme ruled the dissolution of the parliament unconstitutional and ordered the reinstatement of the House.<sup>2</sup> Issuing a verdict on a different case on March 8, the court also annulled the decision of Election Commission to award the NCP (Nepal Communist Party) name to the party formed by the unification of CPN (Maoist Center) and CPN-UML in 2018 citing that the name "Nepal Communist Party" had already been issued to the party led by Rishiram Kattel.<sup>3</sup> This decision by extension invalidated the merger of Oli and Dahal's parties and led to the revival of the two parties to their status before merger.

Following this, the CPN (Maoist Centre) on May 5 withdrew its support to Oli Government. In a vote of confidence held in the parliament, Oli government failed to garner a majority after a faction of his own party led by Madhav Kumar Nepal also boycotted the voting. Subsequently, on May 13, 2021 Oli was reappointed as the Prime Minister due to his position as the leader of the party with the most parliamentary seats. Instead of seeking another vote of confidence, Oli began the process of forming a government under Article 76(5), a move which was contested in the Supreme Court.

Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur also claimed to have garnered the support of 149 parliamentarians including that of 26 from CPN-UML and 13 from Janata Samajwadi Party. On the other hand, Oli asserted that he had the backing of all MPs from CPN-UML and Janata Samajwadi Party. President Bhandari on May 22, 2021 concluded that neither claim was satisfactory and thus dissolved the House of Representatives and called for midterm elections in two phases on

November 19 and November 21, 2021.<sup>4</sup> This decision was met with extensive opposition. Eventually on July 12, 2021 the Supreme court invalidated the dissolution of the parliament and ordered Deuba to be appointed as Prime Minister within 28 hours in line with article 76(5) given that Deuba had submitted 149 signatures to the President, representing the majority of the 271 members of the House.<sup>5</sup>

On February 7, 2021, the subsequent government formed under the head of Sher Bahadur Deuba announced the local election to be held on May 13, 2022 with consultation of Election Commission Nepal. Following successful completion of the local election on the set date, the government also decided on August 4 to hold the parliamentary election on November 20.





## 2. Legal Framework of the Election

The Legal framework governing the election plays a crucial role in ensuring a fair and democratic electoral process by establishing clear rules, eligibility criteria, and mechanisms to prevent malpractices. It provides equal opportunities for candidates, maintains transparency in voter registration and result announcement. A strong legal framework fosters public confidence, upholds democratic principles, and contributes to Nepal's stability as a democratic republic. Major legal frameworks concerning the Local Level and Parliamentary elections in Nepal include:

### A. The Constitution of Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 provides the primary legal framework for elections in Nepal<sup>6</sup>. The Constitution established Nepal as a federal democratic republic state embracing a competitive multi-party democratic system of governance with adult franchise and periodic elections at all three Local, Provincial and Federal level of the state.

#### I. Provisions on Elections of Federal Parliament

Nepal's constitution envisions a bi-cameral federal legislature called the Federal Parliament consisting of two houses namely the House of Representatives (HoR) and the National Assembly.<sup>7</sup> The House of Representatives, called the lower house of the parliament, has 275 members. Among these, 165 members are elected through the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system and 110 members are elected through the Proportional Representation (PR) system. The FPTP system elects one

member from each of the 165 constituencies across the country, while the PR system distributes the remaining 110 seats or forty percent of the total seats based on the total number of votes each political party receives nationwide. The seats under the PR system are allocated only to political parties that successfully gain at least 3 percent of the total votes cast nationwide under PR election. The HoR has a term of Five years and elections are held every five years.

#### II. Provincial Assembly Election System

Nepal's constitution provides for a Provincial Assembly in each of its seven provinces, with a total of 550 members elected through a mixed electoral system.<sup>8</sup> This system combines the first-past-the-post (FPTP) method, electing 330 members (60% of total seats) based on the most votes in their respective constituencies, and the proportional representation (PR) method, electing the remaining 220 members (40% of total seats) based on the proportion of votes each political party receives across the province. Voters cast two ballots: one for a candidate (FPTP) and another for a political party (PR). The distribution of seats under the PR election of Provincial Assembly is similar to that of the PR election for the HoR.

### III. Election of Local Levels

According to the Constitution, the local level structure of Nepal is composed of 753 local levels, divided into Municipalities including Metropolitan Cities, Sub-Metropolitan Cities, and Rural Municipalities. These structures play a crucial role in local governance, enabling more direct public participation in decision-making processes, and promoting transparency and accountability.

Elections for these local bodies are instrumental in ensuring robust grassroots-level democracy. The Constitution guarantees the right of every citizen to vote in these elections, thereby promoting inclusivity and broad representation. Through these local elections, citizens directly elect their representatives who make decisions on local issues, such as development projects, local taxes, and public services.

The elected local representatives include a Chairperson/Mayor, Deputy-Chairperson/Mayor in each local level, and a ward committee comprising five members including the Ward Chairpersons and four ward members in each ward of the local level. The ward committee must have at least two female members including at least a female from Dalit community.

The Constitution also provides for the inclusion of women mandating that each local body must have at least one woman in an executive position, ensuring gender representation. Similarly, it stipulates provisions for the representation of marginalized groups to ensure a diverse and inclusive local governance system.

### IV. Role of Election Commission

The constitution has also set the provision of an Election Commission as an independent constitutional body responsible for conducting free, fair, and impartial elections in Nepal. Article 245 of Nepal's Constitution 2015 includes provision on the Election Commission, provisions relating to the appointment of five commissioners including the Chief Election Commissioner, eligibility criteria to be appointed a commissioner, term of the Commissioners' Office, and remuneration.<sup>9</sup>

The functions, duties and powers of the Election Commission have been outlined by Article 246 of the constitution and also gives the commission the power to supervise, direct and control the election of the President, Vice-President, members of the Federal Parliament, members of the Provincial Assemblies and members of Local Level. It also gives the Commission authority to decide on any questions arising about the qualification of a candidate after filing nomination of candidates in any of the above elections. Besides these, the Election Commission election also has the authority to delegate any of its functions, duties and powers to the Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commissioner, or any government employee as to be exercised and complied with subject to the specified conditions.

The Government of Nepal, State Government and Local Government are obliged according to Article 247 of the constitution to provide employees and assistance to the Election Commission which may be required to perform its functions pursuant to the constitution.

## V. Provision on Political parties

Article 269 of the constitution outlines the provision on the formation, registration and operation of political parties in Nepal.

<sup>10</sup> According to clauses under this article, persons who are committed to common political ideology, philosophy and program may form and operate political parties subject to sub-clauses that require a political party to have a democratic constitution and rules, there must be an election at least once in every five years for each of the office-bearers of the party at the Federal and Provincial levels. There must be a provision of inclusive representation in its executive committees at various levels. To participate in elections and be recognized by the Election Commission, any political party registered under Article 269 must follow the registration process outlined in Federal Law. This process includes submitting necessary documents such as the party's constitution, manifesto, and yearly audit report, as required by the Federal Law.

### B. Election Commission Act 2017

The Election Commission Act 2017 is an important legislation that defines the laws relating to the functions, duties, and powers of the Election Commission.<sup>11</sup> It provides the definitions of various election related terms and grants the Election Commission a range of powers, such as setting the date for voting, coordinating security measures, monitoring election activities, allowing observation, requesting assistance, using physical facilities, deciding on disqualifying candidates, and canceling elections if necessary.

Furthermore, the Act authorizes the Commission to establish a code of conduct for various entities and individuals involved in the election process, such as the government, security personnel, election workers, political parties, candidates, media, private and non-

governmental sectors, and other organizations and people identified by the Commission. The Commission has the duty of monitoring and enforcing compliance with the code of conduct.

The provision for election Code of Conduct is outlined in Chapter-4 of the Election Commission Act 2017. The Code of Conduct applies to various agencies or persons including the federal, state and local government, security agencies, political parties, candidates and persons related with the candidates amongst many others. The Election Commission is responsible for creating, implementing and monitoring the Code of Conduct and may impose a fine to violators as well as cancel candidacy of candidates who are found frequently violating the Code of Conduct by providing reasonable grounds.

### C. Other important laws relating to elections in Nepal

These include limited to the Electoral Roll Act, 2017, the Election (Offense and Punishment) Act, 2017, the Political Party Registration Act, the Local Level Election Act, 2017, and other rules and directives.







## 3. Local Election 2022

### 3.1 General Overview of Local Election-2022

**O**n May 13, 2022, Nepal held its second local level elections, after the promulgation of the constitution in 2015 which established fundamental changes in Nepal, including federalism, secularism, and inclusion. The local elections were conducted in a single phase in all the 753 local levels, including the 460 Rural Municipalities, 276 Municipalities, 11 Sub-Metropolitan Cities, and 6 Metropolitan Cities.

A total of 1,45,013 candidates from 65 parties and independent candidates contested for different posts in each of the 753 local levels including the position of Head/Deputy Head, and five members in the ward committee comprising of a Ward Chairperson, a Female Member, a Dalit Female Member, and two other members. The voter turnout stood at 64% according to the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN).

The Nepali Congress swept the local elections bagging the maximum number of head posts of local levels i.e Chairperson/Mayor in 329 local levels. The main opposition CPN-UML secured second position by winning the head posts in 206 seats. While the CPN-Moist Center managed to secure 121 seats, the Janata Samajwadi Party 30, the CPN (Unified Socialists) 20, the Democratic Socialist Party 16, and other parties and independents have won 31 seats respectively.

Women accounted for 41.22% of the total representatives elected in the local level election. This represents a dismal 0.1% increase in the share of elected women in local governments compared to the last local election in 2017. Electoral provisions requiring political parties to nominate a woman candidate in either of Chief or Deputy Chief's position and reservation for a Female and Dalit Female ward members in each ward of the local level largely contributed to women's representation in the local levels.

The figure of women's candidacy in executive positions of local levels and more so the results of the election shows that women were woefully underrepresented in the head post. The vast majority of those elected to these posts were male. Of the 293 candidates elected in the position of Mayor only 13 were women. That means only 4.4% of Mayors were women. Similarly, of the 460 Chairpersons elected only 12 (2.6%) are women. This discrepancy was even more pronounced in the case of Ward Chairperson in which only 1.02% of those elected to the post were women.

The elections were canceled in 85 polling centers due to disputes, clashes and disruptions on the election day, of which the elections in all the 10 polling centers of Budhiganga municipality of Bajura were held a month later. Instances of election related contestations were evident in all phases of the election including pre-candidacy, candidacy registration, campaigning period, silence period, election day and post-election phase.

However, compared to local elections in 2017, the 2022 local level elections saw negligible or very less anti-election activities. Actors opposing elections resorted to arson, vandalism, and use of IEDs targeting electoral activities throughout all three phases of local elections in 2017. The 2022 local elections saw a colossal drop in such anti-election activities that helped to boost electoral security and make a conducive environment for election. However, the contestations between competing parties, candidates and their supporters over different election-related disputes triggered fractious violence in many instances.

The successful completion of local elections on May 13 overcoming initial speculations and doubts marked an important achievement towards implementing the constitution and strengthening local governance through periodic elections.



## 3.2 Trends of Violent Contestations during Local Election 2022

The local level election 2022 was peaceful in general but pockets of fractious violence were observed throughout different phases of the election. Nepalmonitor recorded 250 incidents of election-related contestation throughout the entire election cycle (April 3 to May 30).<sup>12</sup> The nature of

these incidents ranged from peaceful protests like demonstration, sit-in, padlocking to violent incidents like threats, intimidations, attacks against candidates and their supporters, and clashes between cadres of political parties.<sup>13</sup>

*The dynamics of election-related contestation varied during different stages of the electoral cycle showing a clear trend of rise in number of incidents from the Candidacy Registration phase up to the Election Day and then subsiding during the Post-election period (see Figure 1).*

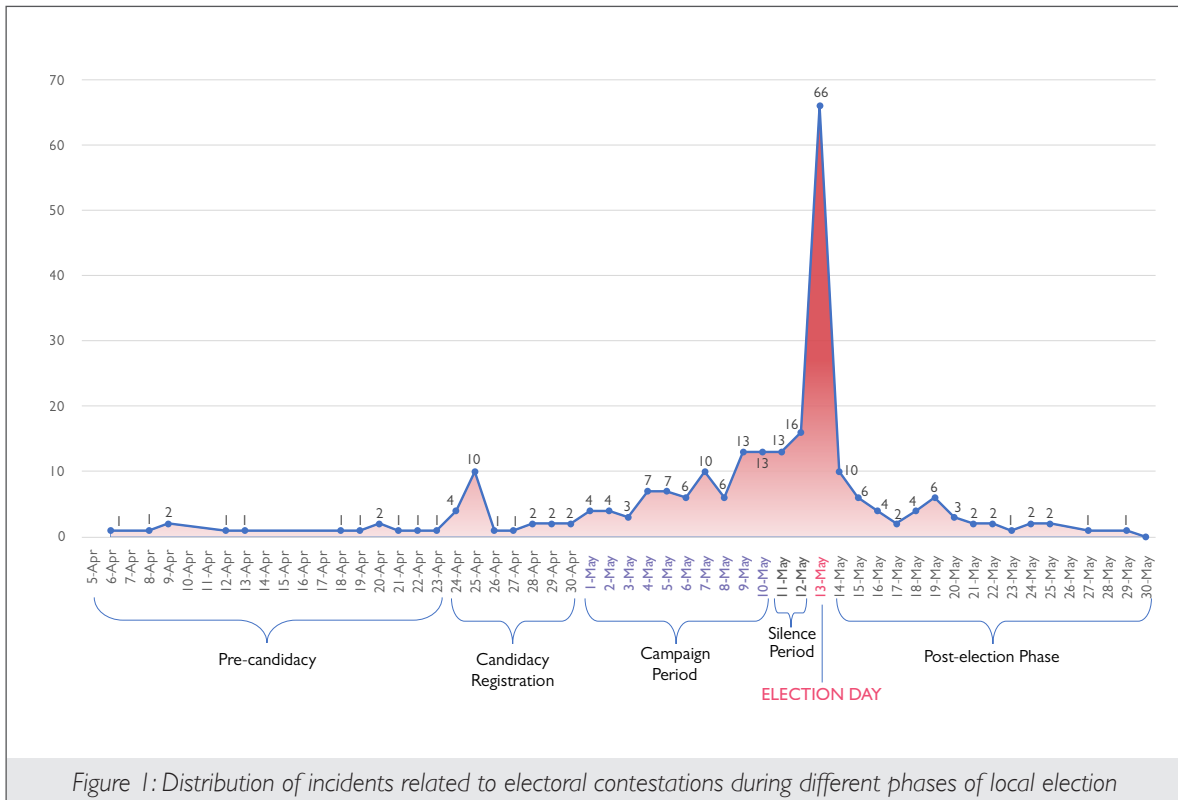


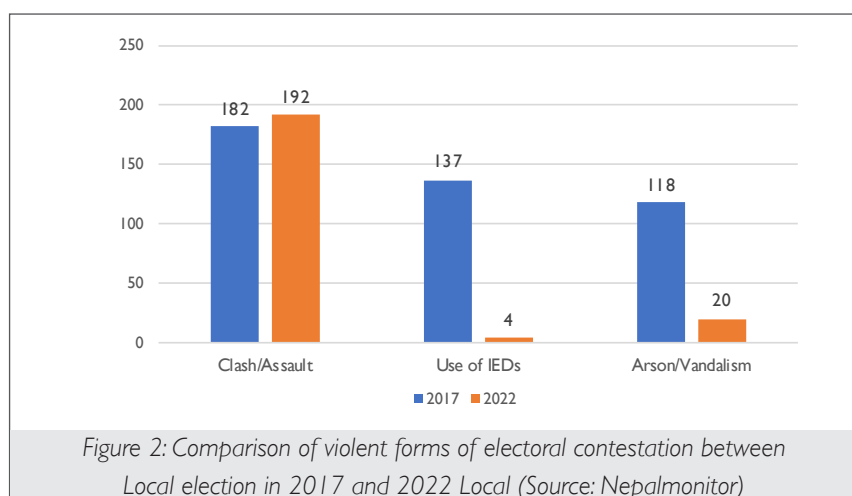
Figure 1: Distribution of incidents related to electoral contestations during different phases of local election

Of the election-related incidents recorded by Nepalmonitor, there were 192 clashes/assaults, four incidents involving use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and 20 incidents of arson or vandalism. Around 39% incidents of electoral violence took place during the evening or night time. Two persons were killed while 459 sustained injuries in violent incidents caused by election-related disputes.

The above figures represent a slight increase by about 5% in incidents of election-related clashes/assaults but huge drop in violent incidents involving the use of IEDs and cases of arson and vandalism compared

to the 2017 local level election which faced threat of obstruction and disruption from the Netra Bikram Chand led Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) and Madhes-based regional parties initially.

During 2017 local elections - which were held in three phases for security reasons<sup>14</sup> - Nepalmonitor recorded 182 clashes/assaults, 137 incidents involving the use of IEDs either directly targeting campaign events, candidates for election infrastructure or detonating at a distance in order to create terror and 118 incidents of arson and vandalism. 13 people were killed in violent incidents surrounding the election. (see Figure 2).



### 3.3 Pre-candidacy registration (April 3 to April 24, 2022)

The time period from April 3 to the date of start of candidacy registration on April 24 has been considered the pre-candidacy registration phase of the election for the purpose of analysis in this report.

This phase provided an initial ground for the local level elections by finalizing the political parties and incepting the process of candidate selection within the parties. As for electoral disputes, this phase accounted for 6% of all incidents tracked by Nepalmonitor, 40% of which involved some form of violence. The phase presents the most peaceful period among all the cycles of the local level elections - 2022.<sup>15</sup>

The electoral contests that occurred during this period were mostly of intra-party nature, arising mainly due to

disputes between cadres of political parties competing to secure electoral candidacy for themselves or their preferred person. In some instances, fierce competition and infighting for candidacy resulted in bitter rivalry within different factions in political parties sometimes escalating to fight and clash. Nepalmonitor recorded 13 such incidents during the pre-candidacy registration phase.

Disputes over selection of candidates led to cadres of political parties padlocking and vandalizing their own party offices in a few cases. The reluctance of local level party cadres to comply with the electoral alliances between the parties as directed by the party's central leadership also triggered contestation in some local constituencies.

*In Kaski, the decision of Nepali Congress to forfeit the mayoral candidacy of Pokhara metropolitan and support CPN-Unified Socialist candidate as a part of electoral coalition triggered prolonged protests from the local congress cadres. They padlocked the district party office on April 20, stating that the party's decision taken without consulting rank and file cadres hurt their self-esteem.<sup>16</sup>*

*Later on April 24, the local cadres of Congress locked 35-36 district level party members inside the meeting hall while they were in a meeting related to elections. The conflict at the metropolis level also trickled down to the ward level after the party gave instructions to the candidates for the posts of ward chairperson in wards 18 and 24 to withdraw their candidacy and support the candidates of CPN (Maoist Centre) as per the agreement of the alliance. The cadres then vandalized the party office in Tersapatti, Pokhara on April 28, condemning the same.<sup>17</sup>*

Concerns from general public and civil society members regarding the logistical management of the election and the electoral process also sparked protests in some places. In Baitadi, youths of Gotri, in ward no. 6 of Jagannath Municipality staged a sit-in protest at the district headquarter Martadi on April 3, demanding separate polling station for their ward as it

required them 4 hours of walk to reach the combined polling station set with ward nos. 5 and 6. Likewise, women's rights activists staged demonstrations in many places including Birgunj on April 23, raising the issue of women's representation in elections and claiming that the alliances will affect the candidacy of women in the executive posts.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.4 Candidacy Registration (April 24 to 30, 2022)

This period included the election timeline from the start of registration of candidates from April 24 to the distribution of election symbols to candidates on April 30.

Like the pre-candidacy registration phase, this period was also marked by intra-party disputes over candidacy in executive positions by aspirants. However, this period saw an increase in the frequency of electoral contestation. The period comprised nearly one-tenth of the total electoral contests recorded by Nepalmonitor - all within one week - out of which 70% were violent demonstrations, protests, and clashes

including assault on the candidates.<sup>19</sup>

As political parties found it difficult to manage the aspirations of many leaders and cadres who were vying for candidacy in the local election, switching to other parties that award electoral candidatureship became common among contenders. In many instances, contenders who were denied electoral tickets by their party, filed independent candidacy in the local elections. Bitterness created by fierce competition over candidacy for local election resulted in physical confrontation between cadres of political parties in some instances.

*In Dolpa, the cadres of CPN-UML in the opposite block to the party's official Deputy Mayor candidate for Thulibheri municipality tore the candidate registration form, which resulted in clash between supporters of the two competing factions during candidature registration on April 25. The two groups pelted stones at each other, injuring a DSP who was trying to take the situation under control.<sup>20</sup>*

Similarly, citizens representing civil society and different local pressure groups also staged demonstrations protesting the decision of political parties to award

candidacy to people with charges of financial and other irregularities in the court.

*Account holders in 'Sahakari Bittiya Bikas Sanstha Limited' a Co-operative in Banke, staged a demonstration in front of the Chief Election Commissioner's Office in Nepalgunj condemning the candidacy of the cooperative's chairperson, in the position of ward chairperson of Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan city-14. The cooperative was accused of squandering 43 crore rupees. The struggle committee had filed a case against 41 people including the chairperson, though the chairperson was later released on bail.<sup>21</sup>*

### 3.5 Campaign Period (May 1 to 10, 2022)

As per the election timeline, candidates had around 10 days from May 1 to May 10, to campaign for elections.

The electoral activities that were more subtle and peaceful during the initial phases turned more violent as the candidates and political parties stepped on the ground to drive electoral campaigns increasing chances of face-off between rival candidates and their supporters. The campaign period comprised nearly 30% of the total electoral contestations. More than

90% of them were violent incidents.<sup>22</sup>

The contestations during the campaign period were mostly of inter-party nature. The incidents of violence ranged from arson and vandalism of vehicles used by rival parties for election campaigning, to issuing death threats, pelting stones as well as assaulting the candidates physically. In some cases, not only the candidates but also their family members were assaulted by the cadres of competing parties.<sup>23</sup>

*Police arrested a local cadre of Nepali Congress on May 6, on the charge of torching a vehicle used for electoral campaign by the mayoral candidate of Belbari Municipality from Rastriya Prajatantra Party. CCTV footage showed that the accused set fire to the vehicle parked at the courtyard of the candidate's house around 2 AM in the morning on May 6.<sup>24</sup>*

*In Aathbiskot municipality -3 of Rukum West, Seven including 2 policemen and a candidate of ward chairperson were injured during a clash between cadres of CPN (Maoist Centre) and Nepali Congress on May 7.<sup>25</sup>*

Likewise, cadres of parties were also involved in vandalizing the house of candidates and opposition's local party offices. The parties also staged

demonstrations and obstructed highways condemning the violence against them by competing parties.

*The Cadres of CPN (Maoist Centre) obstructed the East-West Highway on May 8 at Hariwan of Sarlahi accusing the rival party cadres of feeding its candidate poison laced sweets during the door-to-door election campaign.<sup>26</sup>*

Domestic weapons like Khukuri, sticks, rods, and stones were found to be the most common weapons used during violent clashes. Review of incidents recorded by Nepalmonitor showed that there were

no incidents involving the use of small arms or other fire-arms during the campaign or in other phases of the local elections.

### 3.6 Silence Period (May 11 to 12, 2022)

In the context of Nepal, the 48 hours period before the polling day is called the silence period. The candidates and parties are required to stop all forms of campaigning during this period. The silence period also aims to prevent any kind of inappropriate activities that affect the elections, and provide a cooling period prior to the polling day so as to create a safe and secure environment for voters.

The silence period of the local election during which political parties and candidates were supposed to refrain from engaging in any electoral activity was not free from election-related altercations and disputes. These disputes, as recorded by Nepalmonitor, often escalated into violent incidents including assaults and group clashes. Of the total 29 electoral contestations recorded by Nepalmonitor during this phase, 26 were violent.<sup>27</sup>

*In Tulsipur, an unidentified group hurled two petrol bombs into the premises of the residence of a Mayoral candidate at Tulsipur sub-metropolitan city on the night of May 12. The bombs however, didn't cause any loss and damage to lives and property.<sup>28</sup>*

Though the candidates and parties refrained from organizing rallies and public gatherings during the silence period, they continued to engage in canvassing voters through local influencers. This tendency of indirect campaigning became the source of contestations and hence the major trigger of violence.

In many places across the country, cadres of parties and supporters of candidates sentried their supposed influence areas especially during the night time, to prevent the campaigners belonging to other parties from entering their area and influencing voters. This led to disputes between the cadres of different parties, requiring police to intervene with warning shots in some instances to control the situation.

*The cadres of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML clashed as they came face to face in a settlement near Daleli Bazar of Kanepokhari rural municipality-2 in Morang while campaigning during the silence period on May 11. Police seized a motorcycle during the clash.<sup>29</sup>*

Allegations of candidates and their supporters engaging in trading votes through their trusted ones; mostly local influencers and sometimes national personalities were also reported during the silence period. In a few instances violence was triggered as the competing candidates and their supporters claimed to have caught them red-handed in the process.

Despite the code of conducts' restrictions, candidates and their supporters were found making last minute efforts to influence voters during the silence period. Candidates and their supporters fearful of their supposed voters being influenced by rival candidates engaged in vigilantism which sometimes resulted in violent confrontations.

*In West Rukum, the cadres of CPN (Maoist Centre) and Nepali Congress clashed with each other during the night of May 12 at Kholagaun of Chaurjahari municipality-10 as the cadres of Nepali Congress blamed the candidate and the cadres of CPN (Maoist Centre) for distributing money to the voters. The clash injured 5 persons.<sup>30</sup>*

*Local cadres of Nepali Congress locked the wife of CPN-UML's mayoral candidate for Butwal sub-metropolis at a house in squatters area of Butwal-11, on May 11 alleging the latter of distributing money to influence the local election in favour of her husband.<sup>31</sup>*

Few anti-election activities, limited to small areas, were also observed during the silence period. These incidents were mostly symbolic and didn't affect the electoral process.

*A bomb went off in Butwal on May 11. Flyers calling for nationwide strike on May 12 were found at the site of the incident.<sup>32</sup>*

*The student wing of Communist Party of Nepal (CPN Vaidya) staged a torch rally at Durbarmarg in Kathmandu on May 12 condemning the local elections.<sup>33</sup>*

### 3.7 Election Day (May 13, 2022)

The Election Day on May 13 was the most contentious day of the local election 2022 and saw a steep rise in violent confrontations compared to other phases of election. Nepalmonitor recorded 66 incidents of violence at polling centers across 33 districts on the election day, constituting one fourth of the total violent electoral contestation recorded by Nepalmonitor<sup>34</sup>.

Major triggers of these incidents were disputes between cadres of political parties at polling centers, alleged attempts to capture polling booths and rigged voting. Alleged attempts to exploit and influence votes of elderly citizens and persons with disabilities by party representatives also triggered disputes and clashes in some polling centers.

Likewise, alleged voting misconduct by polling officers also resulted in tension in some polling centers. In Kavrepalanchowk district, representatives of political parties vandalized furniture and election materials at the polling center of Shree Ram Secondary School in Panchkhal municipality-13, accusing the polling officer

of giving multiple ballot papers to the same person.<sup>35</sup> In Balara municipality-3 of Rautahat district a polling officer was arrested for allegedly trying to influence voters in favor of a particular party.<sup>36</sup>

As recorded by Nepalmonitor, 61 persons sustained injuries in the violent incidents. A single incident of clash between parties in Gadhimai rural municipality of Rautahat resulted in 15 injuries. Likewise, incidents of clashes in Kharpunath rural municipality of Humla and Baiteshor rural municipality of Dolkaha resulted in 10 injuries each.

Election security personnel fired warning shots in 67 polling centers of 18 districts where the situation turned tense due to clashes and rioting. The warning shot fired by police at the polling center in Bhimsen Thapa rural municipality-2 in Gorkha injured an election volunteer. <sup>37</sup>Similarly, a person died while another sustained injury when police fired warning shots to control tension following a clash at a polling center in Katari municipality-10 of Udayapur.<sup>38</sup>

*After clashes broke out between cadres of the Janata Samajwadi Party, Nepali Congress, and CPN-UML in Yamunamai Rural Municipality in Rautahat, a former police constable ran away with the ballot box in the ensuing chaos, and the voting process was suspended. He was later arrested.<sup>39</sup>*

Incidents involving use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) purportedly targeting the local election were recorded in 3 districts on polling day. A cylinder bomb was detonated near the parliament at Kathmandu on the morning of election while an IED went off near polling center in Sankhuwasabha. No damage or human casualty were reported in both incidents. IEDs were also found near two polling centers in Bajhang.

Despite the instances of violence, elections were completed smoothly in more than 99.6% of 21,955

total polling centers across the country. Elections were canceled to be held at a later date in only 85 centers across 28 local levels in 17 districts of six provinces due to disputes and clashes between cadres of political parties at the polling centers. Polling was cancelled at all 10 polling centers in Budhiganga Municipality in Bajura due to inter-party contestation accusing each other of rigging votes and capturing booths. In Lumbini Province, elections were held peacefully in all polling centers of the province on Election Day.

### 3.8 Post Elections (May 14 to 30, 2022)

Contestations during the counting of votes and after the declaration of election results accounted for one-fifth of the total violent incidents recorded by Nepalmonitor during the election cycle.

The process of counting the votes of the local election was found to be lengthy and tiring particularly due to the large candidate pool and large size of ballot papers designed to accommodate those candidates. In many instances the inefficiency in counting the votes became the seeds of disputes leading to demonstrations,

clashes, and suspension of vote counting.

Disputes over validation of unsigned ballot papers, improperly sealed ballot boxes, and discrepancy in the record of votes cast versus number of votes counted, also resulted in clashes and demonstrations. In some cases, deliberate or accidental mistakes by the staff employed in vote counting centers also triggered violence.

*A violent clash took place between supporters of candidates at a vote counting site of Deumai municipality in Ilam after a voting stamp was found in the pocket of a counting staff. Police fired 3 rounds of warning shots to take the situation under control.<sup>40</sup>*

*The vote counting was halted temporarily at Gujara municipality and Ishanath municipality in Rautahat as the election officers mistakenly announced wrong results.<sup>41</sup>*

Likewise, many incidents of clashes were observed during the post-election phase as winning sides took out victory rallies and frustrated losing sides took umbrage at the celebration.

In Bara, the supporters of Democratic Socialist Party and Nepali Congress clashed with each other at Simraugarh Municipality-10, during the victory rally of the former party. A total of 7 people were injured

from both sides and vandalized six vehicles.<sup>42</sup>

The prevalence of violence during the post-election phase shows that the probability of electoral violence doesn't end with the conclusion of voting at polling booths. Thus, there should be the same level of caution and restraint like in other phases from all stakeholders concerned with elections.

### 3.9 Province wise analysis of Electoral Violence during Local Elections

Analysis of election-related incidents shows that the largest share of contestations, that is 22.40% of the total 250 incidents, were recorded in Madhesh province. Incidents were recorded in all eight districts in the province but Sarlahi and Dhanusha (10 each)

saw higher number of contestations during the local level election.

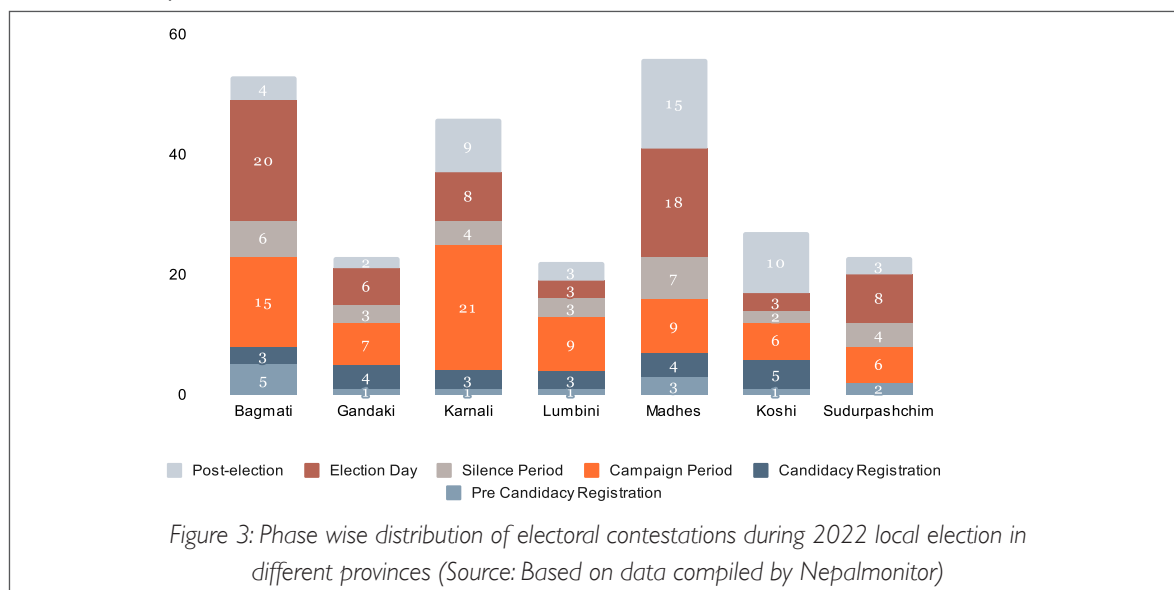
Incidents of violent contestations in Bagmati province(21.2%) were mostly concentrated in



remote districts like Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, and Dolakha, where relatively higher cases of confrontations were observed on the polling day.

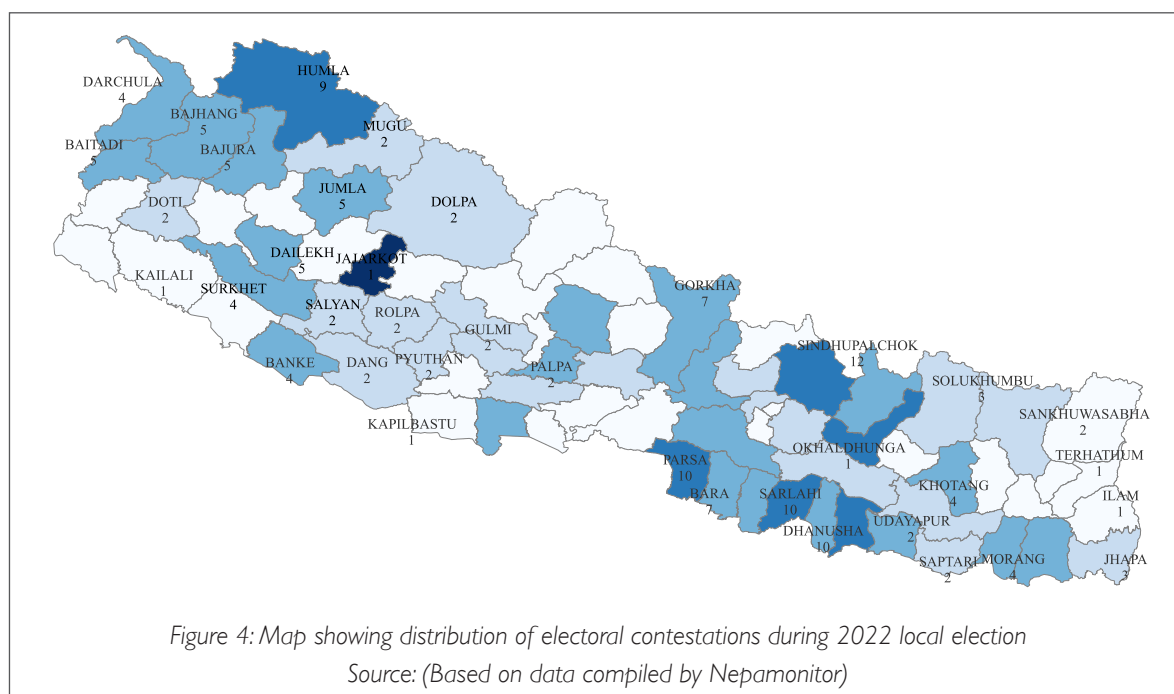
Karnali province accounted for 18.40% of the total reported incidents during the local election. The election-related incidents in Humla and Rukum West districts comprised the bulk of the contestations

in Karnali province. A total of 16 incidents were recorded in Rukum West alone, during the campaign period. There were reports of repeated clashes between cadres of CPN- Maoist Center and other political parties that had formed an electoral alliance in the district considered a stronghold of CPN-Maoist Center.



Election-related incidents in Province I comprised one tenth of total electoral contestations recorded by Nepalmonitor. The candidature registration, campaign and silence period in this province were largely peaceful compared to the post elections period. Though there were only three violent incidents on the polling day, two persons were killed in different incidents in Udayapur and Solukhumbu districts.

Gandaki and Sudurpaschim province fared the same proportion of electoral contestations, with each accounting for 23 incidents throughout the election cycle. Lumbini province saw the lowest count of electoral contestations among all provinces. Lumbini was the only province where elections were held successfully on the polling day at all polling centers.





## 4. House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) Election 2022

### 4.1 General Overview of HoR and PA Election 2022

The government of Nepal announced on August 4, 2022, that both the House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) elections would be held on November 20. The decision came a day after ruling coalition party leaders recommended conducting both federal and provincial elections simultaneously in a single phase. The government's choice aligned with the Election Commission's proposal, which had suggested November 18 as the polling day during a meeting with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in July.

In 2017, the HoR and PA elections were held in two phases, whereas the Election Commission's recommendation for nationwide polling in a single phase in 2022 indicated a shift in the political and security environment. Conducting elections in a single phase was also deemed beneficial for reducing the financial and logistical burden of conducting multiple phases of voting.

Nepal employs a mixed electoral system comprising first-past-the-post (FPTP) and proportional representation (PR) voting in both provincial and federal elections. The federal parliament has 275 members, with 165 elected directly through FPTP voting, and the remaining 110 chosen based on the proportion of votes received by political parties. Both provincial and federal parliament members serve five-year terms. The province wise distribution of HoR seats is shown in Table 1.

PROVINCE	FPTP	PR
Koshi	28	110
Madhesh	32	
Bagmati	33	
Gandaki	18	
Lumbini	26	
Karnali	12	
Sudurpaschim	16	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>110</b>

Table 1: Province wise distribution of HoR seats under FPTP and PR

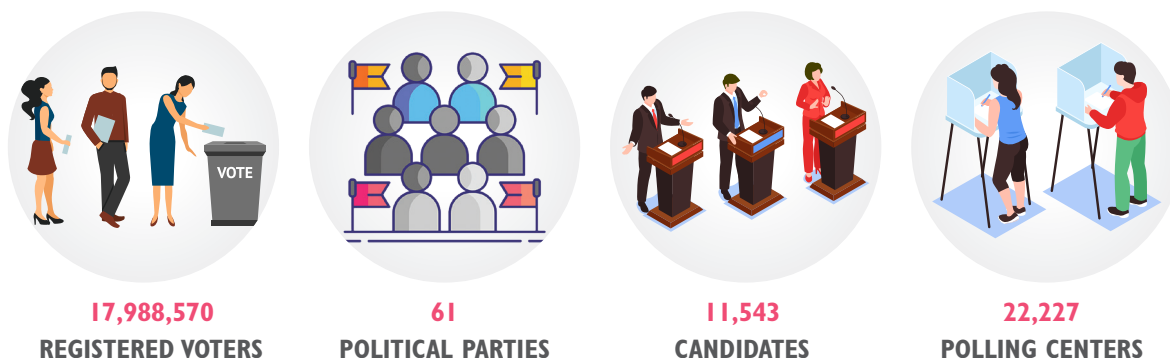
In the provincial assembly elections, 550 representatives are elected across seven provinces, with 330 chosen directly and the remaining 220 through proportional representation. The distribution of electoral seats for both FPTP and PR systems in each province is shown in Table 2.

PROVINCE	FPTP	PR
Koshi	56	37
Madhesh	64	43
Bagmati	66	44
Gandaki	36	24
Lumbini	52	35
Karnali	24	16
Sudurpaschim	32	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>220</b>

Table 2: Province wise distribution of PA seats under FPTP and PR

The number of registered voters as of August 4, the last date to register on the electoral roll, was 17,988,570 including 9,140,806 men, 8,847,579 women and 185 of other gender. A total of 11,543 candidates

ran for both first-past-the-post and proportional representation positions from 61 different political parties. The 2022 elections were held in 10,892 polling locations and 22,227 polling centers.



## 4.2 Pre-Campaign phase of the HoR and PA Election

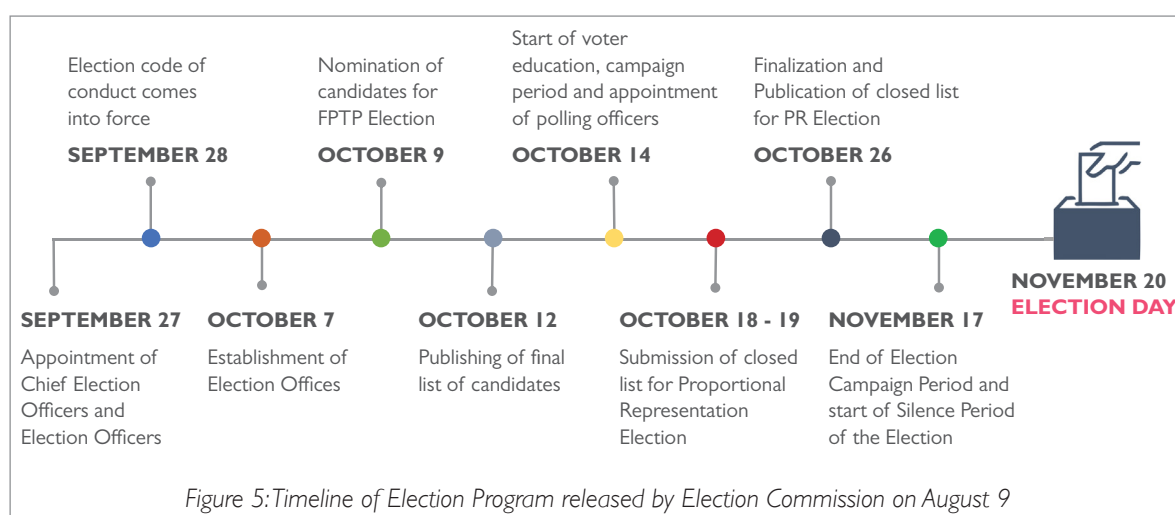
### ELECTORAL PROGRAMS ON A SMOOTH SAIL

The activities of Election Commission Nepal (EC) primarily set and determined the environment for the election as it was the sole authority that conducted, supervised and directed the election programs. The important electoral programs including registration of parties and candidates under the First Past the Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system for both the HoR and PA elections were completed within the proposed electoral timeline.

Besides the election programs, the managerial activities of EC regarding preparations for elections including printing 8 crore ballot papers were carried out at a full pace. There were four different types of ballot papers, one each for FPTP and PR electoral systems, respectively for HoR and PA elections. Also, 43 different national organizations and 2 international organizations were selected as national and international observers.

Nepal's 2022 Election was also significant in terms of information dissemination approaches adopted by EC. EC established a toll free number 1102 for any inquiries related to election and started an e-bulletin<sup>43</sup> to provide regular updates and information related to ongoing electoral activities. Also, social media, especially Facebook and viber chat groups were extensively used to disseminate the updates, news, and notices related to elections.

The electoral activities and programs as shown in the timeline in Figure 5. set by the EC mostly went on track, which helped to create a conducive environment for the election. This also facilitated a peaceful first phase of the electoral cycle, leaving few instances of intra-party rift at both the federal and district level due to disputes related to distribution of electoral tickets.



## ELECTION SEES EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF CODE CONDUCT

The EC published the election Code of Conduct <sup>44</sup> in Nepal gazette on August 29 which came into effect from September 28. The code of conduct aimed to further guide the electoral process and environment and touched upon different aspects of the election including candidate expenditure, campaigning, election security and had provision that allowed for termination of candidacy and fine up to one lakh rupees upon violation of the code of conduct. It also designated provisions that should be abided by different stakeholders including the political parties and candidates, election officials, government ministers, teachers and professors, and voters.

The EC made a number of changes to the election code of conduct compared to the local election, including the provision requiring candidates to submit their property details and educational qualification while filing candidacy. The code of conduct increased the duration for which candidates can campaign by an hour per day (7:00AM to 7:00 PM) and introduced the concept of 'special conduct' in place of the 'silence period'. The Code of Conduct allowed the candidates to start campaigning for election and organize rallies only 17 days before the polling day. However, it allowed the candidates to organize house-hold campaigns (without assembling more than 25 individuals) after their nominations. Also the code prohibited conducting vote surveys for any or all constituencies after the election symbols were provided to the candidates.

The EC allocated an upper ceiling of expenditure that parties and candidates can spend in different constituencies while contesting in elections. The amount was calculated mathematically using three parameters: population of the constituencies(60%), number of polling centers in the constituency (20%), area covered by a particular constituency in that geographic area (20%). The expenditure ceiling of candidates ranged from 25 lakhs to 35 lakhs for different constituencies in HoR elections and 17 lakhs to 23 lakhs in PA elections respectively.

The Code of Conduct for the local level elections held on May 13, 2022 required the candidates to submit their expenditure details to EC within 30 days

of the completion of election. However 90 percent (1,23,624 nos.) of the total 1,37,043 candidates failed to submit the expenditure in the provided time and incurred a penalty as per the clause 25 of the Election Commission Act-2073. Among those candidates who failed to submit the expenditure, 429 candidates of different parties were found listed on the closed list of proportional candidates. Of which, the EC later canceled the candidacy of 369 candidates stating failure to pay the penalty amount. However, later in February 2023, the President approved the decision of the cabinet to waive the penalty amount for those candidates who failed to submit the expenditure details followed by the verdict from the apex court.<sup>45</sup>

The Election Commission canceled the candidacy of 550 candidates <sup>46</sup> in total from the closed list of 6457 candidates registered by parties to contest under Proportional Representation electoral system for both the HoR and PA elections citing the breach of election law and election code of conduct. The remaining 181 candidates were removed from the closed list for reasons that included candidates not reaching the required age bar, nomination from multiple parties, not being registered in the voter list, failure of candidates to submit required documents, candidates being black-listed by the government, and candidates holding public office among others.

The EC also revoked the candidacy of a candidate contesting in HoR election under FPTP electoral system in region no. 3 of Lalitpur district on October 29, citing the election act that prohibits individuals holding positions of benefit to contest in elections. The candidate was an elected member at Nepal Medical Council. The candidate however claimed to have asked the EC on September 12, 25 days prior to nomination date about legitimacy of candidacy, provided that she only received meeting allowance and no other facilities from the council.<sup>47</sup> The EC however didn't respond to the inquiry earlier and declared her as one of the candidates in that constituency.

EC later canceled the candidacy after receiving a complaint, when the candidate was campaigning for the election. The matter was taken to the supreme court

by the candidate which gave a verdict to uphold the candidacy.<sup>48</sup> This case drew a significant controversy and also raised questions to the election commission.

During HoR and PA elections, the local structures of Nepal Police and National Investigation Department were also mandated in monitoring the expenditure of individual candidates along with the compliance of the Code of Conduct. There were two tiers of monitoring committees formed at the district level and central level to monitor the compliance of the code. Also, a different monitoring mechanism was formed under the head of the District Treasury Controller Office to monitor the expenditure of the candidates.<sup>49</sup>

Apart from EC, the political parties and other stakeholders including the security forces, government bodies, and civil society had an important role to create a conducive environment for election. The commitment of political parties to contest in elections abiding by the Code of Conduct was a key determinant for a successful election. The parties mostly followed the timeline on election programs set by the election commission and engaged peacefully in electoral activities. The proactive role of the election commission and active participation and engagement by political parties and candidates in the electoral process indeed helped to create a favorable pre-polling environment for HoR and PA elections-2022.

## ESTABLISHED POLITICAL PARTIES OPT FOR ELECTORAL ALLIANCE

A total of 87 political parties registered at the Election Commission Nepal (EC) expressing interest to contest in the HoR and PA elections-2022.

<sup>50</sup> This showed a slight increment in the registration of the number of parties compared to local elections in May where 79 parties had registered of which only 65 participated in the local level elections. However, in terms of participating in elections, only 61 of the registered 87 parties fielded their candidates in the general elections.

The political environment during pre-campaign period was marked by exploration of possible pre-poll alliances by the political parties. The political parties also showed a general tendency to take part in elections by forming an alliance rather than contesting alone. The process of forming these alliances was primarily based on the give and take of electoral seats through multiple negotiations between parties rather than similarities on political ideologies.

The coalition of then ruling parties: Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist Centre), CPN (Unified Socialist), Janata Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Janamorchha that forged an alliance while contesting in the local elections especially in metropolitan and sub-metropolitans agreed further to extend the coalition apparatus until the provincial and federal elections.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, the main opposition party CPN-UML was also observed exploring possibilities of electoral alliance, especially

with small political parties outside the ruling coalition including Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) and Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP).<sup>52</sup>

The parties had the provision of recommending candidates from subsidiary committees with decisive power of electoral tickets vested with the party's central leadership.<sup>53</sup> The cadres and aspirants who were denied electoral tickets, were found resorting to different means for expressing their dis-satisfaction including padlocking, staging sit-in at party office and quitting the party membership or filing independent candidacy in many instances.

Though political parties resort to alliances as a tool for maximizing the outcome of their electoral performance, alliances also became one of the triggers for dispute and dissatisfaction especially in candidate selection as observed during the local level elections. Alliances decreased the probability of an aspirant to contest in the election, as the constituencies were shared between the parties in the alliance. Aggregated with the high aspiration to contest in elections, the perception among the cadres that, 'though they may not get a ticket to contest in this election, claiming recommendations this term could be helpful for their future politics'; also made managing aspirants a tough nut to crack for the parties.

## NEW PARTIES TRY TO EMERGE AS ALTERNATIVES TO OLD GUARDS

Although Nepal's major parties dominated the election outcomes in most constituencies in local election, independent candidates won mayoral positions in key cities such as Kathmandu, Dharan, Janakpur, and Dhangadi. In the last local election in 2017, independent candidates had won in just four local levels. In the 2022 local election 13 independent candidates won mayoral and rural municipality chair posts.<sup>54</sup>

The local election demonstrated that there was a significant mass of people in Nepal, particularly in the cities, who were open to accepting alternative political forces. This noticeable shift in voter's attitude instilled a belief that despite the dominance of traditional

political parties, there was now space for new actors and parties to emerge in Nepali politics. Inspired by these circumstances, the political climate also aligned in favor of alternative political interventions, as the HoR and PA elections rolled out.

Rashtriya Swatantra Party formed only after the local elections also came into the picture as an alternative political group raising agendas of corruption and service delivery by governments and existing political parties. Similarly, the Janamat Party in South Eastern Terai and Nagarik Unmukti Party in South Western terai also positioned themselves as potential alternatives to existing political parties trying to cater to the people's search for alternative political forces.

## ELECTION SECURITY: MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO TACKLE IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

Election Security remained a top priority of the EC and the government with regard to the preparation for the November 20 election. In this regard the Nepal Government prepared a Unified Security Plan for the election and formed different mechanisms including Central Command Post, Central Unified Election Cell, Home Ministry Election Cell under the lead of senior Home Ministry officials for managing election security.

The government deployed all four security agencies Nepal Army, Armed Police force (APF), Nepal Police and the National Investigation Department (NID) for election security. These include 71,693 regular police personnel and 115,000 temporary police personnel. Compared to the May 13 local level election, the government mobilized 25,000 more police personnel, including 15,000 temporary police in the upcoming election.<sup>55</sup>

The government allocated a budget of Rs 7.994 billion to the Nepal Police for election security for hiring and recruiting the regular and temporary police and buying vehicles.<sup>56</sup> Of the total budget, Rs 1.235 billion was allocated for Nepal Police while Rs 5.86 billion was appropriated for temporary police personnel to be hired for the purpose of the elections.

The Central Security Committee of the government also identified a few challenges to the election security including the challenge of holding the election in a single

phase.<sup>57</sup> Intra-party dispute and conflicts between different factions within parties and possible conflict arising from political rivalry over electoral issues between competing political parties were considered as triggers causing serious threat to election security.

During this period, two of the fringe communist parties, namely Baidya led Nepal Communist Party (Revolutionary), and Netra Bikram Chand aka Biplav led Nepal Communist Party appeared as potential unfriendly elements for elections. The former decided to boycott the elections whereas the latter warned of serious consequences and also called for nationwide strike on August 23, after Lalitpur District court issued an arrest warrant against 23 leaders of the party including the Chairperson Biplav under the charge of involvement in crime against the state.<sup>58 59</sup> Later the government made a decision on September 12 to withdraw the cases against Biplav.<sup>60</sup>

Despite this, on November 1, Netra Bikram Chand aka Biplav led Nepal Communist Party (NCP) announced that it would boycott the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly elections to be held on November 20. This came as a new challenge to election security as the NCP (Biplav) party was believed to have a larger base of supporters compared to other fringe communist parties which had also decided to boycott the election.

The NCP (Biplav) had a history of using means of violence to oppose elections and sabotage the electoral process in the past. In 2017 NCP caused a major threat to election security as the party boycotted the election and engaged in threat and intimidation, assault, arson, vandalism and use of IED (Improved Explosive Device) attacks on candidates, political party leaders, their supporters, and election officials in its attempt to obstruct the electoral process.<sup>61</sup> 214 cases of incidents related to the use of IEDs were recorded in the 2017 elections. Police attributed most of these incidents upon the NCP (Biplav) based on its official political position to boycott and disrupt the election

and the modus operandi of the party.

The government also increased monitoring of the activities of CPN's leaders and their cadres. Besides the NCP, the government identified around two dozen other small and large groups including fringe communist parties and few non-state armed groups in Terai that had boycotted and vowed to disrupt the election. Some activities distorting the electoral environment were observed on the later phases of election by these actors but it didn't cause any serious consequences like cancellation of election or any violent altercations.

### ELECTORAL CANDIDACY: Females under-represented in FPTP elections

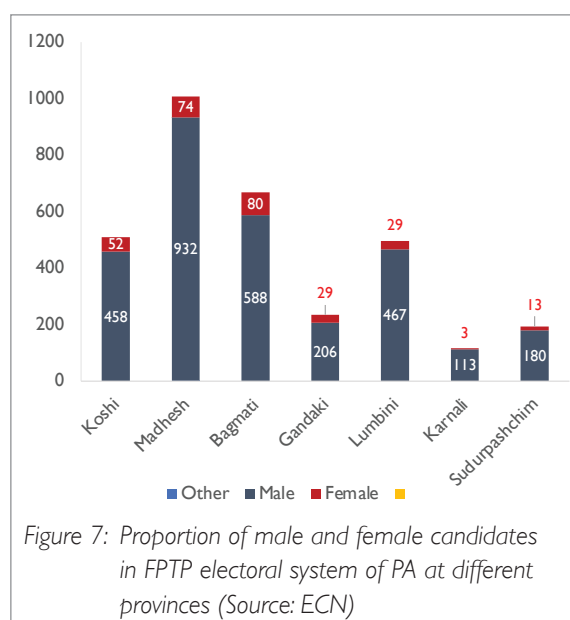
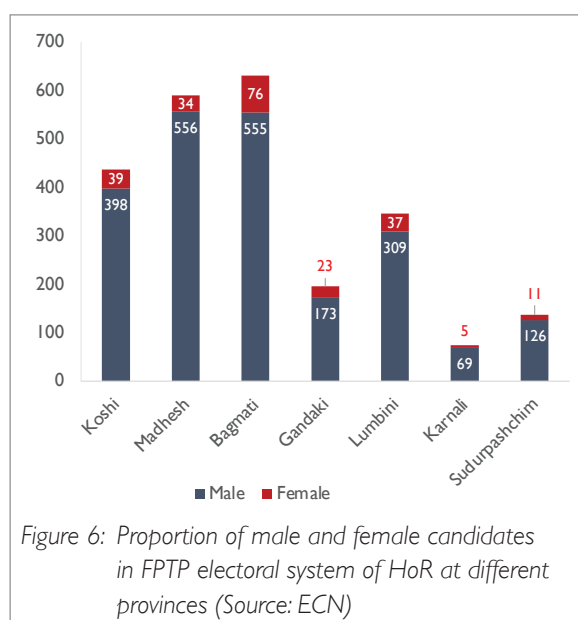
A total of 2411 candidates contested under the FPTP electoral system for 165 federal constituencies. Female candidates (225 nos.) comprised less than 10% of total candidacy in the FPTP elections. Of the total 87 registered parties only 61 contested under the FPTP electoral system. Likewise, a significant number of individuals contested as independent candidates (approx 30%) in the election.

PR electoral system for HoR and PA elections-2022, however had slightly higher candidacy of females than male. For the PR electoral system in federal elections, only 47 parties submitted the closed list of candidates with 1313 female and 1089 male candidates. Similarly there were 2426 female and 1629 male candidates contesting under the PR electoral system in the provincial assembly elections.<sup>63</sup>

The status of female candidacy under the FPTP electoral system in the PA elections was also similar to HoR elections. Of the total 3224 candidates under the FPTP electoral system in the PA elections only 8.7 percent were female.<sup>62</sup> Also, there was one candidacy from a gender minority group contesting under FPTP electoral system in Madhesh Province.

The higher numbers of female candidates under the PR electoral system was particularly due to the article 84(8) of Constitution of Nepal-2015 that mandates each political party in HoR and PA to have at least one third of the total members to be female.<sup>64</sup> To fulfill this provision, the political parties were found resorting mostly on the proportionate list of candidates rather than fielding more female candidates in direct elections.

The closed list submitted by the parties under the



## TRENDS OF POLITICAL CONTESTS SURROUNDING THE ELECTION

Political contests around the election remained mostly peaceful during the Pre-campaign period with few instances of political disputes. Nepalmonitor recorded the following cases of election related disputes from September 1 to October 15.

**Rupandehi, Oct 14:** Supporters of an aspirant for independent candidacy for the upcoming parliamentary election from Constituency No 2 of Rupandehi staged a sit-in before the office of the Election Officer in Butwal after the office canceled his candidature.

**Nawalparasi East, Oct:** Cadres of CPN-UML clashed with CPN-Maoist cadres over a dispute regarding withdrawal of nomination of the CPN-Maoist candidate in East Nawalparasi.

**Lalitpur, Sep 28:** Nepali Congress party cadres led by Shekhar Koirala staged a sit-in in front of the party office in Lalitpur on September 28 demanding

equal opportunities for cadres from their faction in the upcoming election.

**Makawanpur, Sep 9:** The cadres of CPN-UML padlocked their district office in Makawanpur on September 9 condemning the decision of party's central committee to withdraw the party's candidacy in Electoral Constituency No 1 of the district and support Ra.Pra.Pa candidate Kamal Thapa.

**Kathmandu, Sep:** CPN-UML's Budhanilkantha municipal committee in Kathmandu picketed Election Office over removal of names of their supporters from voter's list. The residents of Budhanilkantha led by CPN-UML Budhanilkantha Nagar Committee team surrounded the District Election Office Kathmandu accusing the election office of removing UML supporter's names under the pretext of removing fake names.

### 4.3 Campaign Period of HoR and PA Election

The Code of Conduct allowed the candidates to start campaigning for election and organize rallies only 17 days before the polling day. However, it allowed the candidates to do house-hold campaigns (without assembling more than 25 individuals) after

their nominations. For the purpose of study, this report has divided these two periods as Phase I and Phase II of the campaign period, which are discussed below.

#### FIRST PHASE OF THE CAMPAIGN

The parties and candidates started to roll out the first phase of the electoral campaigns after nomination of candidates on October 12 under the First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system for both the federal and provincial assembly elections<sup>65</sup>. The first phase of the campaign was limited mostly to household visits by candidates as the election code of conduct prohibited mass assemblies, corner assemblies, and publishing or broadcasting appeals for votes in communication media before November 3 i.e. before 17 days from the polling date.

The political parties and candidates also released their election manifesto announcing their policies and programs. These manifestos had promises of massive economic growth, creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs along with increasing access to quality health and education. Manifesto of some parties also had agendas related to constitutional amendment on state restructuring, governance system with directly elected President, along with call for reinstating monarchy in Nepal.



Despite agreements to field joint candidates, the parties in electoral alliances have issued separate manifestos. For instance in the ruling coalition, CPN (Maoist Centre) had agendas of directly elected President whereas Nepali Congress advocated for improving the current federal parliamentary system. Also in another alliance, Rashtriya Prajatantra Party had agendas of reinstating monarchy whereas CPN-UML doesn't support such agenda. This difference in agendas, though contesting together in coalition made the realization of election manifestos fuzzy. Nonetheless, it provided a ground upon which voters can question leaders about previous commitments, their fulfillment, and the current agenda.

Though the political environment during the first phase of campaigning remained calm, there were complaints against many candidates, parties, and other stakeholders for violating code of conduct. The EC sought clarification from many stakeholders including candidates for violation of election code that included participation of more than 25 persons in campaigning, use of banners and party flags in public vehicles, providing donations to schools, giving statements against the code of conduct, and using children while campaigning, among others.<sup>66 67 68</sup>

The electoral environment was mostly dominated by discussion and analysis of candidates (nominated in

different constituencies both from different political parties and contesting independently), their competing candidates, and probability of their victory. Cases of candidates, political party leaders and their supporters engaging in unhealthy personal exchanges, spreading misinformation and hatred towards rival candidates especially on digital platforms were also seen.<sup>69</sup> Online campaigns like "No Not Again" directed against established political leaders and advocating for their alternative, also drew significant public attention.<sup>70</sup> Apart from digital rows, the electoral atmosphere remained mostly calm leaving few instances of inter-party clashes during household campaigns. Also, the protest programs announced by small communist parties who decided to boycott the House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) elections did not cause any negative stir in the electoral environment.<sup>71</sup>

Nepalmonitor recorded only 4 incidents during this reporting period that were mostly non-violent in nature.<sup>72</sup> There was a sharp decline in the number of incidents recorded by Nepalmonitor compared to 2017 HoR and PA elections which were dominated by use of IEDs targeting the candidates and the campaign events. During 2017 federal and provincial elections, Nepalmonitor had recorded more than 90 and 55 incidents of use of IEDs, and clashes respectively during the campaigning period.<sup>73</sup> The period from

## MAIN PHASE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN

November 3 to November 17 marked the main phase of campaigning for House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) elections-2022. While parties and candidates prioritized door to door visits, mass assemblies and rallies as campaign strategies; an apt for promoting agendas through digital platforms like Tiktok, Facebook, and Youtube were equally visible which reflected the increasing importance and role of digital media in political campaigns.

The Election Commission (EC) Nepal also had a very vigilant role in monitoring election code of conduct, accomplishing managerial tasks that included transportation of ballot papers and

election materials to designated constituencies, and imparting voter education.

A noticeable increase in confrontation between competing parties and candidates were observed during this period with increased instances of clashes, vandalism and personal attacks than during the earlier stages of the election. Parties and groups boycotting the election did not pose a significant threat to election security during the campaign period as their activities were mostly limited to organizing symbolic protests against the election.



## **ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNING: PEACEFUL COMPARED TO LOCAL ELECTION**

The probabilities of direct confrontation between the competing candidates and parties increased during the campaign period as they expedited campaigning on the ground. While no incidents of confrontations between the competing candidates and their supporters produced a ripple effect nationwide, some instances of violence was observed in many constituencies during this period.

Arson and vandalism of vehicles used in campaigning, group clashes between cadres of competing parties, and personal attacks against the candidates marked the key triggers of violence during the campaigning period. These incidents however stack much lower when tallied with similar incidents recorded during the campaigning period in the local level election in May 2022, and HoR and PA elections in 2017.

Nepalmonitor had recorded 120 incidents of violence during campaign period in 2017\_elections where use of IEDs to target senior leaders, campaign events, election infrastructures were of particular concern.<sup>74</sup> While the nature of incidents during the campaign

period of the local elections (73 cases) in May 2022 and the current election(34 cases) were similar, the number of incidents almost halved during HoR and PA elections as recorded by NepalMonitor over the campaigning period from November 3 to 17.<sup>75</sup>

No serious threats to election security were observed during the campaign period from the parties and groups boycotting the election though they had announced a series of protest programs. The major threat to election security, as noticed in the campaign period came from the confrontations between competing parties, candidates, and their supporters. A robust security mechanism with strong presence of security forces (police and temporary police) on ground can be said to have aided a peaceful setting during the campaign period. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, a total of 298,589 security personnel were deployed to guard 10,892 polling stations and 22,227 polling centers. Of them, 74,849 were from the Nepal Army, 71,693 from the Nepal Police, 35,116 from the Armed Police Force, 115,000 temporary police, and 1,921 from the National Intelligence Department.<sup>76</sup>

## **DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS: A POPULAR ELECTIONEERING CHOICE**

General observation of the campaigning environment showed a dynamic shift in the pattern of election campaigning. While parties and candidates prioritized door to door visits, mass assemblies and rallies as campaign strategies, they also turned to social media platforms like Tiktok, Facebook, and Youtube to push their agendas and reach out to voters.

From October 16, 6339 advertisements related to election campaigns were found to have run in Facebook that amounted to expenditure of more than 1 crore rupees.<sup>77</sup> Also the same statistics derived from Ad library of Meta as of November 15 showed that almost 10 lakh rupees was spent per day in running ads related to vote appeals towards the end of the cam-

aign period on November 17.<sup>78</sup>

In the light of growing use of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Tiktok for election campaigning and political activity, the EC also placed special emphasis on monitoring the digital environment including social media platforms in a bid to control misinformation, disinformation and hate speech surrounding the election through these mediums. In this regard the EC officials held a meeting with representatives of Meta, the parent company of popular social media platform Facebook on October 17 to discuss possible cooperation to control hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation through the platform during the election.<sup>79</sup>

On October 25, the EC issued a press release saying that it had taken cognizance of 3 different Facebook campaigns “No Not Again”, “NO NOT AGAIN”, and “No. Not Again” engaging in publishing misleading and biased contents and giving offensive statements against candidates vying in the elections.<sup>80 81</sup> The EC warned those running these campaigns to disable them or face stringent action for alleged violation of the election code of conduct. Later on October 28 the EC held a meeting involving officials and experts to discuss its concerns over the acts of these campaigns and a task force of the EC was ordered to start a search operation to find those responsible for the controversial campaign in social media.

Around the same time, Facebook disabled a popular Nepali Facebook group Men’s Room Reloaded (MRR) primarily formed to discuss men’s issues and share jokes and other posts on social issues for alleged violation of community guidelines.<sup>82</sup> Although there was no clarity regarding which community guideline MRR had violated, its admin speculated that it could have been disabled at the behest of EC for promoting political agendas.

The EC widely mobilized digital platforms for sensitizing voters by regularly promoting video contents for voter’s education and also announcing competition to make Tik-Tok videos on election among others. While parties and candidates mostly used folk songs as ‘campaigning songs’ to cater the agendas among a larger audience in previous elections, they were also found using rap music as campaign promotion tools during this election to appeal to young urban voters.<sup>83</sup>

The shift towards digital campaigns as popular electioneering choice by the parties and candidates resulted in noticeably reduced use of physical campaign materials like flags, banners, and pamphlets. However, digital electioneering also increases the risk of spreading false and harmful information for vested political gains. For instance, a news story got highlighted in Nepali media on November 9, that read “The EC gave directives to a candidate not to ring the bell (their election symbol) in the election campaign as it causes sound pollution.” requiring the EC to clarify later that it hadn’t issued any such directives.

## ACTIVITIES OF GROUPS BOYCOTTING ELECTIONS:

### MOSTLY LIMITED TO SYMBOLIC CAMPAIGNS

Different groups opposing the election mostly resorted to nonviolent means to express their boycott of the election ranging from staging protests, demonstrations and carrying out campaigns including wall-painting and distributing pamphlets denouncing the election.

A few cases of violent incidents through intentional and accidental use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) were also reported on November 16, the penultimate day of the electoral campaign period in Bhojpur, Dolakha and Banke districts. Police attributed

the blame of these incidents to the NCP (Biplav) party.

Due to strong election security measures in place no untoward security issues resulting in any fatalities were observed until November 17, the last date of the election campaign. The security mechanism was found watchful and swift in dealing with encountered election security incidents. As of November 17, police arrested at least 23 persons, most of them affiliated with fringe communist parties from different parts of the country on the charge of engaging in anti-election activities.<sup>84</sup>

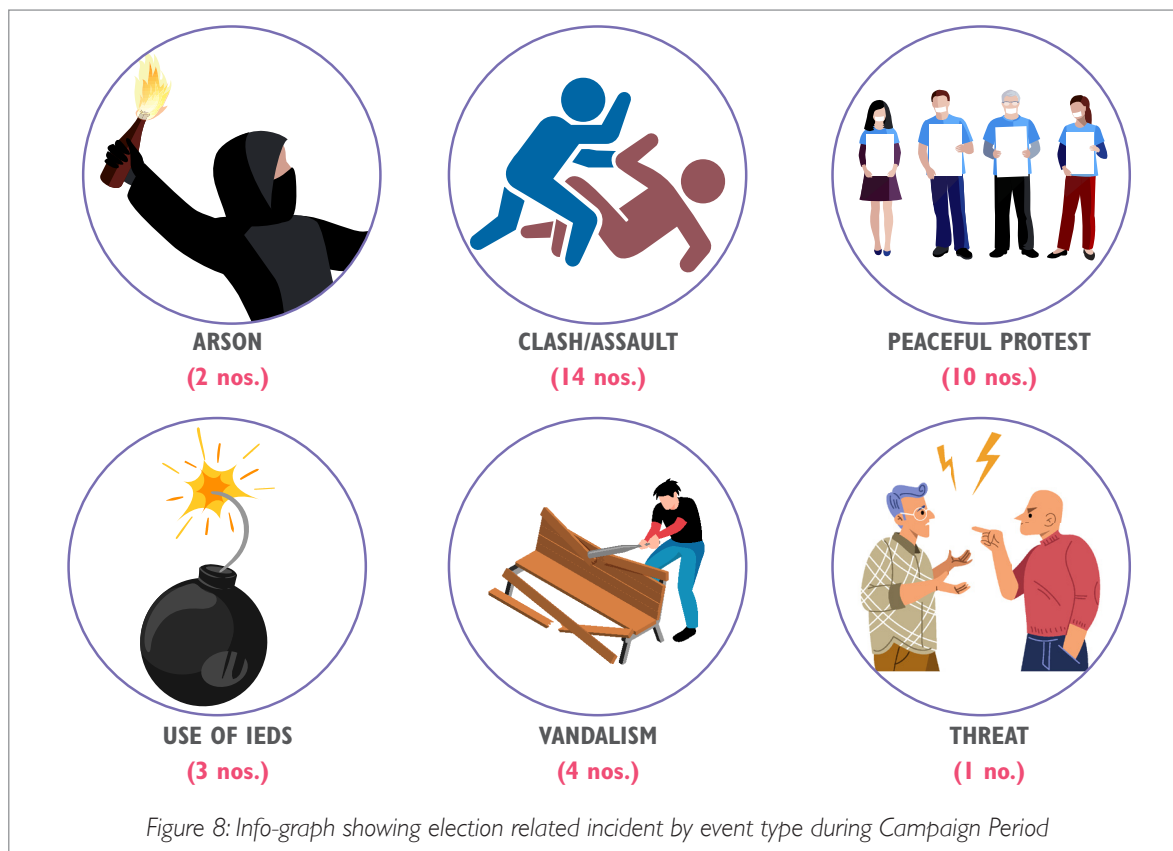
## TREND OF ELECTORAL CONTESTATION DURING CAMPAIGN PERIOD

Nepalmonitor recorded a total of 34 incidents related to electoral contests during the electoral campaign period from November 1 to 17. The majority of these incidents were recorded in Bagmati province - 9 cases, followed by Madhes and Sudurpaschim province

where 6 incidents each were reported. Both Gandaki and Lumbini province saw 3 incidents related to electoral contests while a single incident of electoral contestation was reported in Karnali province in Surkhet district.

The nature of these incidents varied from different forms of nonviolent peaceful protests to violent means including Clash/Assault, Use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Arson and Vandalism. (See Figure 8) 3 incidents involving IEDs were recorded during the electoral campaign period in which two persons believed to be cadres of Nepal Communist

Party (Biplav) sustained injuries when the IED in their possession went off in Bhojpur and Banke on November 16. An item believed to be an IED also reportedly exploded in Bhimeswor of Dolakha on the same day. Police attributed all three incidents to the Nepal Communist Party (Biplav) which has officially vowed to disrupt the election.



## LIST OF INCIDENTS DURING THE CAMPAIGN PHASE

(Based on Incidents compiled and mapped by Nepalmonitor)

### KOSHI PROVINCE

#### Morang Nov, 16:

A 21-year-old youth of Koshi rural municipality-7 in Morang was physically assaulted by cadres of the Democratic-Left Alliance on November 16 during an electoral campaign assembly organized by the ruling alliance in Katahari rural municipality-3 after questioning the achievement of the Alliance's candidate over the past ten years during an interaction program.

#### Bhojpur, Nov 16:

A person sustained serious injury when an IED



(Improvised Explosive Device) he was carrying went off in Tiwari Bhanjyang of Bhojpur near the election campaign site of CPN (Maoist Centre) leader Prachanda on November 16. According to reports, the injured was a cadre of Netra Bikram Chand-led Nepal Communist Party (NCP) which had boycotted the election.

### **Bhojpur, Nov 13:**

An independent candidate demanded security after allegedly being beaten and issued death threats by the personal secretary of the Chief Minister of province I in Shadananda municipality of Bhojpur on November 12.

### **Jhapa, Nov 7:**

Supporters of independent candidate for the House of Representatives election from Jhapa constituency no 2 Swagat Nepal accused the ruling coalition candidate Hari Rana for the

same constituency of manhandling Nepal during an interaction program organized in Birtamod of Jhapa on November 7.

### **Jhapa, Nov 5:**

The Netra Bikram Chand aka Biplov-led Nepal Communist Party (NCP) staged a torch rally in Birtamod of Jhapa on November 5 evening demanding to cancel the election scheduled for November 20. The party has vowed to disrupt the election.

## **MADHESH PROVINCE**

### **Rautahat, Nov 16:**

3 police personnel were injured during a clash between the supporters of two independent candidates in Katahariya municipality-5 in constituency number 3 of Rautahat on November 16 night. Police fired four rounds of tear gases and three warning shots to take the unruly situation into control.

### **Mahottari, Nov 15:**

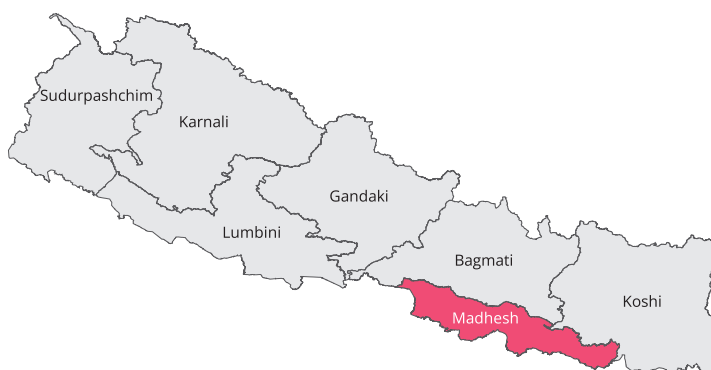
Police arrested seven leaders and cadres of Baidya-led CPN (Revolutionary) from Balawa-7 of Mahottari on the charge of engaging in anti-election activities. The police stated they recovered anti-election pamphlets and miking materials from the arrested.

### **Dhanusha, Nov 15:**

A local of ward no 5 in Chhireshowrnath municipality of Dhanusha accused the cadres and supporters of CPN-UML of assaulting him and his wife during a household election campaign on November 15 for expressing his view that candidates rarely look back towards voters after they win the election. The local also accused the UML cadres of threatening him.

### **Sarlahi, Nov 12:**

A clash broke out between the cadres of the Hamro Nepali Party and CPN (Maoist Centre) in Sarlahi on November 12. The clash took place after the cadres of CPN (Maoist Centre) reportedly



tried to clear the obstruction of the road during a demonstration organized by the locals and Hamro Nepali Party (Stick Election Symbol) alleging that local authorities had neglected the construction of road in Malangwa municipality and Kaudeni rural municipality of Sarlahi Constituency number 2.

### **Parsa, Nov 7:**

The Election Commission sought clarification from Nepali Congress candidate from Constituency number 4 of Parsa Ramesh Rijal on the charge of threatening the commission's Code of Conduct monitoring officer for Parsa Rudra Bahadur Karki for removing election campaign materials that violated the code conduct.

### **Sarlahi, Nov 03:**

Local residents of Kaudena rural municipality-3, which falls under Sarlahi's House of Representative Constituency number 2, staged a demonstration on November 3, by restricting the election candidates and their representatives from entering their village for alleged neglect towards upgrading the dilapidated road in their locality.

## BAGMATI PROVINCE

### **Makwanpur/Bhaktapur Oct 18:**

Police arrested three cadres of Nepal Communist Party (NCP Majority), a break-away faction of Netra Bikram Chand aka Biplav-led CPN (Communist Party of Nepal) from Madhyapur Thimi of Bhaktapur and Hetauda of Makawanpur or engaging in painting messages on wall against the upcoming election.

### **Sindhupalchowk, Oct 30:**

Prahlad Chaulagain, a central member of Young Communist League (YCL), a youth organization of the CPN (Maoist Centre), issued a threat to finish those who opposed the Left-Democratic Alliance in the upcoming election by posting a message on the wall of his Facebook profile.

### **Chitawan, Nov 17:**

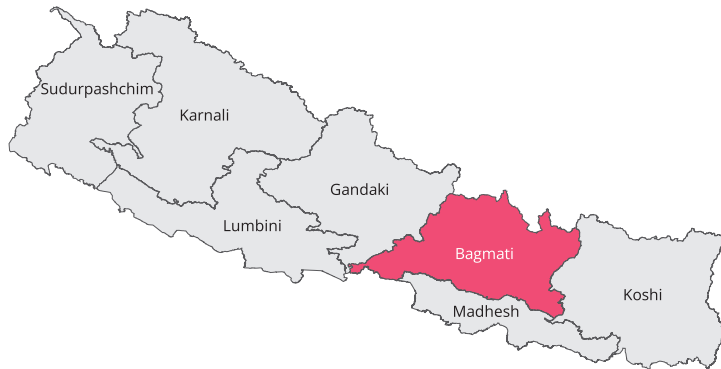
A group of unidentified persons torched a campaign vehicle being used by Nepali Congress candidates for the Provincial Assembly election from Chitawan constituency area number 3 Kha Thakur Prashad Dhakal in Chitawan on November 17. The vehicle bearing plate number Bagmati Province 06 001 pa 0001 which was torched by two unidentified persons while parked before Dhakal's house in the morning.

### **Chitawan, Nov 16:**

A group of unidentified people vandalized an election campaign vehicle belonging to Democrat-Left Alliance candidate for HoR election from Chitwan constituency number 2 Umesh Shrestha in Bharatpur metropolitan city-10 of Chitawan on November 16.

### **Dolakha, Nov 16:**

An item believed to be an improvised explosive device (IED) went off in Bhimeshwor municipality-3 of Dolakha on November 16. According to police, the item exploded with a loud bang near a dumping site at Satdobato of the municipality. A police team which went to investigate the explosion did not find any piece of IED related materials at the site according to DSP, Ganga Poudel of Dolakha police.



### **Kathmandu, Oct 31:**

Supporters of Dr. Tosima Karki of Rashtriya Swatantra Party staged a demonstration in Kathmandu against the Election Commission. The Election Commission revoked her candidacy in HoR election under FPTP electoral system from region no. 3 of Lalitpur district on October 29, citing the election act that prohibits individuals holding positions of benefit to contest in elections. The candidate was an elected member at Nepal Medical Council.

### **Kathmandu, Nov 15:**

The student wing of Nepal Communist Party (NCP) led by Netra Bikram Chand staged a protest in front of Tribhuvan University in Kirtipur on November 15 against the upcoming House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly elections 2022.

### **Kathmandu, Nov 15:**

Rajendra Prasad Pathak, an independent candidate for the House of Representative election from Kathmandu constituency number 9 accused the cadres of rival parties of brutally assaulting him on November 15 while he was returning home via Kirtipur after a program at Chandragiri municipality.

### **Kathmandu, Nov 14:**

Nepal Communist Party (Biplav) staged a demonstration in Maitighar Mandala of Kathmandu on November 14 as a part of its phase wise protest program against the upcoming November 20 election.

### **Kathmandu, Nov 14:**

ANNFSU (Revolutionary), the student wing of Nepal Communist Party (Biplav) staged a demonstration in Bagbazaar area of Kathmandu demanding the cancellation of the upcoming House of Representative and Provincial Assembly Election.

### **Chitawan, Nov 13:**

A group of people vandalized the vehicle of Rashtriya Swatantra Party President Rabi Lamichhane during his campaign in Muglin on November 13.

### **Makawanpur, Nov 8:**

Birodh Khatiwada, the House of Representatives election candidate in constituency number 2 of Makawanpur from CPN-Unified Socialist party was

assaulted by a local person during his election campaign at Manahari rural municipality-4 of the district.

### **Chitawan, Nov 2:**

Cadres of Nepali Congress padlocked the joint election campaigning office of the Democratic-Left Alliance in constituency number 1 in Ratna Nagar of Chitwan district on November 2.

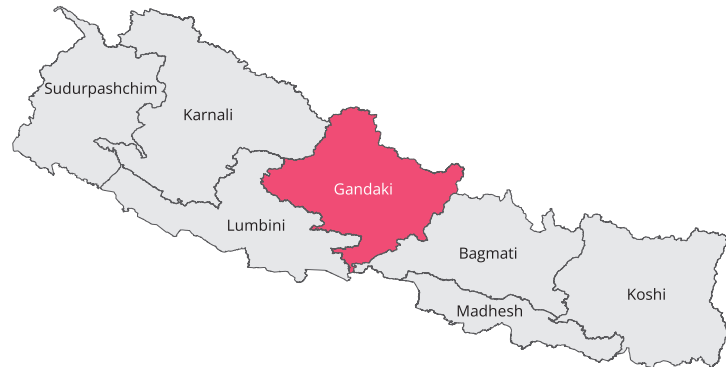
## **GANDAKI PROVINCE**

### **Lamjung, Nov 15:**

Two Nepali Congress cadres were injured after being physically assaulted in MadhyaNepal-1 of Lamjung on November 15. Congress accused the ward chairperson of ward 1 of the municipality and CPN-UML cadres of the attack. Police arrested the accused ward chairperson and a few others.

### **Baglung, Nov 15:**

Police arrested thirteen cadres and leaders of the Nepal Communist Party (Mashal) on the charge of engaging in activities against the upcoming election in Jaimuni of Baglung on November 15. According to the police, the arrested cadres of Nepal Communist Party (Mashal) organized an anti-election campaign in Kushmishera Bazar.



### **Gorkha, Nov 14:**

A group of five people attacked the election campaign team of Abdus Miya CPN-UML's candidate for the House of Representatives election in Gorkha constituency- 2 on November 13 night at Mango resort in Palungtar municipality-7 of Gorkha where they had stopped for dinner. CPN-UML's state secretariat member Hari Kafle sustained a serious injury on his head in the attack.

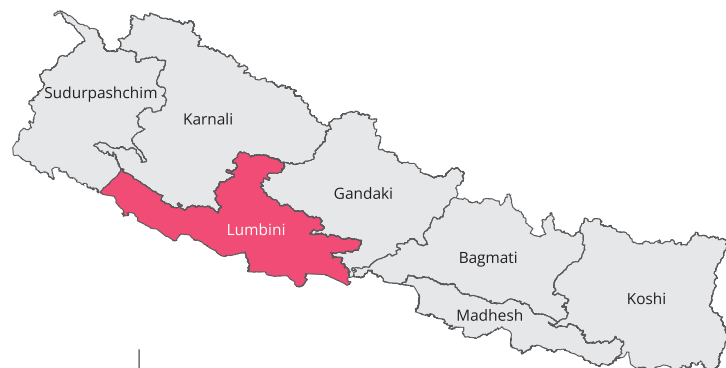
## **LUMBINI PROVINCE**

### **Banke, Nov 16:**

Two cadres of Netra Bikram Chand-led Nepal Communist Party (NCP) sustained serious injuries when a pressure cooker-based Improvised Explosive Device (IED) went off in their room in Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan city- 10 on November 16. Police suspected the IED went off when the NCP cadres were in the process of assembling it.

### **Kapilvastu, Nov 08:**

An unidentified group of people torched three vehicles including two trucks and a motorcycle in



front of the house of Nepali Congress candidate from Kapilvastu constituency number 3 for the House of Representatives election. According to police, pamphlets purportedly circulated by Nepal Janatantrik Mukti Morcha (Convenor Bikrant) which had boycotted the election were found at the scene of the incident.



### **Rupandehi, Nov 04:**

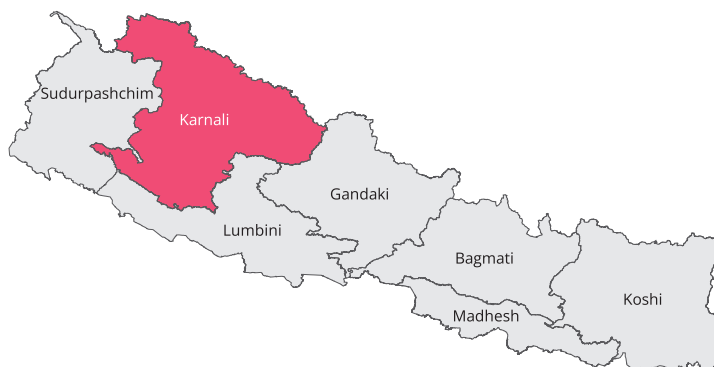
The cadres of political parties clashed with each other during the shoot of an election centered television debate program on November 4 in Sammarimai

rural municipality of Rupandehi district. A local sustained injury after being attacked during a dispute between Nepali Congress and CPN-UML supporters at the debate program.

## **KARNALI PROVINCE**

### **Surkhet, Nov 08:**

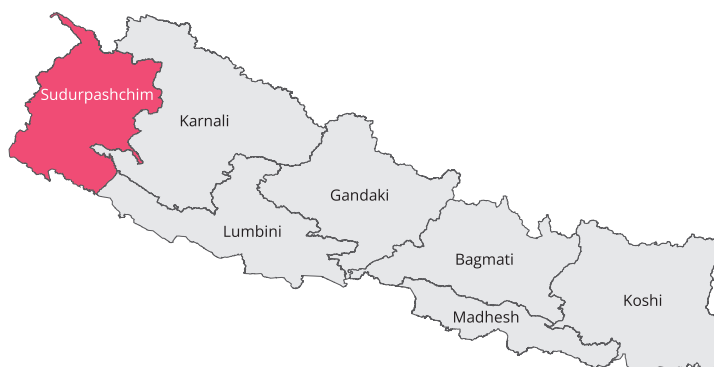
A local youth attempted a physical attack on CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' in Chingad rural municipality of Surkhet while he was speaking at an election campaign program on November 8. The youth threw a shoe at Dahal while he was speaking at the program which landed near Dahal.



## **SUDURPASCHIM PROVINCE**

### **Bajhang, Oct 27:**

Four people were injured in a clash between the cadres of CPNUML and Nepali Congress in Bajhang over an election campaign-related dispute.



### **Darchula, Nov 14:**

Cadres of the ruling alliance blocked the road in Naugad of Darchula on November 14 protesting against assault on their cadre and demanding the arrest of the attacker. CPN-Maoist Center's Darchula leader Khadaksingh Dhama accused CPN-UML cadres of attacking a CPN-Maoist cadre on November 13.

### **Kailali, Nov 14:**

An unidentified group pelted stones at the office of Nagarik Unmukti Party in Tikapur of Kailali in the early morning on November 14, according to Chairperson of the party, Ranjita Shrestha. The party condemned the incident by issuing a press release on Sunday.

### **Darchula, Nov 13:**

A clash broke out between the cadres of the ruling alliance and CPN-UML in Naugad rural municipality-6 of Darchula on November 13. A cadre of the CPN (Maoist Centre) was seriously injured in the clash.

### **Kanchanpur, Nov 12:**

Police on November 12 arrested cadres of CPN (Majority) and Mohan Vaidya-led communist party on the charge of being engaged in anti-election activities. Police arrested them from Dodhara Chandani Municipality-7 Babathan while they were campaigning against the election.

### **Darchula, Nov 10:**

A clash broke out between the cadres of CPN-UML and cadres of the ruling alliance in Darchula on November 10 during an election campaign in Api Himal rural municipality-5.

### **Kailali, Nov 09:**

An unidentified group vandalized the vehicle being used for an election campaign by the candidate and leaders of Nagarik Unmukti Party on the afternoon of November 9 in Ward no. 17, Dumaliya of Dhanghadi Sub-metropolitan city of Kailali. Leaders of the party accused the opponent party cadres of the vandalism.

## 4.4 Silence Period of HoR/PA Election (November 18 - 19)

The silence period of the HoR and PA election started at midnight on November 17. During this period, the election code of conduct barred all forms of campaigning including through rallies and gatherings, speeches, posters, leaflets as well as digital form of campaign so as to give voters the opportunity to reflect on and make voting decisions without external influence.

9 reported incidents of electoral contestations were compiled and mapped by Nepalmonitor from Kathmandu, Gulmi, Sindhupalchok, Rolpa, Mahottari, Solukhumbu, Kanchanpur, Myagdi districts during the silence period with 2 non-violent incidents and 7 violent incidents as listed below:

### **Kathmandu, November 18:**

Cadres of CPN (Revolutionary Maoist) staged a demonstration in front of the Election Commission in Kathmandu against the house of representatives and the provincial assembly election. The demonstrators demanded the cancellation of the election and they displayed a black flag against the election as well.

### **Gulmi, November 19:**

Nepali congress alleged that their cadre Suvash Mahat was injured in a physical assault by the cadres of CPN-UML at Isma rural municipality Gulmi Constituency no-2. Nepali congress asserted that the cadres of CPN-UML physically assaulted Mahoto on the bus at Cheda. Mahat was the son coordinator of the election mobilization committee of the alliance of Nepali Congress in Gulmi constituency no-2.

### **Sindhupalchok, November 19:**

Police arrested Chatra Bahadur Tamang, son of Aman Singh Tamang a CPN-UML candidate for provincial Assembly on November 19 on the charge of distributing money to the voters during the silent period of the election. Some cadres of Nepali Congress physically assaulted Chatra after he was found possessing Rs. 1,14,950 cash, Two bundle checks of ICC Bank, and a Scorpio Vehicle bearing the number plate of ba 20 cha 1428.

### **Rolpa, November 19:**

Netra Bikram Chand's party staged a torch rally in Thawang of Rolpa on November 19 evening against the House of Representative and Provincial Assembly Election. The demonstrators chanted slogans to cancel the House of Representative and Provincial Assembly Election.

### **Mahottari, November 18:**

A clash broke out between the cadres of CPN (Maoist Center) and CPN-UML in Ramgopal municipality on November 18. Five cadres of CPN-UML were injured during the clash according to the locals. According to the injured,, the cadres of CPN-UML threatened them to vote for CPN-UML while under the influence of alcohol.

### **Solukhumbu, November 18:**

Aclash broke out between the cadres of CPN-UML and the ruling coalition on November 18 night in Dudhukoshi rural municipality-6.. Cadres of CPN-UML alleged that the cadres of the ruling coalition gave economic temptation to the voters to gain votes in their favor during the silent period of the election.

### **Kanchanpur, November 18:**

Aclash broke out between the cadres of Nepali Congress and CPN (Unified Socialist) in Bhimdutta municipality-1 on November 18 night resulting in the injury of two cadres.

### **Myagdi, November 18:**

Four persons were injured in a clash that broke out on November 18 during the silent period of election in Ratibeni municipality-9 between supporters of the ruling coalition and CPN-UML. A motorcycle was vandalized whereas six others were torched. The cadres of the ruling coalition accused CPN-UML cadres of attacking them when they had gone to inspect after being informed that UML cadres were distributing money to voters.

### **Mahottari, November 18:**

A clash broke out between cadres of CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Centre) in Samsi rural municipality-3 after a motorcycle of a maoist cadre hit a cadre of CPN-UML.



## 4.5 Election Day

### PEACEFUL AND WELL CONDUCTED ELECTION AMID LESSER VOTER TURNOUT THAN ANTICIPATED

The polling day of the House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) election on November 20 remained mostly peaceful despite some instances of clashes, disputes, and protests at polling centers in some districts.<sup>85</sup>

According to the Election Commission (EC) overall voter turnout stood at 61.4%, well below the 70% voter turnout anticipated by the EC. Despite a peaceful and well conducted election, low voter turnout remained a big concern among election officials, political parties, candidates and civil society. The local elections in May had witnessed significantly high 72% voter turnout while 78.3% voter turnout was also recorded during HoR and PA elections - 2017.<sup>86 87</sup>

Major and minor disputes over voting were reported in 75 polling centers across the country which resulted in halting of voting at those centers. In 15 of these polling centers in Surkhet, Nawalparasi, Gulmi and Bajura district elections were canceled to be held at a later date according to the EC. Polling successfully resumed in most other polling centers, despite disputes, clashes and incidents of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). For instance, the polling at Shambusharan Secondary School in Khairapur of Bardiya district, which was suspended for an hour due to an IED explosion outside the polling station, resumed after an hour. Similarly, voting suspended in some polling stations of Palpa, Surkhet, Sankhuwasabha, Dhanusa and Saptari districts due to disputes arising from exchange of ballot papers for HoR and PA elections resumed shortly after all

party agreement in those polling stations

Police fired warning shots at some polling centers in Bajura, Dolakha, Darchula, Doti, Syangja, Taplejung, Bajhang, Siraha, Rautahat, and Humla districts to take the situation into control after clashes at the polling centers. In Tribeni municipality-7 of Bajura a person died while two others sustained serious injuries after police fired shots following a clash between parties after the end of voting period.

In a similar incident, a police personnel deployed at a polling center in Chabbis Pathibhara rural municipality-1, sustained injury after a warning shot fired to control the clash between parties, accidentally hit him. The clash happened due to a dispute related to seizing of ballot boxes. Likewise, an ASI of Nepal police sustained injury during a clash at Danfe polling center in Chankheli rural municipality-5 of Humla.<sup>88</sup> The clash ensued following a dispute about assisted voting.

Causes of disputes at polling centers included dispute over proxy voting, alleged attempts by competing parties to overpower polling booths in a bid to gain unfair advantage and a few incidents of oversight by election staff. Fringe parties that had announced boycotts of the elections, also attempted to disrupt the electoral environment by engaging in activities that include placing IEDs, vandalizing ballot boxes, and organizing demonstrations against election.

### POLITICAL RIVALRY BETWEEN PARTIES AND OVERSIGHT OF ELECTION STAFF FOUND TO BE MAJOR TRIGGERS OF DISPUTES AT POLLING CENTERS

The display of unhealthy competition and bitter political rivalry by parties, often attempting to overpower rival parties at polling centers triggered disputes and clashes at some polling centers. In Sindhupalchok, the cadres of CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Centre) clashed in the polling center at Setidevi Panchakanya Secondary School requiring police intervention to bring the situation to normalcy.<sup>89</sup> The clash ensued after CPN-

UML cadres accused CPN (Maoist Centre) cadres of trying to rig the elections.

Likewise, Police fired 3 rounds of warning shots in the polling center at Badharmal Secondary School in Karjanha municipality-6 of Siraha to control the situation after the cadres of CPN-Unified Socialist and Janata Samajwadi party tried to capture ballot boxes.<sup>90</sup>

Oversight by election staff while distributing ballot papers also triggered disputes in some polling centers. The voting at Mahendra Secondary School's polling center 'C' of Khadbari municipality in Sankhuwasabha district was temporarily suspended as the election officer gave the wrong ballot paper to the voters. The voters were mistakenly given the ballot paper of Provincial Assembly Elections in place of the ballot paper for House of Representative elections. It was known only after 31 votes were casted, which triggered

the dispute and temporary suspension of polling.

Incidents of oversight during distribution of ballot papers were also reported in some polling centers of Palpa, Dhanusa, Parsa, Saptari, and Gulmi districts causing disputes. As most of these oversights were identified in the early hours of polling day, voting resumed shortly in those polling centers with an agreement to cancel those votes and allow the voters to vote again.

## **ATTEMPTS TO OBSTRUCT ELECTION BY ELECTION BOYCOTTING FORCES SEE LITTLE IMPACT**

The political parties and groups, in particular the Nepal Communist Party (Bahumat), a breakaway faction of CPN (Biplav) and CPN (Biplav) were seen active in attempting to obstruct and disrupt the election in different places without much effect.

Cadres of CPN (Bahumat) engaged in demonstration, pamphlet distribution around polling centers, and intimidating voters as a part of their campaign against the election on the polling day. In Kathmandu, police arrested a group of CPN (Bahumat) cadres from Maitighar Mandala as they were demonstrating against elections. Similarly, police arrested the district level leaders and cadres of the CPN (Bahumat) party from Kanchanpur, Arghakhanchi, and Makwanpur districts, on the charge of conducting anti-electoral activities. Likewise, police arrested a cadre of CPN (Bahumat) from Machhapuchhre rural municipality-8 based polling center after he vandalized a ballot box.<sup>91</sup>

The cadres of CPN (Biplav) were also found attempting to disrupt elections in some places. CPN (Biplav) cadres tried to torch a ballot box at a polling station in Brahmasthan of Rapti municipality in Chitwan. Police

also arrested cadres of the party from Darchula on the charge of engaging in anti-electoral activities.<sup>92</sup>

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and suspicious items resembling IEDs were found near polling centers in Achham, Dailekh, Dang, Gorkha, Ilam, Jhapa, Kailali, Kalikot, Kanchanpur, Morang, Mugu, Panchthar, Sunsari districts on the polling day. Although no political force or group officially took the responsibility for placing these devices, police attributed the blame for these to forces boycotting the election. In most cases, these IEDs were diffused by security forces. IEDs went off in Panchthar, Kailali, Bardiya, Morang, and Ilam districts causing panic among voters and brief halting of voting but no serious injury or damage were reported in any of these incidents. In Sunsari, a minor girl sustained injury after an IED was detonated at a polling center in Barju rural municipality-6.<sup>93</sup>

The minimal effect on the electoral process from the forces boycotting the election can be attributed to their waning support base and an effective election security mechanism from the government.

## **PEACEFUL ELECTION EXHIBITS MATURING DEMOCRACY**

Despite disputes in some polling centers, political parties, candidates, and their representatives showed willingness to resolve disputes through dialogues, as a result of which the elections for the HoR and PA were held peacefully and successfully in more than 99 percent of the polling centers. This to a large extent shows that political parties in Nepal have come to broadly embrace the culture of democratic electoral process. Likewise, the Election Commission Nepal

also displayed excellent competency in managing the electoral process which facilitated a conducive environment for elections.

The successful completion of polling day was therefore a milestone in institutionalization of democracy as Nepal looked forward to welcoming its second House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly as envisioned by the Constitution of Nepal-2015.

### **POST-ELECTION PHASE: PEACEFUL AMID CONSTESTATIONS**

The election for the House of Representatives (HoR) and the Provincial Assembly completed successfully on November 20. The contestations observed in the days following the Election day ranged from contestation during vote counting over issues like discrepancy in number of ballot papers found in ballot boxes and number recorded by election staffs, missing signature on ballot papers, mistakes in counting, alleged cheating during vote counting with intention of favoring a particular candidate.

The counting of votes started on time in most of the polling centers leaving few, which were delayed due to protests from candidates and their supporters with a claim of booth capture and rigging of election by the rival parties. For instance, vote counting started after 10 days of polling date in constituency-2 of Syangja district after the candidate and cadres of CPN-UML protested demanding re-election in some polling booths of Chapakot municipality claiming booth capture.<sup>94</sup>

There were also instances when counting of votes had to be suspended in some constituencies due to protest from contesting candidates and their supporters accusing of fraud while counting ballots. For instance, counting of votes at the constituency, Saptari-2 was briefly suspended as Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) staged a sit-in protest at the vote counting location. The party blamed mis-match in the ballot casted and ballot count.

While results for the election in some constituencies started coming within a few days after the polling day, disputes sometimes resulting in violent clashes were also reported during the victory rallies by winning candidates and their supporters. The political vendetta for not giving the vote was also vivid in some constituencies with resentment ranging from

destroying the assets to causing physical harm. For instance, seven people were injured in a clash during the victory rally of a UML candidate from area no. 1 of Majottari's constituency on November 29. Likewise, a 30 year old was assaulted on November 27 by rival party members while returning back to his house in ward no.6 of Dhankuta Municipality from the victory rally of his party.

In terms of occurrence of contestations post-polling, Dolakha and Bajura districts had the highest counts of incidents as recorded by Nepalmonitor. In Bajura, protests and strikes were called by different sister wings of the CPN-UML condemning the murder of Chetan Aidi, a cadre of the party in a dispute related to election. In Dolakha district, which was marred by the issues of electoral disputes, vote rigging and capture of electoral booths on the polling day, re-polling also didn't conclude without any such incidents. On December 1, the cadres of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML clashed outside the polling booth at Baiteshor Municipality-2 during re-polling, resulting in vandalizing a vehicle.

Overall, the Nepalmonitor recorded 21 election related contestations as listed below in the report that accounted for 15% of the total incidents recorded during the full electoral cycle from August till December. However, the contestations were resolved through discussions between all parties involved and did not escalate into larger conflicts. This is a positive outcome, as peaceful resolution of election-related disputes is crucial for maintaining stability and democracy in the country.

## RE-POLLING HELD IN DISPUTED POLLING CENTERS

Although the HoR and PA election concluded successfully in most of the 22,227 polling booths in 10,892 polling centers across the country on the polling day on November 20 disputes were reported in some polling booths of different constituencies resulting in temporary suspension as well cancellation of polling in some polling centers.

In Syangja district, CPN-UML and other political parties including Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) accused the Nepali Congress and its alliance of capturing 4 election booths in Chapakot municipality which falls under the constituency number 2. Organizing a press conference after the election day on November 21, CPN-UML and RSP called for re-polls in those booths.<sup>95</sup>

Similarly CPN-UML also accused the CPN (Maoist Centre) and Nepali Congress alliance of capturing polling booths in 10 wards of Dolakha district and called for re-election in those booths.<sup>96</sup>

While elections were held normally in most places of Bajura district, In Budhinanda municipality-5 election was canceled on the polling day after there were allegations of booth capture by both Nepali Congress and CPN-UML. Both parties filed a complaint of booth capture against each other at the District election office.

After investigation and review the Election Commission decided to stage re-polling in some polling centers in the following districts:

### **Nawalparasi East:**

In Devchuli Municipality-4 based Shanti Shrijana Primary school based polling center re-polling was conducted on November 21. Voting at the polling center was cancelled on November 20 after a local set fire to the ballot box for the PR electoral system for Provincial Assembly on the polling day.<sup>97</sup>

### **Surkhet:**

In polling center at Simta Multiple Campus in Simta Rural Municipality of Surkhet voting was postponed on November 20 after political parties protested when it was found that the polling staff mistakenly put a total of 100 ballots papers of the House of Representatives were put inside the ballot boxes of the Provincial Assembly. In agreement with all parties, re-poll was held in this polling center on November 22. There were 2,926 voters in three polling booths in that polling center.<sup>98</sup>

### **Gulmi:**

Re-polling was also conducted in Kaligandaki Rural Municipality-2 of Gulmi on November 22 where voting had been cancelled due to political dispute on the election day on November 20.<sup>99</sup>

### **Bajura:**

In Nandeshwori polling station A of Budhinanda in Bajura re-election was conducted on November 26 as per the Election commission's decision. The polling center had 999 registered voters.

### **Dolakha:**

A meeting held by the Election Commission on November 27 decided to conduct re-polling in 10 wards of Dolakha validating the complaints of unfair play and absence of a free and fearless environment at the polling centres on November 20. In line with this, re-poll was conducted on December 1 in at voting centres A and B of Putalikath of Janajyoti Secondary School in Baiteshwori Rural Municipality-2 and at voting centres A, B, and C of Kalidhunga Secondary School at ward no 3 of the rural municipality.<sup>100</sup>

Likewise, re-polls were also conducted at A, B and C centres of Baiteshwor Secondary School at ward no 6 of the rural municipality, and voting centres A and B of Japhe Health Post building in Tamakoshi Rural Municipality-3.

# INCIDENTS RELATED TO ELECTORAL CONTESTATION DURING POST-ELECTION PHASE

(Compiled and mapped by Nepalmonitor)

## **KASKI, DECEMBER 11**

The province office of the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party Kaski was padlocked and vandalized by the leaders and cadres of the party on December 10 over the recommendation of proportional candidates in Kaski. The demonstrators agitated after Sushila Devi and Govindaraj Khaniya were not listed as proportional candidates.

## **KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 8**

Cadres and leaders of Rashtriya Swatantra Party picketed the party office on December 8 over the disagreement of the recommendation of proportional candidates. The demonstrators mentioned that the party recommended those as proportional candidates who got the lesser votes in the primary election, leaving those with higher votes. The demonstrators warned to vandalize the office as well.

## **BARA, DECEMBER 2**

An unidentified group torched a piled paddy on December 2 in Gadhimai municipality-3. Leaders of local political parties and local residents suspected that Sheikh Gyasudin's paddy was torched due to political revenge. Sheikh helped the Janata Samajwadi Party in the last House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly Elections.

## **DOLAKHA, DECEMBER 1**

A clash broke out between the cadres of the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML during re-election in Dolakha on December 1. According to the locals, the cadres of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML tried to obstruct each other at the election booth. The clash reportedly took place when UML cadres tried to obstruct Kundanraj Kafle, the candidate for the provincial assembly of the ruling coalition in Baiteshwor municipality-2. CPN-UML cadres reportedly vandalized a vehicle bearing the number plate Ba 2 Cha 1829.

## **BAJURA, NOVEMBER 30**

Cadres of CPN-UML staged a relay hunger-strike in Martadi of Bajura on November 30 demanding re-election in areas where they alleged election booths were captured during the election day on November 20. Likewise, the UML cadres also demanded action against the accused involved in the murder of their student leader Chetan Aidi and release of their cadres arrested during a demonstration.

## **SUNSARI, NOVEMBER 30**

A clash broke out between the cadres of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML during a victory rally of Bhagawati Chaudhary, the winning candidate from CPN-UML Sunsari constituency area no-3. According to police, there was a dispute after the CPN-UML cadres mistakenly splashed color during celebration to cadres of Nepali Congress. The dispute escalated into a group clash injuring 12 persons.

## **MAHOTTARI, NOVEMBER 29**

Seven people were injured in a clash during a victory rally of Laxmi Mahato, a candidate of CPN-UML Mahottari constituency area no-1 on November 29. A group led by Mahato's supporters, including the ward chairperson of Gaushala municipality-2 Shyam Sundar Manadal, assaulted supporters of the rival party. The victims alleged that they were assaulted over the outcome of the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly elections. A total of 3200 ballots were cast in Gaushala-2, which was considered the pocket constituency of the elected representative Mahato. Of which only 1800 votes were cast in favor of Mahato, which was much less than the estimated 2500 votes.

## **DHANKUTA, NOVEMBER 27**

Nepali Congress's municipal chairperson and other supporters were accused of physically assaulting Rajan

Karki, a 30-year-old man of Dhankuta municipality-6 who was returning from home after attending his party's election victory rally in Dhankuta on November 27. The victim sustained an injury in his left eye. The victim further stated that he had to flee to save his life. Shrestha, who was accused of assault, claimed allegations against him as false.

#### **DHANKUTA, NOVEMBER 27**

Cadres of the youth association affiliated with CPN-UML staged a demonstration in Dhankuta after Rajan Karki, a 30-year-old man of Dhankuta municipality-6, was physically assaulted while returning from a victory rally on November 27.

#### **KAILALI, NOVEMBER 26**

The cadres of All Nepal National Free Student Association (ANNFSU), the student wing of CPN-UML, staged a demonstration in front of Chief Minister and Council of Minister's Office in Dhangadi of Kailali district demanding justice for Chetan Aidi. Chetan died during an election-related dispute on the polling day in Bajura. He was the chairperson of ANNFSU-Far Western University committee.

#### **DHANUSA, NOVEMBER 26**

Cadres of CPN-UML staged a demonstration in Janakpurdham of Dhanusha on November 26, accusing alleged irregularity in the vote counting process had resulted in the defeat of its candidate from Dhanusha constituency number 2. The demonstration started from the Railway station in Janakpur and went around Kadam Chowk, District Administrative Office, Provincial Election Office, Murali chowk, and turned into a corner assembly in Janak Chowk. The candidate of Nepali Congress Ram Krishna Yadav was victorious with 20,112 votes, whereas Umashankar of CPN-UML Argariya got 19,955 votes.

#### **SIRAHA, NOVEMBER 26**

The cadres of CPN (Maoist Centre) obstructed the East West Highway at Golbazar of Siraha since the

evening of November 25. The Maoist cadres resorted to protest after the cadres of CPN-UML vandalized the house of Shivanath Sah (elder brother of CPN (Maoist Centre)'s candidate Bishwanath Sah of Siraha region no.3) during the victory rally. The protesting Maoist cadres demanded the newly elected representative to ask for forgiveness and detention of attackers as soon as possible.

#### **MAHOTTARI, NOVEMBER 26**

Counting of election votes at constituency no. 1 of Mahottari district was halted following a dispute between parties on November 26. Cadres of Janmat Party obstructed the vote counting process, stating that the votes cast for their party under the proportional electoral system were being added in other parties' names. The election office of the constituency is making efforts to resolve the dispute through all-party meetings.

#### **SYANGJA, NOVEMBER 26**

Cadres of CPN-UML assaulted 49-year-old Laxmipati Subedi, CPN-UML in-charge of Putalibazar municipality-13 in Syangja on November 26, accusing him of political betrayal within the party and playing a role in defeating the party's candidate for the House of Representatives election of Syangja constituency no-3, Narayan Prasad Marasini. The victim sustained injuries on his head and different parts of his body. According to the family of Subedi, the daughter of the victim was also assaulted by the accused while trying to stop the attackers.

#### **SIRAHA, NOVEMBER 25**

Police arrested 48 year old Dipendra Kumar Yadav aka Dipu, and 42 year old Ajay Kumar Sah of Bariyarpatti rural municipality-1, Badhari in Siraha on the charge of murder of 32-year-old Ramshankar Yadav residing at Naragi of the same ward. Yadav's dead body was recovered by locals on the night of November 25 at Naragi Badhari road. Police had initially suspected a road accident but the investigation later turned out to

be a murder case resulting from political vendetta, said Siraha Police. The relatives and family of the deceased blamed the duo for Ramshankar's murder and stated the dispute related to election outcome as the cause .

### **SYANGJA, NOVEMBER 23**

Cadres of CPN-UML, Rashtriya Swatantra Party, Rashtriya Prajatantra party, Independent candidates, and other political parties staged a demonstration in Syangja on November 23 demanding re-election in three wards of Chapakot municipality in Syangja. CPN-UML secretary Rajendra Dumre alleged that the petition was filed demanding re-election along with the resignation of the election officer and the security agency, accusing them of being silent observers while Congress cadres were capturing election booths.

### **BAJURA, NOVEMBER 23**

CPN-UML's youth wing, ANNFSU cadres, reportedly assaulted government officials in Bajura on November 23. They threw stones, waved black flags, and chanted slogans while the officials were leaving a meeting to resolve the vote counting issue. The attack was in protest of the killing of their cadre, Chetan Ayadi, and they demanded the arrest of the culprits. The ANNFSU cadres vowed to halt vote counting until a thorough investigation into the murder was conducted

### **DOLAKHA, NOVEMBER 23**

The youth organization of the ruling alliance staged a torch rally on November 23 in Dolakha demanding to count the votes of the House of Representative (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) Election. The demonstrators alleged that even though it had been 3 days since the election, the counting of votes had not started.

### **DOLAKHA, NOVEMBER 22**

Counting of votes didn't start until 8:50 am on November 22 in Dolakha, despite all ballot boxes having arrived in the district capital. CPN-UML refused to attend the all party meeting called prior to vote counting demanding re-elections in some polling booths, blaming the ruling alliance for capturing booths at those places. CPN-UML demanded re-election in 5 different polling stations blaming the ruling alliance of Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist Centre), and CPN (Unified Socialist) of capturing booths in Jafe polling center of Tamakoshi, Gairimudi and Namdu polling center of Baiteshor, Bhedpu polling center of Melung, and Jungu polling center of Gaurishankar.

### **SYANGJA, NOVEMBER 22**

Cadres and leaders of the Nepali Congress staged a sit-in at the office gate of Waling municipality of Syangja on November 22 protesting against delay in the counting of votes of Syangja constituency-2.

### **SAPTARI, NOVEMBER 22**

Counting of votes at the constituency, Saptari-2 got suspended as Janata Samajwadi Party (Ja.Sa.Pa) staged a sit-in protest at the vote counting location. The party blamed mis-match in the ballot casted and ballot count. In that constituency, the candidate of Janamat Party, CK Raut was leading the polling by double votes than the party chairperson of Ja. Sa. Pa, Upendra Yadav.







## 5. By-Election 2023

### 5.1 Overview of By-election 2023

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 under Article 84(7) has the provision for fulfilling the vacant seats in HoR, that is by conducting a by-election if any seats remain vacant with 6 months left for the tenure of House of Representatives (HoR), which is further explained by the article 68 of Election Act-2017. In line with these provisions, by-elections were held in three different constituencies, namely Tanahun-1, Bara-2, and Chitwan-2 on April 23, 2023.

The elections were held in the constituencies Tanahun-1, and Bara-2, as the elected Member of Parliament (MPs) in these constituencies got nominated respectively as the President and Vice-President of the country making the directly elected seats vacant.<sup>101 102</sup> The By-election was mandated in Chitwan-2, as the supreme court removed the candidate elected in that constituency from both the position of Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, also revoking the member of parliament in a lawsuit filed claiming violation of citizenship laws by the candidate.<sup>103</sup> Though the candidate claimed to have relinquished US citizenship in 2018, the court said that he had not followed the due process.

### 5.2 Electoral process characterized by peaceful environment and efficient execution

The ruling parties opted for a pre-poll alliance to contest in this By-election, fielding the candidates from Nepali Congress party in Chitwan and Tanahun; and candidates from Janata Samajwadi Party in Bara, as common candidates. CPN UML, which came second during the elections in November contested individually in all three constituencies.

Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) that emerged as the fourth largest and a new parliamentary force during the November elections, fielded an ex-cadre of Nepali Congress in Tanahun as its candidate, who quitted the party some days before the candidature registration.<sup>106</sup>

The popular economist, who was also a central figure in preparing the election manifesto of Nepali

In this context, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) announced a by-election together in these three constituencies to be held on the same date, that is, April 23. As per the election timeline, candidature registration was called for April 3 in all three constituencies.<sup>104</sup>

A total of 69 candidates including parties and independent candidates contested in the elections.<sup>105</sup> Thirty six candidates contested in Bara-2, among which 12 were from different parties and 24 contested individually. In Chitwan-2, there were 24 candidates, 12 each from parties and contesting individually. Only 9 contested in Tanahun, for the vacant post.

After investigating the complaints in the candidature registration, the candidates were finalized and given electoral symbols on April 6. The campaigning for elections started from April 7 and lasted till April 20, leaving the next two days, April 21 and 22 as silence periods with voting slotted for April 23.

Congress in the main election, claimed to be devoid of electoral opportunities in Nepali Congress.<sup>107</sup> Likewise, in Bara RSP fielded a popular ex-policeman and currently the chairperson of Nepal Sushasan Party, who had also contested in the main election from Kathmandu constituency-2.<sup>108</sup>

The By-election became a contest primarily between the established political forces and newly formed political actors like RSP and Janamat Party. Apart from the regular household campaigns, the parties centered their entire party mechanisms and senior party leaders in these By-election by mobilizing the mass assemblies at all the electoral constituencies.

Though the By-election was held in only three electoral constituencies of the total 165, it drew a



lot of interest and was seen as a battle of prestige by the traditional forces and as an opportunity to further advance their political influence by new political forces. These contests between the old and new political forces largely impacted the political environment nationally, and more so due to the huge influence of online and social media. Social media became an easy medium of spreading hate among rival candidates, by using computerized videos, and spreading fake news, often requiring the candidates and the parties to clarify.<sup>109</sup>

Like during the main elections, the ECN made efforts to monitor the upholding of Code of Conduct in the By-election, both physically and virtually. ECN asked for clarification with the candidate of RSP in Tanahun for sharing the vote appeal digitally after the end of campaign period.<sup>110</sup> It also sought clarification from the candidate of Nepali Congress in Tanahun for sending voice messages canvassing votes in his favor during the silence period. Likewise, clarification was sought from the candidate of RSP in Chitwan for sloganeering at the voting center.<sup>111</sup> In another stance, ECN also asked for clarification from the Chiefminister of Madhesh Province for visiting areas inside electoral constituencies in Bara on the polling day.

The voter turnout rate in all three constituencies during the byelections was comparable to main elections, with Chitwan-2 experiencing the highest fall (approx 5%) from 67.63% to 63%. Bara-2 recorded a minimal increase to 64% from 63.5% in main elections, whereas slightly less voters turned out (53%) in Tanahun-1 as compared to main elections(54.03%).

Counting of votes was also completed within 48 hours at all the electoral constituencies. Requiring to conduct elections in only three constituencies certainly eased preparations for ECN, however the specificity in electoral protocols including smaller ballot papers including only specific and required electoral symbols in the ballot paper also significantly reduced the percentage of invalid votes to 1.51% (Tanahun 1.81%, Chitwan-1.52%, and Bara-1.20%) from around 5% in the main elections.

To conclude, amidst the electoral exuberance, different phases of election starting from candidature registration, campaign period to polling day and post election activities were well executed upholding democratic norms and practices.

### 5.3 Result of By-Election further shows preference for new parties

The outcome of the By-election revealed a growing sense of anger, frustration and distrust of citizens with established parties as demonstrated by a major shift in voter sentiment in favor of new political forces like Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and Janamat Party.

Of the 3 electoral constituencies where By-election were held, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) emerged victorious in two constituencies - Chitawan 2 and Tanahun 1, winning by a resounding vote margin against the closest candidates from the alliance of the ruling parties.

According to the Election Commission, in Chitawan constituency 2, RSP candidate won the seat by securing 54,276 votes against the 11,251 votes garnered by the closest rival candidate from the ruling alliance.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, in Tanahun constituency 1, portrayed as its home-turf by Nepali Congress, RSP candidate defeated Nepali Congress candidate

jointly fielded by the ruling alliance by securing 34,480 votes, a substantial margin of 14,388 votes.

Meanwhile, in Bara constituency 2, although the Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) candidate supported by an alliance of ruling parties - Nepali Congress, CPN-Maoist, and CPN-Unified Socialist - won the election, the Janamat party candidate came close, further indicating a growing disenchantment with traditional parties.

The outcome of the By-election not only highlights the growing appeal of new political forces, but also signals a potential transformation in the country's political landscape as citizens express their dissatisfaction with traditional parties and their inability to deliver on the promise of good governance, development and prosperity. It also serves as a wake-up call for established parties to do self-reflection, identify the causes of their disconnect from citizens and re-evaluate their strategies. ♦♦♦



## 6. Overall Trend of Electoral Contestation in Nepal Election-2022

The electoral environment during the House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) elections was found to be more peaceful compared to the local elections. While the nature and trend of incidents and contests observed during different phases of the electoral cycle were similar,

Nepalmonitor recorded fewer incidents in all phases of the electoral cycle during the HoR and PA elections compared to the local elections. The table 3, below shows the number of incidents recorded in different phases of the electoral cycle in both the elections.

Phases of Election	No. of incidents recorded during Local Election-2022	No. of incidents recorded during HoR and PA -2022
Until Candidature Registration	35	8
Campaign Phase	73	43
Silence Period	29	9
Polling Day	66	58
Post Elections	49	23

Table 3: Table showing phase wise distribution of electoral contestations during Local and HoR/PA Election 2022

(Source: Nepalmonitor)

In both the elections, the incidents were seen gradually peaking during the campaign period, post nomination of candidacy and distribution of electoral symbols. The conflicts during the campaign phase primarily involved disputes between political parties. Acts of violence varied from setting fire to, and vandalizing vehicles used by opposing parties for election campaigns, to making death threats, throwing stones, and physically attacking candidates.

The number of incidents recorded during the silence period (48 hours before polling day) was lower than during the campaign period. Since campaigning is not allowed during the silence period, candidates and parties were observed engaging in covert

electioneering, mostly during night hours, to protect their vote bank areas.

The election related incidents peaked on the polling day during both the local and general elections. The disputes related to attempts to rig elections, booth capture, providing voting assistance to elderly and Persons with Disabilities, and managerial irregularities at some instances were found to be the major triggers of these incidents of contestations on the polling day. The use of four different ballot papers in HoR and PA elections eased the overall voting process and experience; however, it also created confusion in some polling booths, as the electoral staff handed wrong ballot papers.

Nepalmonitor also recorded incidents where security forces fired warning shots at 67 polling centers in 18 districts (including Bajura, Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, Kavre, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Udaypur, East Rukum, among others) during the local elections to maintain control. Similar incidents were also recorded in Bajura, Bajura, Dolkaha, Darchula, Syangja, Humla, Siraha, Rautahat, and Taplejung districts during the HoR and PA elections.

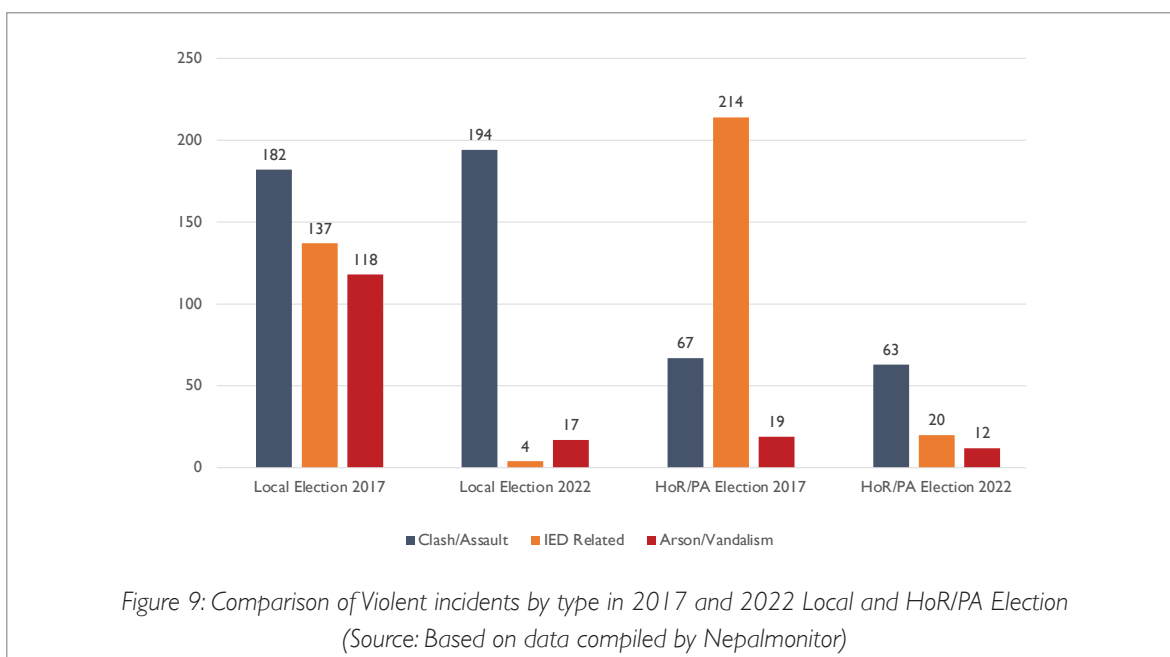
Despite these disputes and incidents, polling was resumed and smoothly completed in 99.6% of the total 21955 polling booths in local elections, and 99.9% of the 22,227 polling booths in HoR and PA elections. Unhealthy competition to cater votes were evident on the polling day, however a tendency towards meaningful dialogue among political actors, and quick resolution of disputes were noteworthy.

A significant number of incidents were also recorded during the post-election phase, particularly during the vote counting process and victory rallies. Disputes arose due to encountering ballot papers with no sign, improperly sealed ballot boxes, discrepancies in the total votes cast at the polling center and counting center, and extravagant victory rallies. This indicates that contestation does not end in the polling booth,

and the post-election period is equally critical in the electoral environment.

The Nepal Elections-2022 were held in a relatively peaceful environment compared to previous national elections in the recent times. Nepalmonitor, while assessing the complete electoral cycle of all three tiers of elections in 2022, recorded fewer incidents of both violent and non-violent nature, such as protests, demonstrations, padlocking, clashes, vandalism, and arson, resulting from election-related causes than in 2017 elections.

During the 2017 local, provincial, and federal elections, the online platform documented a total of 734 incidents, out of which 437 were violent. However, in the 2022 elections, there was a significant decrease in incidents, with Nepalmonitor recording only 440 incidents, including 299 violent ones. The 2022 elections also saw a notable reduction in fatalities, with six deaths reported, compared to 14 deaths in 2017. Incidents resulting in deaths were recorded in Humla, Udaypur, and Solukhumbu districts during the local elections, while two deaths occurred in Bajura and one in Siraha during the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly election 2022.

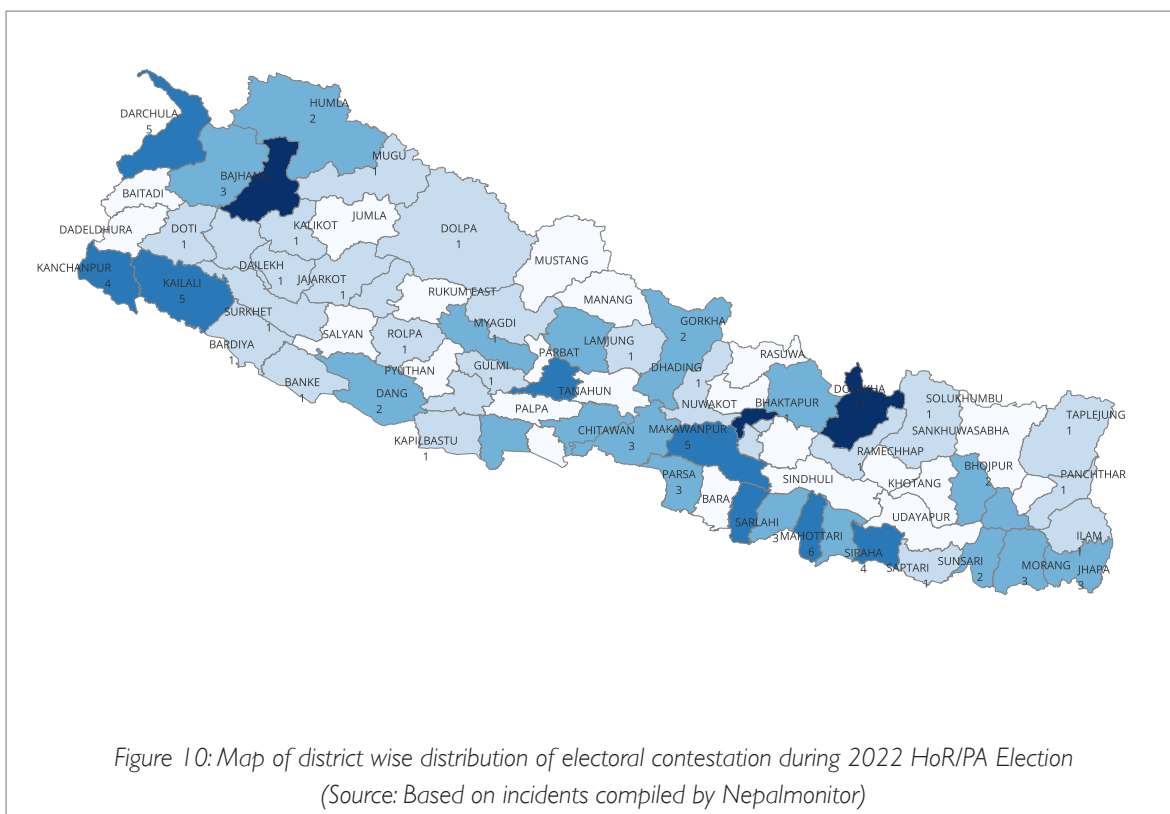


During the 2017 elections, there was a noticeable prevalence of incidents involving the placement of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) aimed at disrupting the electoral process as shown in Figure-9. However, in the 2022 elections, there was a significant decrease in such incidents specifically targeting elections. In 2017, the Nepal Communist Party (Biplav) was primarily responsible for utilizing IEDs and actively boycotted the election while operating in a partially clandestine political manner. Subsequently, NCP (Biplav) transitioned into mainstream politics and signed an agreement with the government in 2021. Their stance on supporting local election in 2022 was ambivalent. Though, they announced a boycott of the House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly (PA) election 2022, but their impact was minimal.

Moreover, the political climate in 2017 was greatly influenced by demands from parties based in

the southern region, who sought constitutional amendments as a prerequisite for their participation in the elections. These demands led to protests specifically targeting the electoral process in 2017. However, these agendas were not raised with prominence over the years creating a more favorable environment for the elections in 2022.

The number of clashes recorded during the 2017 and 2022 elections remained relatively constant. These clashes mostly stemmed from intra-party disputes related to ticket distribution and electoral outcomes, as well as inter-party disputes during campaigning, polling day, vote counting, and victory rallies. The similarity in the nature and number of clashes between the elections in 2017, and 2022 indicates the need for increased commitment from political actors to foster healthy competition while upholding the fundamental principles of democracy through periodic elections.









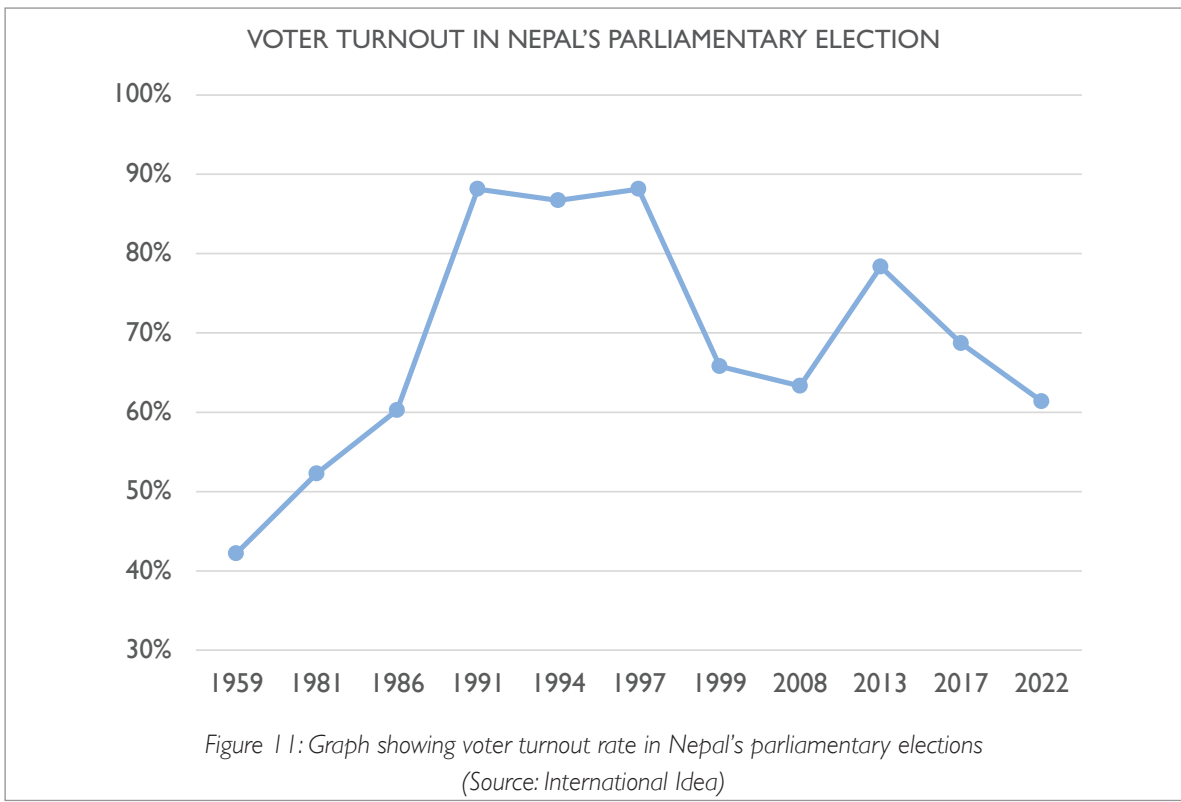
# 7. Participation of Voters in Nepal Election-2022

One of the most important indicators of how citizens actively contribute to the governance, future, and success of their nation is the voter turnout rate. In most instances, higher voter turnout indicates the vibrancy of democracy, whereas lower turnout is typically correlated with lack of voter's enthusiasm.

The voter turnout remained historically low post 1990s at 61.35% during the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly Elections in 2022. During previous elections it remained at 68.67% in 2013 and 78% in 2017. Likewise, the local level elections held in May 2022, saw the voter turnout of 72 %, which accounts for a slight drop compared to last local elections (74.16%) in 2017.

The voter turnout in Nepal's parliamentary elections saw a constant rise in parliamentary elections until the 1990s. The first ever parliamentary elections in 1959 saw 42.19% of voter turnout in a time when Nepal's population was less than 10 million among which 48% were eligible voters. The turnout had a fair increase during the parliamentary elections in 1981 (52.30%) and 1986 (60.31%) that were held after reformation in the partyless panchayat system, post 1980s referendum.

The first parliamentary elections in 1991 after the restoration of multiparty democracy marked an exciting voter participation, recording 88.13% voter turnout. The voter's participation remained constant whilst two more parliamentary elections, in 1994 and 1997. It significantly decreased thereafter, as the



country fell into Maoist insurgency period that hit Nepal for the next 10 years.

The first constitutional assembly elections in 2008, post-civil war also observed a seemingly less voter turnout (63.29%), which partly can be accredited to securitized environment and hideous fear of insurgents, alongside the fraction of population displaced due to civil war. The second constitution assembly elections in 2013, which was held after the first assembly failed to deliver the godot, however saw encouraging participation (78.78%) of voters. There has been a decline in voter's turnout ever since, in the last two parliamentary elections in 2017 and 2022 as mentioned above and shown by the chart.

This downward trend of voter turnout suggests a decline in interest of citizens in the mainstream political parties, as their representatives. The nationwide whim created in the favor of new political actors, primarily during the byelection also complements the shift in interest of citizens. The lower citizen participation however doesn't necessarily indicate that citizens are becoming less active in politics provided there is a rise in other forms of citizen's activism like mass protests and increased use of social media as a new platform of political engagement.

Some of the institutional arrangements might have also restricted the turnout to the lowest point. There is no provision of voting from outside the electoral constituency. Leaving the members of security forces and government employees deployed in electoral duties who are allowed to cast proportionate votes, one has to be present at polling centers in their own constituencies to vote. This has also made a significant chunk of the working population devoid of casting their votes. Likewise, nearly 4 million of Nepal's population, most of whom are above 18 years and having voting rights, reside abroad for work. Of the total 17.8 million voters, this population in diaspora who are not allowed to vote remotely from outside the country also marks a significant proportion.

The new provisions introduced whilst this elections, like setting the cut-off date of 18 years to a day penultimate to the polling day have contributed to increase the numbers in voters pool, but the statistics as discussed above shows more needs to be done to walk the voters inside the polling booth.

◆◆◆



## 8. Outcome of the Nepal's 2022 Election and its Implication

The election commission published the final combined result accounting both votes cast under both the FPTP (First Past the Post) and Proportional Representation (PR) system for the House of Representatives (HoR) election on December 14.<sup>113</sup>

The Nepali Congress party emerged as the largest party by securing the highest 89 seats in the House of Representatives that consists of a total of 275 seats. The runner-up, CPN-UML, clinched 78 seats, followed by CPN (Maoist Centre) with 32 seats. The Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) which was formed only a few months before the election also fared well securing 20 seats in the HoR.

The Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) secured 14 seats in the House of Representatives (HoR), closely followed by the Janata Samajwadi Party with 12 seats, and the CPN (Unified Socialist), a CPN-UML breakaway faction, with 10 seats. Meanwhile, the Madhes-based Janamat Party, led by CK Raut, who previously boycotted the 2017 general elections, emerged as a strong regional party in Madhesh garnering 6 seats, winning one under the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system and securing the rest through the Proportional Representation (PR) system. The Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP), another Madhesh-based entity, and the Nagarik Unmukti Party (The People's Freedom Party) won 4 and 3 seats respectively. The Rashtriya Janamorcha and Nepal Majdur Kishan Party, two small leftist groups, each clinched a seat. Notably, five independent candidates, unaffiliated with any party, also managed to secure seats in the HoR election.

Only seven of the 69 political parties that participated in the HoR election met the threshold of 3 percent of the total votes cast under PR election needed to

be designated a National Party. These parties were Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, CPN (Maoist Centre), Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) and Janamat Party.

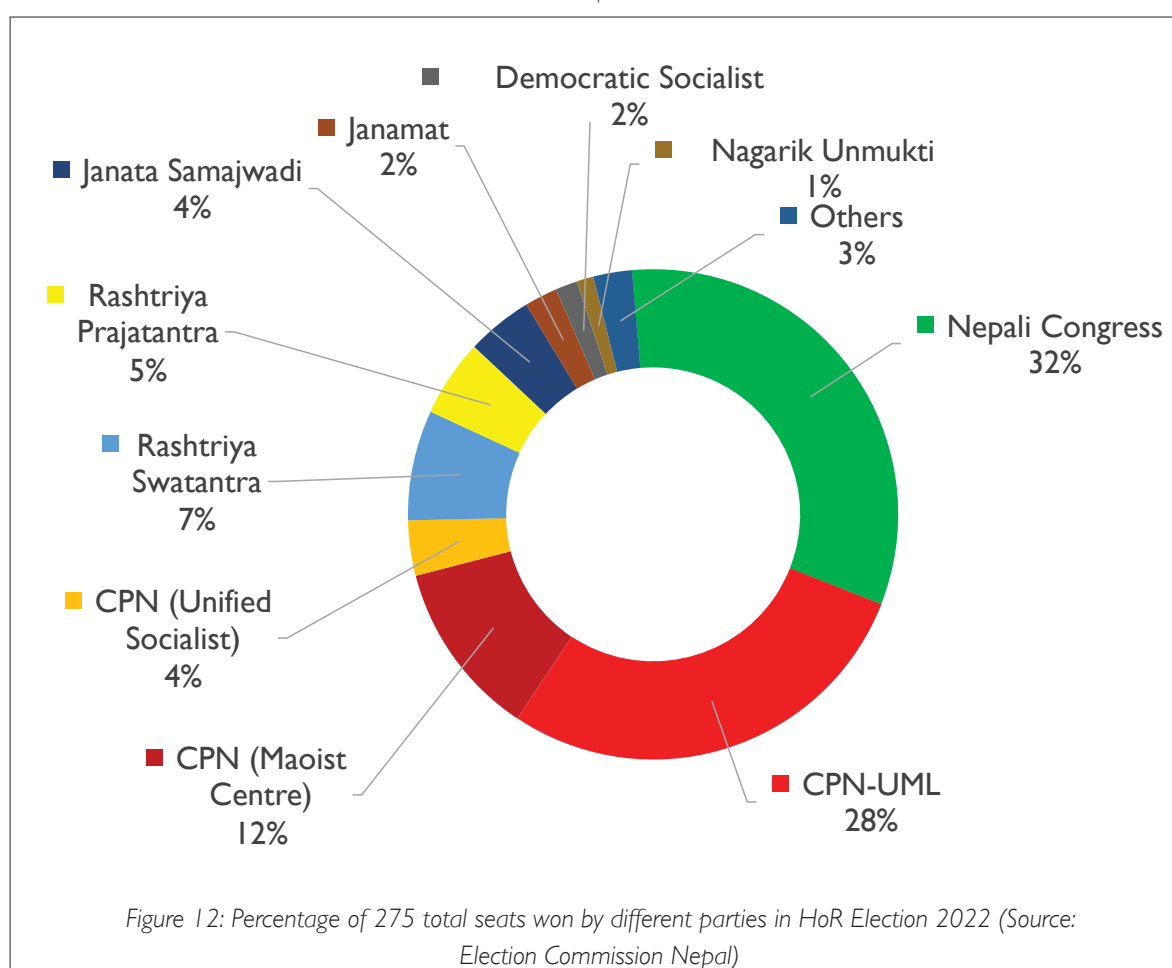
In the 2017 election, the Left Alliance, consisting of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) or CPN-UML and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) or CPN (Maoist Centre), had achieved a landslide victory, securing nearly two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. However, political alliances shifted dramatically in the lead up to the 2022 election due to various political developments including a bitter split of the NCP and CPN-UML subsequently.

The 2022 election instead saw an electoral alliance of ruling coalition parties Nepali Congress, Maoist Centre, CPN (Unified Socialist) and Rashtriya Janamorcha. Other parties including Nepal Socialist Party led by former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai and Loktantrik Samajwadi Party led by Mahantha Thakur were also roped into the alliance. The main opposition party CPN-UML formed an alliance with Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Upendra Yadav led Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) in some constituencies.

The results of the local elections were largely dominated by established parties, with the Nepali Congress securing the most head positions of the local level. They were closely followed by other traditional parties like the CPN-UML, CPN (Maoist Centre), Janata Samajwadi Party, and several minor parties. However, in a striking shift from the usual electoral pattern, independent candidates emerged victorious in important cities including Dharan, Dhangadhi and national capital Kathmandu securing the mayoral posts.

The election results, where only the Nepali Congress among the established major parties improved its performance compared to 2017, illustrated the electorate's disenchantment with older parties and willingness to explore alternative political entities, as evidenced by the success of new parties. Conversely, left-leaning parties including CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist Center, and CPN (Unified Socialist) experienced a decrease in parliamentary representation. This highlighted a transformative shift in the political landscape, suggesting that urban constituents were becoming increasingly open to non-traditional political alternatives that could challenge the established status quo.

The final makeup of the parliament was a mixed bag with representation from parties with various ideologies and characteristics including Left-Right, Liberal-Conservative, Old-New, Regional and National. No single party won near enough seats to easily form a government. Even on a combined basis Nepali Congress led alliance fell shy of the 138 majority required to form a government as shown by Figure 12. This portended a political situation where putting together a government would require a coalition of multiple parties with differing ideologies and agendas and careful talks and compromise between them.



Overall, these results indicated not only an increasing attraction towards new political groups, but also suggested potential change in the country's political environment as people voiced their discontent with conventional parties and their inability to deliver on their commitments of good governance, development

and prosperity. Additionally, this was a reminder for established parties to reflect on themselves, identify the reasons for their detachment from the people, and re-evaluate their strategies.





## 9. Conclusion and Recommendations

**A**lthough the 2022 elections were carried out peacefully and successfully in general, it's crucial to acknowledge that the perfect democracy is an ongoing pursuit, with room for continual improvement. As part of this, specific emphasis needs to be placed on mitigating electoral violence and pushing towards an even more democratic electoral process. It's clear that, while the elections signified a significant stride in Nepal's democratic journey, some hurdles still remain in the path of attaining a truly inclusive and violence-free electoral environment as shown by many incidents of electoral violence throughout different phases of the election.

Electoral violence delegitimizes the process of elections and undermines the democratic institutions of the country, thereby weakening the very fabric of democracy. Prevalence of electoral violence throughout different phases of the local elections 2022 shows that despite Nepal's proven commitment to democratic principles a lot remains to be done in terms of eradicating electoral violence and ensuring a free and fair election environment.

The government should also continue to educate voters on the importance of peaceful elections and the consequences of violence. All stakeholders including policy makers, political parties and civil society should promote a culture of peaceful politics where all citizens can exercise their right to choose their representatives without fear of violence. Electoral staff must exercise utmost care to ensure that their actions do not exhibit any bias or preference for a particular candidate or a party to ensure the trust in the electoral process.

Evidence based analysis of electoral contestations and overall assessment of Nepal's 2022 elections suggests that consolidated efforts in the following areas would help to facilitate a peaceful election where all citizens can exercise their right to choose their representatives without fear of violence.

- The frequency, sensitivity, nature, as well as the causes of electoral violence varied in different phases of elections, suggesting the need for phase wise security provision to maintain electoral decorum.
- Almost half of the reported instances of electoral violence happened during the evening or night time which shows that night hours are equally sensitive like the daylight during election.
- Lengthy and logistically cumbersome vote counting process was found to be the trigger of disputes in many instances during the elections. Process of counting votes should be made efficient so that election results could be announced as soon as possible. The possibility of counting the votes in respective polling centers, rather than moving ballot boxes to a central vote counting location should be explored.
- Despite the government's election security measures based on polling center sensitivity, recurring electoral violence persists in districts like Bajura, Dolakha, and Sindhupalchowk. This indicates that current strategies fall short

in these hotspots and highlights the need for a reassessment of security measures, a deeper understanding of local socio-political dynamics, and more effective, and sustainable solutions to reduce election violence.

- Provisions should be made to enable eligible voters, such as students, professionals, and internal migrants, who are unable to travel to their assigned polling centers or electoral constituencies, to vote from alternative constituencies. This can be facilitated by establishing voting megacenters in major cities. Additionally, measures should be taken to address the voting rights of the Nepalese diaspora during elections
- Although the utilization of online and traditional media, as well as involving local government mechanisms like Female Community Health Volunteers for voter education a week prior to the election, was a positive development, there is a need to enhance in-person voter education. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that voter education is an ongoing process and should be incorporated into curricula and fostered as a topic for social discourse.
- Political Parties, and candidates need to embrace democratic political culture, shunning unhealthy political competition and violence.



## Endnotes

- 1 See [President dissolves House, declares elections for April 30 and May 10](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 2 See [संसद पुनर्स्थापना गर्ने सर्वोच्चको फैसला](#), Setopati
- 3 See [सर्वोच्चले खारेज गर्‍यो नेकपाको एकीकरण, ब्यूँताइदियो एमाले र माओवादी केन्द्र](#), Setopati
- 4 See [राष्ट्रपतिद्वारा प्रतिनिधिसभा विघटन, दुई चरणको निर्वाचनको मिति घोषणा](#), BBC
- 5 See [दुई दिनभित्र देउवालाई प्रधानमन्त्री नियुक्त गर्न सर्वोच्चको आदेश](#), Annapurna Post
- 6 See [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nepal\\_2015.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nepal_2015.pdf)
- 7 See [भाग-८, संघीय व्यवस्थापिका](#), Nepal Law Commission
- 8 See [भाग-१४, प्रदेश व्यवस्थापिका](#), Nepal Law Commission
- 9 See [भाग-२४, निर्वाचन आयोग](#), Nepal Law Commission
- 10 See [भाग-२९, राजनीतिक दल सम्बन्धी व्यवस्था](#), Nepal Law Commission
- 11 See <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Election-Commission-Act-2073-2017.pdf>
- 12 List of incidents recorded by Nepalmonitor throughout the election cycle
- 13 An incident in the context of this report represents a single event while violent incident represents an event in which there is use of or an intention to use physical force to harm or cause damage to person or property
- 14 The 2017 local elections were held in three phases on May 14 (first phase), June 28 (second phase), and September 18 (third phase)
- 15 List of incidents recorded during pre-candidacy registration period
- 16 See [पोखराको मेयर एकीकृत समाजवादीलाई दिने निर्णयविरुद्ध कांग्रेस कास्की कार्यालयमा ताला](#), Annapurna Post
- 17 See [कार्यकर्ताले पाटी कार्यालयमा थुनिदिए पोखरा कांग्रेसका नेता](#), Chakrapath
- 18 See [उम्मेदवारीमा महिलाको हक मारिएको भन्दै प्रदर्शन](#), Nagarik News
- 19 List of reported election-related incidents during candidacy registration phase
- 20 See [Cadres of CPN-UML clash during registration of candidacy; DSP injured](#), Nepal Monitor
- 21 See [Victims of Co-operative stage demonstration at Office of Chief Election Officer in Banke](#), Nepal Monitor
- 22 List of incidents recorded during campaign period
- 23 See [Father of candidate for ward chairperson from CPN \(Maoist Center\) attacked with sharp weapon by an unidentified group in Dhanusha](#), Nepal Monitor
- 24 See [Nepali Congress cadre arrested on the charge of torching vehicle used for electoral campaigns by mayoral candidate of Rashtriya Prajatantra Party in Morang](#), Nepal Monitor
- 25 See [Seven injured in a clash between cadres of CPN \(Maoist Center\) and Nepali Congress in Aathbiskot of Rukum West](#), Nepal Monitor
- 26 See [CPN \(Maoist Center\) cadres stage demonstration in Sarlahi against alleged poisoning of ward chairperson candidate and cadres](#), Nepal Monitor
- 27 Recorded incidents during silence period of the election
- 28 See [Petrol bombs hurled at the house of Nepali Congress's Mayoral candidate in Tulsipur](#), Nepal Monitor
- 29 See [कांग्रेस र एमालेका कार्यकर्ताबीच भडप](#), Nagarik News
- 30 See [Five injured in a clash between cadres of Nepali Congress and CPN \(Maoist Center\) in Rukum West](#), Nepal Monitor
- 31 See [Local Congress cadres take wife of CPN-UML mayoral candidate into control for alleged cash distribution in Butwal](#), Nepal Monitor
- 32 See [बुटवलको मिलनचोकमा बम बिस्फोट](#), Setopati
- 33 See [चुनाव बहिष्कार गरी मसाल जुलुस निकाल्ने वैद्य निकट विद्यार्थीहरु समातिए](#), Desh Sanchar
- 34 List of incidents recorded on election day
- 35 See [पाँचखालको श्रीराम माध्यामिक विद्यालयमा मतपेटिका तोडफोड, मतदान प्रभावित](#), Pahilo Post
- 36 See [सर्लाहीमा व्यापक तनावस् ३ ठाउँमा गोली चल्‍यो, मतदान अधिकृत कुटिए](#), Nagarik News



- 37 See [गोरखाको ताराखसेमा प्रहरीको गोली लागी स्वयंसेवक घाइते](#), eKantipur
- 38 See [उदयपुरको कटारीमा गोली चल्थो, २ जना घाइते](#), Online Khabar
- 39 See [रौतहटको यमुनामाईमा मतपेटिका लुटियो](#), Online Khabar
- 40 See [देउमाई नगरपालिकाको मतगणना स्थलमा गोली चल्थो, मतगणना स्थगित](#), News 24
- 41 See [गुजरा नगरपालिकाको मतगणनास्थल बाहिर ढुंगामुढा, प्रहरीद्वारा अश्रुग्यास प्रहार](#), eKantipur
- 42 List of incidents recorded post-election phase
- 43 See [निर्वाचन व्यवस्थापन र सञ्चालनमा समीक्षाबाट प्राप्त हुने सुभाव महत्वपूर्ण हुन्छ : आयुक्त डा. तुलाधर](#), Election Commission Nepal
- 44 See <http://rajpatra.dop.gov.np/welcome/book?ref=25066>
- 45 See [Prez Bhandari waives fines slapped by EC to local level candidates failing to submit election expenses on time](#), my Republica
- 46 See <https://election.gov.np/>
- 47 See <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10224648448611497&set=a.3828110094119>
- 48 See [निर्वाचन आयोगको बदमासी: पहिला सोध्दा जवाफ नदिने, पछि आएको उजुरीका आधारमा उम्मेदवारी खारेज](#), Desh Sanchar
- 49 See [यस्तो छ मंसिर ४ को निर्वाचनका लागि आयोगद्वारा जारी आचारसंहिता](#), Nepal Live
- 50 See <https://election.gov.np/admin/public/storage/HoR/Press release/Press Release 2079-05-09.pdf>
- 51 See [सिट वाडफाँट कार्यदलको बैठक आज पुनः बस्दै](#), Nagarik Sewa
- 52 See [Local Election 2022 - Periodic Update II \(Electoral Violence and Contestations\)](#), Nepal Monitor
- 53 See [जिल्ला सम्भावना भएका लोकप्रियलाई एमालेको टिकट](#), Nepal Patra
- 54 See [People mulling independent runs for federal seats begin consultations](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 55 See [Nepal Police receives Rs 8 billion for election security](#), Khabar Hub
- 56 See [Nepal Police receives Rs 8 billion for election security](#), Khabar Hub
- 57 See [केन्द्रीय सुरक्षा समिति बैठक : चार कारणले अघिल्लो भन्दा यसपटकको निर्वाचन बढी चुनौतीपूर्ण](#), Naya Patrika
- 58 See [Local Level Election 2022 - An overview of electoral contestation](#), Nepal Monitor
- 59 See [Lalitpur District Court's arrest warrant against Biplav and other leaders of his party](#), Online Khabar
- 60 See [मुद्दा फिर्ताको निर्णयपछि विप्लव समूहले दियो सरकारलाई धन्यवाद](#), Online Khabar
- 61 See [Violence Monitoring during Nepal's Election 2017](#), Prezi.com
- 62 See <http://shorturl.at/elJU9>
- 63 See <https://www.facebook.com/ecnofficial>
- 64 See [http://www.moljpa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Constitution-of-Nepal-English-with-1st-Amendment\\_2.pdf](http://www.moljpa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Constitution-of-Nepal-English-with-1st-Amendment_2.pdf)
- 65 See <https://election.gov.np/>
- 66 See [नेकपा एमालेका उम्मेदवार जुली कुमारी महतोलाई स्पष्टीकरण](#), Eleciton Commission Nepal
- 67 See [उम्मेदवार विना मगरलाई स्पष्टीकरण](#), Eleciton Commission Nepal
- 68 See [काँग्रेस उम्मेदवार जोशीलाई स्पष्टीकरण](#), Eleciton Commission Nepal
- 69 See [YCL leader accused of issuing threats to opponents over Facebook](#), Nepal Monitor
- 70 See [EC set to crackdown 'No, Not Again' campaign in social media](#), my Republica
- 71 See [निर्वाचन बहिस्कार गर्ने दलहरु](#), Naya Bimarsha
- 72 See [Periodic Update - October 16-31: House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly Elections-2022](#), Nepal Monitor
- 73 See [Violence Monitoring during Nepal's Election 2017](#), Prezi.com
- 74 See [Violence Monitoring during Nepal's Election 2017](#), Prezi.com
- 75 See [Local Level Election 2022 - An overview of electoral contestation](#), Nepal Monitor
- 76 See [Country goes to polls in a relatively safe environment](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 77 See [लाखौं रकम तिरेर फेसबुकमा चुनावी प्रचार, कुन नेताले कति गरे खर्च ?](#), Tech Pana
- 78 See <https://shorturl.at/boADG>
- 79 See [फेसबुकसँग निर्वाचन आयोगको सहकार्य किन ?](#), Online Khabar
- 80 See [EC set to crackdown 'No, Not Again' campaign in social media](#), my Republica
- 81 See [EC set to crackdown 'No, Not Again' campaign in social media](#), my Republica
- 82 See [Prior to general elections, Facebook disables MRR group](#), Online Khabar



- 83 See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_tp4i0RxYQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_tp4i0RxYQ)
- 84 See <https://nepalmonitor.org/>
- 85 See [Around 61 percent cast votes in largely peaceful polls](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 86 See <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/229/40>
- 87 See [Around 61 percent cast votes in largely peaceful polls](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 88 See [ASI injured at clash in Chankheli rural municipality polling center in Humla](#), Nepal Monitor
- 89 See [CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist Center cadres clash at Kuvinde polling center in Sindhupalchok](#), Nepal Monitor
- 90 See [Police fires 3 round warning shots to control situation at a polling center in Karjanha of Siraha](#), Nepal Monitor
- 91 See [Cadre of CPN \(Majority\) led by Dharmendra Bastola arrested for breaking ballot box in Kaski](#), Nepal Monitor
- 92 See [Biplav Maoist cadres try to foil elections in Chitwan; voting obstructed at a centre](#), Nepal Monitor
- 93 See [Minor girl injured after IED goes at polling center in Sunsari](#), Nepal Monitor
- 94 See [बाजुरा र स्याङ्जा २ मा मतगणना गर्ने निर्वाचन आयोगको निर्णय](#), Desh Sanchar
- 95 See [स्याङ्जा २ मा बुध कब्जाको आरोप, एमाले र घण्टीसहितका दलले मागे पुनः मतदान](#), Nepal Press
- 96 See <http://shorturl.at/rDEM3>
- 97 See [नवलपरासी पुर्वको देवचुलीमा मतदान सुरु, सुरक्षा व्यवस्था कडा](#), Online Khabar
- 98 See Re-polling underway in Surkhet, my Republica
- 99 See <https://ekantipur.com/federal-provincial-election-2079/2022/11/22/166909899521565102.html>
- 100 See [Re-polling underway in 10 polling centres of Dolakha](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 101 See Ram Chandra Paudel is new President, The Kathmandu Post
- 102 See <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2023/03/17/ram-sahay-prasad-yadav-elected-vice-president>
- 103 See [Nepal Supreme Court removes deputy PM over citizenship](#), Aljazeera
- 104 See [उपनिर्वाचन : ३ क्षेत्रमा ६९ को उम्मेदवारी](#), eKantipur
- 105 See [उपनिर्वाचन : ३ क्षेत्रमा ६९ को उम्मेदवारी](#), eKantipur
- 106 See [Economist Swarnim Wagle quits Nepali Congress](#), The Kathmandu Post
- 107 See [Dr. Swarnim Wagle joins RSP, to contest by-poll in Tanahun-1 \(with video\)](#), Nepal Khabar
- 108 See [Ramesh Kharel to contest by-election from Bara-2](#), my Republica
- 109 See <https://shorturl.at/rvFY>
- 110 See [उम्मेदवार स्वर्णिम वाग्लेलाई २४ घण्टाभित्र स्पष्टीकरण पेस गर्न जिल्ला आचारसंहिता अनुगमन समिति तनहुँको निर्देशन](#), Election Commission Nepal
- 111 See [रवि लामिछानेलाई निर्वाचन आयोगले सोध्यो स्पष्टीकरण](#), Nepal Live
- 112 See [Rabi Lamichhane wins Chitwan 2 with 54,276 votes, 43,025 more than the closest rival](#), Online Khabar
- 113 See [निर्वाचन आयोगले आज चुनावको अन्तिम नतिजा सार्वजनिक गर्दै](#), Annapurna Post



**Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP)**

📍 Block 18, 2nd floor, Sahayog Marg  
Anamnagar-29, Kathmandu, Nepal

☎ 01-4102998, 01-5707143

✉ info@cocap.org.np

🌐 <https://www.cocap.org.np>