

PRESS FREEDOM AND JOURNALISTS' SAFETY

**Status of Physical and Digital Safety of Media Persons and Challenges to Press Freedom in
Nepal**

Conference Paper

For Freedom Forum

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation Full Form

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
ETA	Electronic Transactions Act
ECN	Election Commission Nepal
FF	Freedom Forum
FNJ	Federation of Nepali Journalists
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
KMG	Kantipur Media Group
MAN	Media Action Nepal
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NPR	Nepalese Rupees
PCN	Press Council Nepal
RSP	Rastriya Swatantra Party
RSF	Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UML	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist)
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy Institute

Press Freedom and Journalists' Safety

By Namrata Sharma

1. Press Freedom Status in Nepal

As the world advances both technologically and politically, press freedom is facing increasing attacks not only in physical spaces but also, more dangerously, in the digital sphere. In today's world, protecting press freedom has become essential for safeguarding human rights, transparency, and democracy.

Global press freedom has reportedly declined to its lowest level in 25 years, with journalists in many countries working under difficult or extremely dangerous conditions. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has been publishing the World Press Freedom Index since 2002. This year, RSF once again ranked 180 countries based on media pluralism, independence, journalists' safety, and the legal, economic, and socio-cultural environment in which the media operates. Norway topped the index with a score of 92.72, while Eritrea ranked last. Even some of the world's oldest and largest democracies showed alarming declines. The United States fell to 64th place, while India dropped to 157th amid growing legal pressure and political hostility toward journalists. According to the RSF 2026 report, the global average score declined to 54.3 points, the lowest since the index began in 2002, with more than half of the countries now classified under difficult or very serious conditions for press freedom. European countries continue to dominate the top positions in global press freedom rankings, with Norway remaining at the forefront.

Against this global backdrop, Nepal ranks 87th out of 180 countries and currently enjoys the highest press freedom ranking in South Asia. During regional conferences attended by South Asian human rights activists and media professionals, Nepal is often acknowledged, alongside Sri Lanka, as one of the few countries in the region where issues related to democracy and human rights can still be openly debated.

There have been several instances where journalists such as Ravish Kumar and Siddharth Varadarajan from India have openly discussed the erosion of democracy and increasing threats to press freedom in South Asia while visiting Nepal—topics they often find difficult to discuss freely in their own country.

RSF ranks India at 157th, Pakistan at 153rd, Bangladesh at 152nd, Bhutan at 150th, and Sri Lanka at 134th. Afghanistan has fallen to 175th place due to severe restrictions imposed by the Taliban regime on journalists and media institutions. Therefore, the perception among many activists that Nepal remains a relatively safer space for democratic dialogue and free expression is true to some extent. However, it is equally important to reflect on whether Nepal should merely celebrate its comparatively better ranking or critically examine the subtle and emerging threats that may gradually weaken press freedom and democratic institutions from within.

There are several local organisations in Nepal that report on the status of press freedom in the country. These include Freedom Forum (FF), Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), Press

Council Nepal (PCN), and Media Action Nepal (MAN). Most of these organisations produce annual reports that provide important perspectives on the status of press freedom in the country.

1.1 Status of Press Freedom in Nepal During 2025

Looking at the data on the status of press freedom in Nepal in 2025, Freedom Forum reported that a total of 114 incidents of press freedom violations were documented between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025. Among these incidents, 35 violations were recorded during the Gen Z protests of September 8–9 alone. These violations directly affected 139 media persons, of whom 13% were female and 87% were male.

The report mentions that the number of press freedom violations during this period was the highest recorded in the past five years since 2020 and more than double the number documented in the previous year, 2024. The number of affected journalists and media houses also remained the highest. A total of 22 media houses faced various forms of attack in 2025. During the Gen Z movement, 16 media houses became victims of arson and vandalism in different parts of the country. Around 12 television channels had their broadcasts disrupted, while 38 media persons' vehicles and properties were destroyed. Affected media organisations recorded huge losses of infrastructure, data, and archives. Similar data can also be obtained from the websites and reports of the organisations mentioned above.

1.2 Status of Press Freedom in Nepal 2026

As mentioned above, in the global data released by RSF on May 3, 2026, Nepal ranked 87th among 180 countries. However, when we review the findings released by organisations working on press freedom within Nepal, a more alarming situation emerges.

*The report *Eroding Press Freedom 2026* published by Freedom Forum mentions that Sudurpaschim Province's Beldadi Municipality Vice-Chairperson Shanti Nath filed a complaint against journalist Basudev Dhimi over reports published on Paschimkhabar.com. Following this, Nepal Police issued an arrest warrant against the journalist under cybercrime charges on April 23, 2026.*

Similarly, the report notes that the Special Court staff filed a contempt of court case against Drishtinews.com, its Chairperson Shambhu Lal Shrestha, and Executive Editor MP Subba on June 23, 2025. The portal had published reports on alleged corruption within court processes leading to acquittals in cases filed by the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority.

The same report documented that on February 26, Ratopati.com's Koshi Province Bureau Chief Arjun Acharya was attacked in Jhapa-5 while covering a door-to-door campaign of CPN-UML Chairperson KP Sharma Oli. His mobile phone was confiscated, and he sustained injuries to his head, eyes, and face.

Freedom Forum further documented that on February 16, the Election Commission wrote to the Press Council Nepal seeking action against Setopati.com for publishing a public opinion poll on election outcomes. The Press Council sought clarification alleging a violation of the code of

conduct. Setopati.com subsequently filed a writ petition at the Supreme Court, arguing that the move violated constitutional guarantees of press freedom. On March 9, the Election Commission imposed a fine of NPR 100,000 on the media outlet.

Nepal's position at 87th in the RSF Index is indeed something the country can take pride in because the same indicators are applied uniformly to all 180 countries studied. This also corresponds with the perception among many in South Asia that Nepal remains comparatively safer for journalists. However, the documented cases mentioned above show that there are still numerous examples where journalists and media institutions have faced intimidation, violence, legal harassment, and attacks simply for carrying out their professional duties.

Apart from the cases mentioned above, Nepal has witnessed a series of groundbreaking investigative reports exposing the involvement of high-ranking political leaders and state actors in corruption ranging from land grabbing to human trafficking through forged Bhutanese refugee cases. These investigations have often triggered backlash against journalists and media houses through physical attacks, online harassment, and political intimidation.

Ironically, these same corruption stories uncovered by Nepali journalists became one of the driving forces behind the Gen Z movement of September 2025, which eventually toppled the government and led to the formation of a youth-led administration with an overwhelming majority.

Data of the status of freedom of Press in Nepal based on a few leading organisations working on this issue in Nepal and globally:

- A. According to the report *Press Freedom and Journalists' Safety 2083* by the **Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ)**, between May 4, 2025, and April 30, 2026, there were 131 cases of attacks on press freedom in Nepal. Among these incidents, 51 cases involved misbehavior and threats against journalists, 30 involved attacks on journalists and media equipment, 18 related to professional insecurity, and 26 involved obstruction and hindrance to journalistic work. The report also documented three cases of policy-related hurdles, two cases of journalists being arrested, and one case involving the mysterious death of a journalist. This report notes a significant rise in attacks compared to the previous year, during which 76 cases were recorded. During the September 8, 2025 GenZ Revolution alone, there were 26 incidents of press freedom violations, directly affecting more than 100 journalists and media houses. On the second day of the protests, several media organisations were attacked, looted, and subjected to arson. According to the FNJ report, these attacks caused an estimated institutional loss of 600 million rupees, while journalists and media entrepreneurs suffered an additional estimated private property loss of 180 million rupees. Five journalists were injured by bullet shots during the unrest. The report further states that several public service and private media outlets, including Radio Nepal, Nepal Television, Kantipur Publications, Annapurna Post, Thaha Khabar, Radio Jagaran Butwal, Nepalvani FM, Ilam Express, various media houses in Chitwan, and the FNJ Saptari Branch were victims of vandalism and arson.
- B. According to a press release issued by the **Press Council Nepal** on 22 Baishakh 2083, covering the period from 1 Baishakh 2082 to the end of Chaitra 2082, a total of 120 cases

related to press freedom violations were recorded. These included 35 cases of threats against journalists, 24 cases of physical attacks, 16 cases of misbehaviour, 9 cases involving capture and obstruction, 6 cases of arrests, 15 cases related to professional insecurity, 3 cases of policy-related obstruction, and 1 case involving the mysterious death of a journalist. Among the provinces, Bagmati Province recorded the highest number of cases with 57 incidents, while Karnali Province recorded the lowest with only 3 cases. Madhesh Province reported 27 cases, followed by Koshi Province with 10, Sudurpashchim Province with 9, Lumbini Province with 8, and Gandaki Province with 6 cases. The Press Council also recorded 167 cases of gender-based violence affecting journalists during the same period. Of those affected, 157 were men and 10 were women. In addition, the Council documented 10 cases involving the abuse of press freedom.

- C. According to the report ***Press Freedom in Peril: Rising Violence Against Media in Nepal 2026***, released by Media Action Nepal (MAN), Nepal witnessed a worrying rise in attacks against independent journalism and freedom of expression between May 4, 2025 and May 2, 2026. The report documented 71 incidents of press freedom violations. Most incidents occurred in Kathmandu Valley and in the districts of Saptari, Dhanusha, and Rautahat in Madhesh Province, identified as high-risk areas for media professionals. The report highlighted coordinated attacks on media outlets during September 2025 and linked violence against journalists in March 2026 to political unrest. Documented cases included physical assaults, arson attacks, state-led criminalisation, judicial overreach, and institutional interference. Journalists were reportedly attacked with knives, belts, and helmets, while major media houses including KMG, Nagarik, NTV, and Radio Nepal suffered damages worth billions of rupees due to coordinated arson attacks. The report also notes the misuse of the Electronic Transactions Act (ETA), particularly Section 47, to arrest and prosecute journalists over reporting and social media posts. Cases involving court-issued interim orders for news takedowns and deletion of archived content by the Press Council Nepal have also raised serious concerns regarding institutional independence and press autonomy. Gender-based violence and harassment against female journalists were also documented. Additionally, many journalists interviewed by MAN stated that they were not paid on time and were sometimes dismissed without proper notice. While government interference remains a major concern, media institutions themselves must also address workplace safety, fair wages, and professional security for journalists. The report concludes that the period between May 2025 and May 2026 marked a decline in Nepal's press freedom. Although no journalists were killed during the reporting period, there were two arrests, one equipment seizure, eight incidents of information blockage, 50 threats, six cases of harassment, and ten instances of misuse of laws affecting 78 journalists and 10 media outlets.
- D. **Freedom Forum's *Eroding Press Freedom 2026*** similarly documented 97 incidents of press freedom violations between May 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026. These incidents directly affected 145 media professionals, including 123 male and 22 female journalists, along with 20 media houses.
- E. According to several Press Freedom reports published by the **Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)** which works globally to protect journalists and freedom of press, there are increasing threats to press freedom in Nepal which includes attacks both in the legal and physical fronts. CPJ has expressed alarm over arrests of media personalities in Nepal and has also urged the Nepal Government to withdraw the social media bill that is

expected to undermine press freedom in the country. CPJ has also recorded a “troubling erosion” of press freedom with a total of 32 cases of press freedom and freedom of expression violations impacting 40 individuals and media houses. CPJ stresses that this data reveals an alarming increase in severity and diversity of threats, including killings, arrests, equipment seizures, information blockages and threats.

- F. CIVICUS, a global civil society alliance, has issued several statements through its CIVICUS Monitor reports expressing concern over the suppression of fundamental freedoms and dissent by the government in recent years. According to the reports, these concerns include arrests and the use of excessive force during protests, the targeting of journalists, censorship of media outlets, reprisals against activists, and increasing digital restrictions. CIVICUS states that Nepal’s commitments to the United Nations Human Rights Council have been inconsistent with the realities on the ground. The report further notes that Nepal’s civic space has been rated as “obstructed” by the CIVICUS Monitor, stating that the country has failed to fully uphold its international human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Although Nepal’s Constitution guarantees freedom of peaceful assembly, CIVICUS reports that peaceful protests in recent years have frequently been met with arbitrary arrests and excessive force, including the use of firearms. The report also highlights incidents of unlawful killings for which no one has been held accountable. In addition, the CIVICUS Monitor has documented cases in which authorities allegedly targeted activists, critics, and human rights defenders for their advocacy and activism. CIVICUS has also expressed alarm over continuing threats and physical attacks against journalists, including assaults, harassment, blocking of articles, and increasing state censorship. The organization specifically points to the Electronic Transactions Act 2008, particularly Section 47, arguing that its vague provisions have been misused to restrict freedom of expression. CIVICUS has called on the Government of Nepal to ensure that journalists are able to work freely without fear of retaliation for expressing critical views of the government, and to hold accountable those responsible for harassment or attacks against media workers. The organization has also urged the authorities to refrain from blocking social media platforms and to develop an action plan ensuring that all laws affecting internet and digital rights comply with Nepal’s commitments under the ICCPR to protect freedom of expression and access to information.
- G. The 23rd *Annual South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-2025 Frontline Democracy: Media and political Churn* by **International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) South Asia** states that during this period the media industry and working journalists in Nepal “continue to grapple with significant challenges.” The political uncertainty and changing governments in Nepal seem to have impacted freedom of press as per the report. The report mentions that despite some wins on journalists’ rights the economic and employment conditions for media workers remain dire in the country. Although working journalists’ rights have been formulated it is not implemented. The report mentions that during the period it covered there were tightening control over the media in Nepal by the then PM Oli led coalition government. The Social Media Operation, use and Regulation Bill registered in the Upper House of Parliament on January 26, 2025 and the Media Council Bill passed by the Upper House on February 10, 2025 are likely to have significant impact on the media the report states. The report expresses concerns on rising

restrictions on social media in the country. It has recorded that over the period journalists were killed, threatened, beaten and abused while performing their duties.

1.3 SDG Target 16.10.1

SDG Target 16.10.1 seeks to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. It is supposed to measure the number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months. However, the government has so far not set any indicators to monitor this. Although committed to delivering the SDGs, Nepal government has so far not addressed its commitments to SDG Target 16.10.1. So far neither national indicator nor any baseline data can be found under this target. This needs to be addressed immediately by the current government. Every four years, UNESCO publishes *The World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development* report examining media freedom, pluralism, independence, journalists' safety, and 12 media development trends. The 2025 report warns that these values are under unprecedented pressure, threatening the world's ability to meet SDG Target 16.10 by 2030. Nepal government needs to heed this warning.

Several international bodies including Amnesty International, CIVICUS, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and UNESCO closely monitor impunity against journalists and the status of press freedom globally. Most of these organisations have expressed growing concern regarding the deterioration of press freedom worldwide, including in countries such as Nepal.

The UNESCO report states that press freedom has experienced its steepest decline since 2012. V-Dem's Global Freedom of Expression Index has dropped by 10% over the past decade, indicating the erosion of democratic freedoms globally. The report further highlights weakened democratic institutions, declining public trust, increasing polarization, rising hostility toward environmental journalists and researchers, and the growing dominance of major technology companies.

These companies often operate with shifting policies and profit-driven algorithms that create fertile ground for hate speech and disinformation. Such developments directly affect vulnerable groups, including children and teenagers, while simultaneously weakening reliable information ecosystems.

Over the past two years, the rise of artificial intelligence has dramatically transformed the media landscape. UNESCO's report details escalating threats to journalists' safety, with women journalists disproportionately targeted. It also highlights the increasing weaponisation of legislation against independent journalism and the alarming rise in journalists being forced into exile.

1.4 National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Nepal witnessed several crimes against journalists during the conflict era of the mid-2000s. Many of these cases still await justice. In recent years, Nepal has also witnessed the killings of journalists such as Suresh Rajak and Suresh Bhul, along with brutal attacks against journalists during the Gen Z protests. These cases too remain unresolved.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has mainstreamed freedom of expression, press freedom, and journalists' safety into its regular human rights monitoring mechanisms. This was formalized through its 2019 Directive, which established central-level and provincial-level monitoring structures and mechanisms for safety of journalists and promotion of freedom of expression.

The NHRC conducts monitoring visits to media organisations to assess violations. However, the overall effectiveness of the institution in addressing impunity against crimes targeting journalists requires serious review. Although safety mechanisms exist, their effectiveness remains questionable. Justice has not adequately prevailed either for victims from the conflict era or for journalists facing attacks in the current democratic context.

2. Impact of the Gen Z Movement

September 12, 2025, the fifth day of the Gen Z protests, will be remembered as a defining moment in Nepal's political history — a day when youth-led mobilisation toppled a government, dissolved parliament, and contributed to the rise of a new political leadership built upon anti-corruption narratives.

This unprecedented movement inspired many young people globally by demonstrating how youth mobilisation can challenge entrenched systems of corruption and political stagnation. What is often overlooked, however, is the role of investigative journalism in laying the foundation for this movement. Many of the corruption cases exposed by Nepali journalists became the central narratives that fuelled the Gen Z uprising.

Frustrated by unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, forced migration, and worsening inequality, Nepal's younger generation increasingly questioned the lifestyles and privileges of political leaders while ordinary citizens struggled economically. What began as a digital movement on social media eventually transformed into a nationwide street movement that toppled a corruption-ridden regime.

Ironically, despite journalism playing a central role in exposing corruption, journalists and media houses themselves became targets during the protests. Photographers and reporters covering the demonstrations were attacked and intimidated. Mainstream media institutions suffered coordinated arson attacks causing massive losses of infrastructure and irreplaceable archives. To date, there has been little acknowledgement, accountability, or compensation for these damages.

The dissolution of the House of Representatives on September 12, 2025 eventually led to elections and the formation of a new youth-led government under the Rastriya Swatantra Party

(RSP) with the much-desired Balendra Shah as the country's Prime Minister, which now governs with a near two-thirds majority amid high public expectations.

This government came to power with promises to combat corruption, ensure accountability, and establish good governance. In order to fulfil these commitments, protecting press freedom and ensuring journalists' safety must become a national priority.

The new government and parliament have also committed to reviewing the Constitution of Nepal and making necessary amendments. Consultations were held with journalists and press freedom advocates during this process. One major recommendation was to uphold the constitutional commitment to "full press freedom" by revisiting Articles 17(2) and 19 in line with international obligations including the ICCPR.

Section 47 of the Electronic Transactions Act has repeatedly been used against journalists and citizens for exercising freedom of expression online. There are also several documented cases of gender-based violence targeting women journalists and Dalit women journalists both physically and virtually. Addressing these issues remains an urgent responsibility of the new government.

One positive step taken this year was the recognition of senior journalists who have worked independently and professionally for decades without partisan affiliations. On Nepal's Press Day Baishakh 24th 2083, the government honoured five such journalists, including two women and one Madhesi Dalit journalist, breaking the long-standing trend of politically motivated award distribution.

3. Gender-Based Challenges and Risks

According to a report jointly prepared by Media Action Nepal and Article 19, 29 female journalists left the profession between 2023 and 2024 due to workplace harassment and insecurity.

The report clearly demonstrates that gender discrimination within Nepali newsrooms, unequal pay, and the lack of women in leadership positions remain major realities in Nepal's media sector. It also documents cases of trolling, doxxing, sexual harassment, and threats of sexual violence both online and offline. These experiences often lead women journalists toward self-censorship.

Such vulnerabilities are even more severe among women journalists from Dalit and marginalized communities. Reports published by various organisations working on press freedom consistently show that gender-based violence, caste-based discrimination, and class-based exclusion remain deeply rooted within Nepal's media environment.

Certain data are cited in section 1 above.

4. Culture of Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists

Impunity for crimes against journalists remains a serious challenge in Nepal. During the years of armed conflict, numerous journalists were killed, disappeared, threatened, or attacked. Many of these cases remain unresolved even today.

Over the last two years, Nepal has again witnessed killings of journalists, attacks on media professionals, arson against media houses, and increasing misuse of legal provisions to intimidate journalists and suppress reporting. Provincial authorities, government institutions, and even regulatory bodies have at times been accused of threatening or targeting journalists for exposing corruption or abuse of power.

The absence of accountability not only weakens press freedom but also undermines democratic institutions and public trust. Without credible investigations, legal reforms, and institutional accountability, the cycle of violence and intimidation against journalists is likely to continue. Data cited in section 1 above.

5. Way Forward

While Nepal being ranked 87th by RSF it is now important for all stakeholders in Nepal to review the local data generated within Nepal on the status of freedom of press in the country. The following recommendations can be reviewed as the way forward:

5.1 State Agencies and the Government of Nepal

- Ensure full implementation of constitutional guarantees related to freedom of expression and press freedom in line with international human rights standards, including the ICCPR.
- Nepal government has so far not addressed its commitments to SDG Target 16.10.1. So far neither national indicator nor any baseline data can be found under this target therefore immediate attention needs to be given to this fact and work needs to be done.
- Review and amend laws frequently misused against journalists, particularly Section 47 of the Electronic Transactions Act (ETA).
- Develop strong legal safeguards against digital surveillance, arbitrary arrests, online censorship, and misuse of cybercrime legislation.
- Establish an independent national mechanism for the protection of journalists and rapid response during attacks or emergencies.
- Conduct impartial investigations into attacks, killings, arson, threats, and harassment against journalists and ensure accountability regardless of political affiliation.
- Strengthen the independence and effectiveness of institutions such as the Press Council Nepal and the National Human Rights Commission.
- Introduce special protection measures for women journalists and journalists from marginalized communities who face gender-based, caste-based, and digital violence.
- Ensure that journalists covering protests, elections, corruption, and conflict-sensitive issues are protected by law enforcement agencies rather than targeted.

5.2 Media Rights Organisations and Civil Society

- Continue systematic monitoring and documentation of press freedom violations across all provinces.
- Expand legal aid, psychosocial support, and digital safety assistance for journalists facing threats and harassment.
- Strengthen advocacy campaigns against impunity and promote public awareness regarding the role of independent journalism in democracy.
- Build stronger regional and international solidarity networks to respond rapidly when journalists are attacked.
- Conduct training on digital literacy, cyber security, AI-related threats, fact-checking, and ethical journalism practices.

5.3 Media Houses and Journalists

- Improve workplace safety, fair wages, insurance, and contractual security for journalists and media workers.
- Establish strong internal policies against workplace harassment, gender discrimination, and abuse of power within media institutions.
- Invest in digital security systems, secure communication tools, and protection of newsroom data and archives.
- Promote ethical and fact-based journalism to strengthen public trust in the media.
- Encourage diversity in newsrooms and increase representation of women, Dalits, Madhesis, Indigenous communities, and marginalized groups in editorial and leadership positions.
- Strengthen investigative journalism and collaborative reporting while ensuring safety protocols for reporters working in high-risk situations.

5.4 International Organisations and Development Partners

- Increase support for press freedom initiatives, journalist protection programmes, and independent media institutions in Nepal.
- Support digital safety training, AI literacy, and cybersecurity preparedness for journalists.
- Continue international monitoring of attacks against journalists and raise diplomatic pressure when violations occur.
- Provide emergency assistance, legal support, and temporary relocation opportunities for journalists facing serious threats.
- Encourage cross-border collaboration and regional dialogue on freedom of expression and digital rights in South Asia.

5.5 Technology Companies and Digital Platforms

- Improve transparency and accountability regarding content moderation policies affecting journalists and media organisations.
- Strengthen mechanisms to combat online harassment, AI-generated disinformation, deepfakes, and coordinated attacks against journalists.

- Protect journalists' digital privacy and prevent misuse of surveillance technologies.
- Collaborate with media organisations and civil society to promote credible information ecosystems and media literacy.

6. Conclusion

Nepal today stands at an important crossroads. While it continues to rank comparatively higher than many South Asian countries in global press freedom indexes, the growing pattern of attacks, legal intimidation, digital surveillance, online harassment, and institutional interference demonstrates that press freedom remains fragile.

The future of democracy in Nepal will depend not only on electoral change or political reform, but also on whether journalists can work freely, safely, and independently without fear of violence, censorship, or retaliation. Protecting journalists is therefore not only about protecting a profession; it is about protecting the public's right to information, democratic accountability, and the future of democratic society itself.