

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/nepal-elections-lead-to-violence-against-21-11-2013,45496.html>

Asia - Nepal

Tension

## Elections lead to violence against journalists, media

21 November 2013

The constituent assembly elections held on 19 November and the general strike call issued on 12 November have created a climate of social tension that has directly affected the news media. Caught between election supporters and opponents, the media have been the victims of violence.

"The incidents involving the media testify to how little freedom of information the authorities have allowed, especially during the elections," Reporters Without Borders said. "Many opposition newspaper have expressed fear about covering events in such an environment.

"This fear is shared by the newspaper distributors, who have been the target of intimidation. We call on both the government and the opposition to try to defuse the tension in order to allow the media to operate without fear for their safety."

Reporters Without Borders added: "The deployment of large numbers of police must not be used as a pretext for targeting newspapers that want to cover the election boycott. On the contrary, the police must guarantee the safety of news providers."

*Radio Dolpa* journalist **Subarna Kumar Dangi** was badly injured in an attack by six members of the Young Communist League (YCL) as he was returning to his home in Dolpa on 8 November. He told the *RSS* agency that one of his assailants had said: "He's the one who wrote the articles about us. Let's break his hand."

The YCL is youth wing of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), which is one of Nepal's leading parties and which has participated in recent coalition governments.

**Gopal Dewwan**, the editor of the weekly *Bishwastasutra* and a correspondent for the daily *Blast Times*, was the target of a shooting attack by unidentified individuals while at his office in Chatarline on 10 November but managed to avoid being hit. The police said they were trying to identify the attackers and their motive.

**Ramesh Rawal**, the editor of the monthly *Jana Swayamsevak*, was arrested by plainclothes police on 14 November in Singha Durbar, and was held for four hours in a police station. At the same time, **Dipendra Rokaya**, a journalist with pro-Maoist *Radio Mirmire*, was the target of an abortive arrest attempt at his radio station.

Most of these acts of violence were attempts to gag news providers. This was particularly clear in two incidents. In one, *RSS* reporter **Raju Bishwokama** was manhandled by border police on 7 November when he photographed them paying money for illegally imported goods. His camera was seized and the photos were deleted.

In another incident, *Nagarik Daily* reporter **Dhruba Dangal's** camera was seized on 20 October after he took photos of police responsible for election security and his photos were deleted.

The newspapers were also targeted during the strike, which was called by 33 parties led by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M), a splinter group from the UCPN-M.

On the first day of the strike, 12 November, newspaper distribution was badly affected throughout the country, especially after stones were thrown at the truck carrying the *Nagarik* and *Republica* daily newspaper near Gwarko, south of Kathmandu.

The distributors of the *Mahima*, *Nya Bidroh* and *Prakashpunja* weeklies were also the targets of intimidation.

Nepal is ranked 118th out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

---

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 34.5 kb)
-