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<http://www.rsf.org/nepal-provincial-reporter-stabbed-to-04-04-2012,42257.html>

Asia - Nepal

Mounting violence

Reporter killed amid continuing attacks on journalists

4 April 2012

Reporters Without Borders condemns reporter **Yadav Poudel's** brutal murder shortly after midnight yesterday in Birtamod, in the eastern district of Jhapa, and offers its condolences to his family and friends. He worked for *Rajdhani Daily* and [Avenues Television](#).

"Poudel's murder comes at a time of constant threats and growing violence for journalists," Reporters Without Borders said. "We urge the authorities not to neglect the possibility that he was killed in connection with his work and to do everything possible to bring both the perpetrators and the instigators to justice without delay."

"Acts of violence against the media have been becoming more frequent in recent weeks and have gone unpunished. Journalists must not be collateral victims of Nepal's political instability, which could deepen in the coming months. Government action is needed to reinforce protection for journalists and to end the climate of violence. Political stabilization requires freedom of the media and information."

The police found Poudel's body yesterday morning outside the Purbanchal Sekuwa Corner Hotel, near the town's bus station. According to the autopsy report, he sustained injuries to the head, his right hand was fractured, several ribs were broken and his liver was crushed.

Local media reports quoted neighbours as saying they heard men on a motorcycle shouting that the journalist had hidden in the hotel and that he had to be killed. The police said they thought he might have been thrown from the third floor of the hotel after receiving a beating.

[This video](#) shows Poudel's body at the site where it was found.

A recent article by Poudel about prostitution in hotels near Birtamod's bus station led to arrests in the Purbanchal Sekuwa Corner Hotel, then called the Fewa Hotel. The owner nonetheless continued operating as before after changing the hotel's name.

According to some sources, Poudel went to the hotel to have dinner with another hotel owner, Yuvaraj Giri, and to discuss the launch of a new newspaper, *Ujyalo Poorba*. The Purbanchal Sekuwa Corner Hotel owners, Somnath Dhakal and his wife Manju, are said to have joined them for the meal. Giri reportedly managed to flee when six people arrived on motorcycles at around 12:30 a.m. but Poudel failed to get away.

The police, who pledged to identify everyone involved in Poudel's murder, have reportedly already arrested 22 suspects including the couple that owns the hotel.

During an emergency meeting of the [Federation of Nepali Journalists \(FNJ\)](#) in Kathmandu, the federation's president, **Shiva Gaule**, condemned the murder, which he said had apparently been planned, and called on the police to take immediate steps to find those responsible.

Aged 40, Poudel had worked as a journalist for the past five years. He was also a proofreader for the *Mechi Times*, a local newspaper, and had been secretary of the *Jhapa Press Union*. He is survived by his mother, his wife and a 14-year-old son. His ashes were scattered in the Kankai river yesterday in the presence of media and human rights representatives.

The past few weeks have seen an increase in threats and attacks on journalists.

In one of the latest cases, **Umesh Kumar Mehta**, an *FNJ* member working for *Popular FM* in Inaruwa, in the eastern district of Sunsari, received a threatening call on 2 April because he reported irregularities in a school management committee election in the nearby village of Madhyaharsahi. The caller, Shyam Lal Mehta, the future head of the committee, threatened to kill him.

Sashi Bichitra, the publisher of *New Highway*, a weekly based in the east-central district of Parsa, received telephone death threats on 22 March. He said he thought they might be linked to his coverage of smuggling in the nearby district of Sarlahi.

Three journalists – **Shravan Deuba** of [Nayapatrika Daily](#), **Deepak Oli** of [Sourya Daily](#) and **Bhim Chaudhari** of *Tarai Television* – were interviewing and taking photos in a deforested area in the western district of Kailali on 12 March when they were abducted and held for two hours by illegal loggers who threatened to kill them if they published any reports about illegal logging.

Death threats have also been made against writer and journalist **Kanak Mani Dixit**, UNICEF staff member Kul Chandra Gautam and human rights activist Subodh Raj Pyakurel as a result of their criticism of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also known as Prachanda, the head of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN-Maoist). Dixit was declared an “enemy of the people” in an article in the 30 January issue of *Lalrakshak* (Red Guards), a monthly published by UCPN-Maoist.

Nepal is ranked 106th out of 179 countries in the [2011-2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
