Electoral Violence and Contestation during Nepal’s Local Election

Factsheet – 1

Period: May 12 – May 14, 2017 | Published: May 15

On May 11 midnight began the silence period for the first phase of local election in Nepal. 4,556,525 registered voters were called upon to elect candidates for 13,556 positions in 283 local bodies of 34 districts in province 3, 4, and 6 on May 14, 2017. According to the Election Commission voter turnout stood at 71 percent of registered voters. Despite various incidents, some involving deadly violence, both the Election Commission of Nepal and National Human Rights Commission in the evening of May 14 concluded that the first phase of election had been relatively peaceful.

Through its Nepal Peace Monitoring Project, COCAP | NepalMonitor.org gathers data on violence and non-violent contestation in Nepal. Together with the Democracy Resource Center Nepal (DRC-N), COCAP has been releasing periodic analytical updates on incidents related to local elections since March 14. This fact-sheet on election-related incidents between May 12 and 14, 2017 is to complement these updates and is based on preliminary data recorded by NepalMonitor.org by noon 15.05.2017.

By noon May 15, a total of 81 incidents had been recorded, 66 of them violent. Three people were killed and approximately 43 injured in election-related violence. In Dolakha, a Nepali Congress supporter died in a police shooting following a clash between political parties alleging booth capture in Melung. In Naraharinath - 6 of Kalikot a person died shot by police after cadres from the Communist Party of Nepal attempted to loot ballot boxes on Sunday evening. In Bhenighat of Dhading district, a cadre from the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) was killed at night. The circumstances of the murder remain unclear.

Following the end of the campaign period on midnight May 11, 2017, the first day of the silence period remained relatively uneventful. Clashes were reported between CPN-UML and Nepali Congress supporters in Beni, Myagdi and in Tanahun. On Saturday, a number of incidents in connection to the bandha announced by the Communist Party Nepal with the aim to disrupt the local election were reported, and explosive devices and hoax bombs found in several places across the country. Cadres of Maoist and CPN-UML clashed in Jajarkot that day. On May 14, 2017, elections started at 7am nationwide and appeared to have gone on without major incidents in most parts of the country. However, disputes between major parties led to clashes in several polling centres in Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, Mug, Humla, Dailekh, Dolpa and Gorkha districts. In most cases, disputes involved supporters of the three major political parties Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, and Maoist Center. In Gorkha, the clash erupted after disputes between Nepali Congress and Naya Shakti. A particular flashpoint was
Tamakoshi and Melung rural municipalities in Dolakha, where situation had been tense from the morning in several polling centers.

Due to clashes, voting had to be temporarily halted in some polling centers of Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Bhaktapur, Dailekh, Gorkha, Humla, and Mugu Districts. In Dulikhel Municipality – 12, Kavre, elections had been postponed after the death of a candidate on May 11. In Namobouddha municipality of Kavre, residents protested the killing of a youth on May 13. They alleged he had been shot by Armed Police Force and refused to participate in the election. In Namobuddha, Kalika of Kalikot and Melung rural municipality of Dolakha voting has been suspended.
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Local Election - First Phase, May 12 – 14, 2017 *

Total Incidents: 81
Violent: 66
Non-violent: 15

Deaths: 3
Injuries: 43
Buildings Damaged: 3
Vehicle Damaged: 13

* based on preliminary data recorded by NepalMonitor.org until 15.05.2017 at noon.
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Forms of Incidents

**Violent**
- Clash: 21
- Arson: 5
- Vandalism: 6
- Explosive Device: 26
- Abduction: 2

**Non-violent**
- Demonstration: 2
- Other political protest: 6

- **3 Province**
  - 33 incidents
- **4 Province**
  - 19 incidents
- **6 Province**
  - 17 incidents

10 incidents occurred in the remaining 4 provinces
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Autors Involved in violent incidents

Major Political Parties
- 27

CPN (Chand)
- 15

Unclear (suspected CPN)
- 25

Security Forces
- At least 6

Which election related issues led to most incidents?

- Contestation regarding implementation and legitimacy of election
- Contestation related to Code of Conduct Violation
- Contestations between rival parties
- Intraparty competition
Incidents related to Communist Party of Nepal

In Kalikot, cadres of Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), led by Netra Bikram Chand, tried to actively disrupt elections by attempting to seize and destroy ballot boxes in Naraharinath rural municipality on May 14. Reportedly, eight police personnel were injured in the incident and one person died and three were injured as a result of police firing.

The previous day, on May 13, the CPN had announced a Nepal Bandh to disrupt the elections. The bandh was reported effective in several districts in Western Nepal. During the bandh, a number of socket bombs, IEDs, and suspicious objects were found throughout the country’s roadside, or near candidates’ homes and polling centers. Minor blasts occurred in Kaski, Nuwakot, Kalikot, Rupandehi and Jumla. Bombs were found, and later defused, in Dhangadi, Kaski, Chitwan, Myagdi, Gorkha, Tanahun, Dhading and Sindhupalchowk districts. In Bajura, Parbat and Kailali, vehicles were vandalized and in Mugu, cadres of CPN seized and destroyed election materials in Shobha Gaun of Rara Chhaya Nath Municipality. On the morning of election day, explosive devices were found and neutralized in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Kavre and Dailekh. A minor explosion was recorded in Nuwakot. These devices appear to have been aimed at scaring voters and no casualties were reported. A candidate in Chitwan and Makwanpur each were allegedly abducted by CPN cadres, although reports have not been confirmed yet.

Electoral Violence in Dolakha

In Dolakha, a district that had seen electoral violence during the 2014 CA election, the situation was tense in several polling stations since the morning and incidents were reported throughout the election day. An individual was killed and 20 were injured in a police firing to control the mob trying to disrupt the election process in Melung rural municipality. In Tamakoshi rural municipality, a clash between NC and CPN-UML caused six injuries. In the same rural municipality, police fired warning shots at a polling center after Maoist Center and NC cadres attempted to seize remaining ballot papers. The previous day in another ward of Tamakoshi, the husband of a UML candidate was temporarily abducted by the cadres of Nepal Congress(NC) during a clash. He was released the same day. Some voters were injured when an unidentified person opened fire in Baiteshwor rural municipality polling center.

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For an updated list of election related incidents in May, please click here.
Incidents During Local Election, First Phase
May 12-14, 2017

Legend
Forms
- Group Clash/Attack
- IED/Explosive Device
- Other violent incident

Number of Incidents
- 0
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 15

May 12: Clash between NC and CPN-UML in Tanahun
May 12: UML cadre killed in Dhading
May 14: One killed in Dolakha police firing during voting
May 14: Clash in polling center in Dolakha
May 14: Six injured as NC and UML clash in Jhule
May 14: Voters injured in a firing in Dolakha
May 14: Clash between NC and CPN UML cadres, UML cadre abducted in Dolakha
May 14: Voting suspended for three hours in Dhoramba, Ramechhap after NC, Maoist Center clash
May 14: Four injured in a clash between NC and UML cadres in Dhading

May 12: Two motorcycles torched after CPN-UML and NC Cadres clash in Myagdi

May 12: One injured in NC-UML clash in Kaise
May 13: One injured in a clash between CPN UML and Maoist Center in Jajarkot
May 14: Two injured in a clash between NC and CPN-UML cadres in Tripurasundari
May 14: Chand’s cadres try to disrupt voting in Kharpunath, Humla
May 14: One injured in police firing died in Kalikot
May 14: Clash in one of the voting booths in Mugu
May 14: Clash erupts in Narayani Municipality, one injured in Dailekh