



Strengthening Freedom of Expression in Nepal

Trainers from civil society organizations and public bodies in Nepal participated in a training of trainers workshop on May third week on freedom of expression hosted by ARTICLE 19, Freedom Forum and the Federation of Nepalese Journalists in Kathmandu. The third and final meeting of the Agenda for Change, in which a panel of high level representatives of different sectors of society gathered to formulate policy recommendations for strengthening freedom of expression in the country, was also held last week.



Participants after the completion of training of trainers on freedom of expression held in Kathmandu from May 21-22.

"Protection of freedom of expression should become a priority for the new Constituent Assembly in Nepal. We are convinced that the training workshops and the recommendations furnished by the media professionals will help make this possible," said Toby Mendel, Senior Director of Law, ARTICLE 19.

The training workshop, held on 21-22 May, brought together 22 experienced trainers from civil society organizations, the National Human Rights Commission, the police and the judicial academy. The training covered a range of issues regarding international guarantees of freedom of expression, such as the legitimate scope of restrictions on freedom of expression, defamation standards, the right to information, and media regulation. The trainers have made a commitment to integrate freedom of expression into training agendas for public officers and journalists.

The third stakeholders' meeting of the Agenda for Change process took place on 24-26 May in Nagarkot, Nepal. Twenty participants from journalists' organizations, civil society groups, the legal community and the legislature

discussed the situation of freedom of expression in Nepal and in particular Internet regulation, film censorship, advertisements in the media, taxation of the media, and media concentration. The participants finalized their recommendations for the Agenda for Change, a detailed policy document setting out how freedom of expression should be protected in Nepal.

The panel of experts drawing up the agenda for change includes Radheshyam Adhikari, Taranath Dahal, Rajendra Dahal, Bishnu Nishturi, Bishnu Sharma, Gokul Pokharel, Dhruva Hari Adhikari, Mahendra Bishta, Suresh Acharya, Babita Basnet, Santosh Sigdel, Tanka Raj Aryal, Laxman Panta, Padam Singh Karki, Kanak Mani Dixit and other.

ARTICLE 19 Asia and Middle East Director Jasmine and Legal Officer Boyko Boev were also there during the meeting. The recommendations furnished by the third meeting included, among others, the following key proposals:

- The government should adopt a national strategy to promote greater access to the Internet
- Films should not be subject to prior censorship and the Censor Board should be abolished
- Advertising in the media should be regulated by an independent body
- Measures should be put in place to ensure transparency of media ownership.

"A consensus has been forged among the panel members to move ahead the national agendas for media reforms as a long term strategy so as to strengthen freedom of expression in Nepal. The meeting has discussed the strategy and activities for further effective advocacy and implementations", said Freedom Forum Chairperson Tara Nath Dhal.

The comprehensive report of the agenda for change of freedom of expression in Nepal is being developed and its international launching ceremony would take place in Kathmandu on the distinguished participation of national and international personalities.



The third meeting of Agenda for Change process for freedom of expression held in Nagarkot from 24-26, May.

Inside

◆ Message from the Chairperson	2
◆ Where Nepal's Press Freedom is Heading?	2
◆ Dhangadhi Incident: A Blatant Violation of Press Freedom	3
◆ Prime Minister for Press Freedom	5
◆ Nepal into Federal Democratic Republic	7
◆ International Watch	8



Message from the Chairperson

The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly (CA) has declared Nepal a federal democratic republic putting to an end the 240-year old Shah dynasty on the back-up of people's power. It is the ever-remembering landslide victory of seven-decade long civil movement accompanied by entire Nepali people. The crucial moment has posed strenuous challenges and opportunities before Nepali people to ensure a prosperous and true democratic country resting sovereignty on people in a true sense. People's long-cherished dream and aspiration for establishing democracy followed by peace and development will come true if this opportunity is cashed in on. Otherwise, it will push our national integrity in stake resulting in the emergence of draconian authoritarian rule in the country. At this critical juncture, it is imperative to exert pressure continuously on the political leadership and parties for mutual understanding and high level commitment towards safeguarding the existence of nation by adhering to the universally-adopted democratic system and culture. Therefore, the situation requires the increased awareness and sense of common responsibility among citizens to curb possible intimidation to our national integrity and sovereignty.

Freedom Forum is an organization representing civil society, proactively dedicated for the success of peace process and democratic movement in Nepal. We are firmly committed for the promotion and protection of various organs and institutions of democracy. To remain unwaveringly active and consistent for the assurance of civil rights is our prime commitment during constitution building process. In this regard, we are committed to provide constructive support and cooperation to Constituent Assembly (CA) towards ensuring an open political environment which guarantees the right to freedom of expression and all civil liberties. Likewise, an intensive and wide civil interaction in society is another area of work to be reckoned with on the way to building federal structure and developing state mechanism.

People's involvement in political process costs high value and is always important. The Unitarian tendency of political parties could be dominantly reflected while drafting components of the constitution if civil society turns its deaf ear to this crucial process thinking that it is the sole responsibility of the elected CA members. Consequently, people might loose their ownership and stake in the constitution. We feel it is our duty to play facilitating and mediating role between people's level and policy makers to ease the process for making the worthy constitution. And we are ready to move ahead with constructive programme in this area.

There is still a long journey to in to make constitution within two years as stipulated. Let us go ahead to contribute from own place and position to carry out the sets of works to have our mission accomplished.

Now, we are working out to set national common agendas in the area of freedom of expression, right to information and media freedom. We are confident that this initiative would significantly help manage the rights of these areas in connection with making constitution. We will be working in close proximity with Constituent Assembly.

We wish all Nepalese people and political parties to become capable to translate the word and spirit of the theme of "federal democratic republic" into the prosperity of Nepal and Nepali. The grand opportunity will not come again. Let us share compliments and best wishes to each other for the grand success to build a democratic and prosperous Nepal.

Tara Nath Dahal
Chairperson

Where Nepal's Press Freedom is Heading?

Freedom Forum is alarmed at the government's decision of conferring 'National Journalism Award-2064' to a person who was the central committee member of CPN (Maoist) and Editor of its mouthpiece Janadesh weekly. The decision is made utterly against the spirit of the rationality of the institution of this award and is not justifiable in consistent with the promotion and protection of free, fair and professional journalism.

The Nepal government has recently decided to confer 'National Journalism Award-2065' on Krishna Sen, CPN (Maoist) central committee member and Editor of its mouthpiece Janadesh, posthumously. Krishna Sen was killed from state side before six years in 2003. However, the Forum paid tribute to the late Sen and condemned the way he was treated and killed by the state.

Sen is to be given away this award worth Rs. 200 thousand according to the ministry level decision of Ministry for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara, who represents CPN (Maoist) in the coalition government.

The government instituted the national award this year to inspire journalist contributing for the promotion and development of free, fair, responsible and professional journalism in the country. It is quite disgusting and disagreeable decision that does not impart good message among journalists and people working in the media.

Giving away the national award to a person active in party politics has shown the bleak future of Nepal Press Freedom. It is not given on the ground that the award is meant for; rather it has promoted indecent journalism and is an amazing decision taken in the guise of promoting journalism.

In this context, Freedom Forum has expressed its dissatisfaction and concluded that the press freedom of Nepal will be witnessing a hard time in the days ahead and, considering this situation, we humbly share with and make conscious to our colleagues and like-minded organizations about the possible intimidation against professional and physical safety of journalists and promotion of journalism in future.

Dhangadhi Incident: A Blatant Violation of Press Freedom

The Dhangadi incident has once again made us aware that a hard time is still there for journalists to pass through even after the establishment of democracy and republic in the country. Carrying out own duty and responsibility for a journalist in an unobstructed manner has not become easier and comfortable as was expected following the signing of Comprehensive Peace Accord. The consequence will not obviously be positive when journalists are beaten, threatened, obstructed to flow information and displaced for bringing out truth and discharging true job. With the country entering into a republic formally ending monarchy in Nepal, journalists have to come across a precarious situation in Dhangadi. It is the great irony of a new Nepal that has provided media workers with a difficult way ahead to carry on the profession.

The incident started when an article by journalist Lakki Chaudhari was published in "Dhangadhi Post" and "Sri Nepal Times", local newspapers from Kailali. He was beaten up and misbehaved by a group of miscreants claiming themselves to be Young Communist League at Urma VDC-4, Rampur of Kailali district on May 26 over the news report that brought out embezzlement of funds in a local temple and a lake. The cadres beat him saying "why you wrote about us and what are you intending to do writing against us; it would be no good for you to follow us and our activities", said Chaudhari.

The threat abruptly mounted against more than three dozen journalists including Chaudhari, Editor and Publisher of 'Hamar Pahura' a Tharu Language daily from Dhangadi and Hemanta Poudel, Editor of kailali district-based newspaper 'Sudur Sandesh Daily' after they took out a protest rally from Dhangadhi Chauraha to District Administration Office (DAO)

// I was compelled to leave Kailali as Maoist frequently threatened me to take life. My newspaper is closed now; I am spending my life in a despair and frustration //

– Lakky Chaudhari

and staged a sit-in in front of DAO during the night in protest of atrocity of Maoist-aligned YCL cadres. At the same time, a massive crowd of protestors, including Maoist picketed the DAO, attempted to enter the office and resorted to vandalism, said Shiva Raj Yogi, News In-charge of Khaptad FM.

The police opened fire when the situation turned volatile killing three protestors. Following the incident, local administration clamped curfew in Dhangadhi municipality area to take situation under control.

Journalists there went a very tough time when they were forced to flee from their office and home to protect themselves from the possible dangers posed by the protestors who were searching them to take actions, added Yogi.

A meeting of the editors and publishers of the eight dailies - Hamar Pahura, Samachar Saramsha, Seti Samachar, Dhangadhi Post, Sri Nepal Times, Rastriya Sandharba, Sudur Sandesh, Morning Bell- a biweekly and two weekly newspapers on May 31 Saturday decided to stop their publication for an indefinite period citing security threats to their offices and journalists.



The situation took a nasty turn following the publication houses were facing threats of arson and vandalism while journalists working for them were getting death threats, according to a joint press statement. They added the situation in Dhangadhi was too volatile to continue publication, especially after the imposition of curfew.

"With the shutdown of all publication of newspapers from Dhangadhi, hundreds of thousand people have been deprived of right to information", Pramod Pathak of civil society.



"I was compelled to leave Kailali as Maoist frequently threatened me to take life. My newspaper is closed now; I am spending my life in a despair and frustration", said journalist Chaudhari.

District Administration Office, Kailali lifted curfew at district Headquarters Dhangadhi on Friday following the request of an all party meeting held in the same day.

Freedom Forum Expresses Dissatisfaction over the Formation Process of National Information Commission

Freedom Forum, the leading organization in the Right to Information (RTI) movement in Nepal, welcomes the formation of National Information Commission (NIC) however it came into existence after 10 months of the promulgation of much-awaited Right to Information Act-2007 and, at the same time, expresses dissatisfaction regarding the time, formation process and persons appointed in the post of commissioners of NIC.

The Nepal government has on May 22, 2008 decided to appoint Binaya Kumar Kasaju as the chief commissioner and Shree Acharya and Sabita Baral as commissioners of NIC.

It is the matter of dissatisfaction since the process of the formation of NIC does not involve transparency and maturity on the part of the government. The government has underestimated the essence and importance of the commission as it has formed it long after the Act came and on the other, appointed commissioners do have no specific knowledge and distinct experience on RTI movement and nor are they from the judicial administration background.

Likewise, the commissioners have been appointed based on their political affiliation which significantly raises the question of its independence, effectiveness and efficiency. The Forum is suspicious towards the competence and performance of the commission on the way to implementing RTI thereby guaranteeing freedom of information to all Nepalese people.

The Forum also demanded that the details of the property, association, capability and other details of the commissioners to be made public before taking up any responsibility in this regard and extended wishes to the newly-formed commission that it could execute necessary works accordingly

Misbehavior against Journalists Condemnable

Ichchha Poudyal, a journalist for Bhutan News Service was misbehaved in public by the cadres of Communist Party of Bhutan-Marxist Leninist-Maoist (CPB-MLM)-Birat Group in Beldangi-1 Refugee Camp on May 16 Friday.

The cadres of CPB-MLM)-Birat Group thrashed journalist Poudyal, arbitrated him to give justification from the forum and attempted to seize mobile accusing him of spying the programme while she was there to cover the news of fifth anniversary of All Bhutan Revolutionary Student Union (ABRSU), according to a press release issued by Association of

Press Freedom Activists (APFA-Bhutan).

Journalist Poudyal along with his colleague of Bhutan New Service Arjun Pradhan remained insecure due to the life-taking threats from the cadres of CPB-MLM (Birat Side) even after showing press cards, added the press release.

"it is quite condemnable act, which has blatantly violated the press freedom and journalist's right to flow information", stated in a press release issued by Freedom Forum.

Police Threatened Journalist to Take Life

Rupandehi district-based journalists Bindu Kumar Chauhan and Kanhai Yadav were issued death threat by police sub-inspector Dev Raj Aryal, including other police personnel of District Police Office Rupandehi on May 13.

The security personnel threatened them to kill over telephone for covering the news on police involvement in smuggling activities carried out in border area.

Bomb Blast Targeting Journalist House

Cadres of Madhesi Mukti Tigers (MMT) detonated a bomb targeting the house of Remesh Subedi, Punisher of Kalaiya Express Weekly and former vice-chairman of FNJ Bara chapter, in the district on May 3 night.

According to the District Police Office, the window panes in the house were smashed due to the bomb explosion. The MMT owned up responsibility of the incident.

Threat and Obstruction to Journalist

Bhawana Joshi, Secretary of Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), Achham Chapter was continuously threatened to take life over telephone.

Likewise, Leela Bhandari, a journalist for Nepal FM was obstructed to cover the news of bandh announced by Nepali Congress in Surkhet district.

Ilam FM Closed Service

Owing to the internal dispute between management and employees, community Radio, Ilam has been closed down from May 21, Wednesday. Employees did not allow to operate the radio from wednesday mornig following the management saked three technicians working there. They padlocked control room of hte radio to prevent its transmission. The meeting of Maipokhari Communication Cooperative Organization, which manages the FM, on Tuesday decided to end job of technicians, Bhakta Thami, Sauada Subba and Surya Regmi citing that they worked against the prosperity of FM.

Statement against Press Freedom

Freedom Forum strongly condemned the statement of Chairman of CPN-Maoist Prachanda warning Kantipur

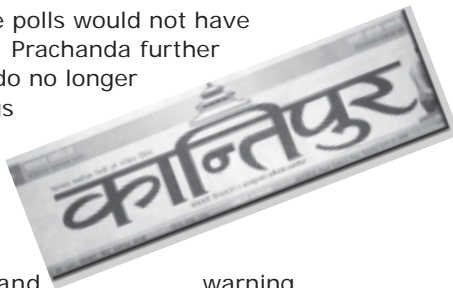


Publication of serious consequences if it continued to exercise his party and said that it is quite disgusting and disagreeable in the open and democratic society. Kathmandu-Freedom Forum strongly condemned the statement of Chairman of CPN-

Maoist Prachanda warning Kantipur Publication of serious consequences if it continued to exercise his party and said that it is quite disgusting and disagreeable in the open and democratic society.

Addressing a mass meet organized by the party at open air theatre in Ratnapark on May 30, Friday, Maoist Supremo said, "Now we no longer tolerate criticism as we have already gained verdict from the people to be the largest party in Nepal through Constituent Assembly (CA) elections".

"Journalists from Kantipur Publications did well to continuously criticize the Maoists before the CA elections. Else, the polls would not have taken place at all", Prachanda further said, "But we will do no longer tolerate such things because we have been already elected by the people".



Such statement and warning against the publication from the largest party of the country has indicated that the Maoist is not respectful to the press freedom and journalists' right to freedom of expression and the situation can cause further hard time and threats to Nepali press, Freedom Forum concludes.

The Forum also reminds the Maoist towards their previous commitment they would be working for the protection and promotion of press and urged to avoid double standard. The Forum also asked the Maoist leadership to respect press freedom in practice in the firm manner since without free, fair and professional press, no democracy could be nurtured well.

Prime Minister for Press Freedom

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said he is committed to guarantee the national independence, human rights, democracy and personal freedom and he is prepared even to sacrifice his life to ensure these freedoms. Kathmandu- Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said he is committed to guarantee the national independence, human rights, democracy and press freedom and he is prepared even to sacrifice his life to ensure these freedoms.



"I am committed to country, democracy, human rights and individual freedom and am ready to even sacrifice my life for these causes," said Koirala.

Claiming that he has never backed away from his responsibilities, PM Koirala said that he will not follow the crowd and believe what others say.

In a reception organized here on the declaration of Federal Democratic Republic, Prime Minister Koirala said he holds the responsibility to protect personal freedom and expressed his firm resolution to protect the freedom at any situation.

"Struggle incessantly for you rights, democracy and personal independence," said the Prime Minister.

New Publication

International Standards on Freedom of Expression A Compilation

The publication of **International Standards on Freedom of Expression-A Compilation** is an outcome of the joint initiatives of ARTICLE 19, Freedom Forum and Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ). The compilation has been divided into four chapters, including Freedom of Expression Guarantees and Regulation of the Media, Content Restrictions, Freedom of Information and Freedom of Expression and Commercial issues. The compilation has been published in both English and Nepali script.



BBC Journalist Prevented from Reporting in Everest Base Camp

Freedom Forum is alarmed at the news of ban imposed by authority on a journalist in the base camp area of Mount Everest.

BBC Correspondent Charles Haviland was prevented by Ministry of Tourism from reporting from the Base Camp on April 28.

Haviland and his assistant producer Iswore Rauniyar had gone to the base camp to cover stories for TV, radio and on-line media.

"We went there to cover stories concerning mountaineering expedition in view of the restrictions posed as China prepares to take the Olympic torch up to the Everest. We were also

there to cover non-political and discreet stories for TV, radio and on-line media," said Haviland.

He added, "We knew there were restrictions on video cameras and satellite phones but some expedition teams were allowed to use them. When we arrived at the base camp, a policeman introduced us to Prabodh Dhakal, liaison officer in-charge of the region and under-secretary of Ministry of Tourism. He did not even allow us to move around".

The Nepalese officials said that they have increased security and controlled information flow in order to prevent any untoward incident that could disturb the travel of the Olympic torch.

Compensation to Journalist Acharya

The District Court Kathmandu has decided to provide a compensation of Rs. 30,000 from the government for illegal detention and torture to journalist Bijaya Raj Acharya, Executive Chairman of the Kathmandu Sirjanshil Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. on a case of compensation.

This was decided by the bench of the judge Sushmalata Mathema. On this case, advocates duo Rishiram Ghimire and Subash Sharma of Legal Desk of Freedom Forum, had pleaded.

Acharya was arrested on Push 25, 2058 BS during emergency and released on Chait 6, 2058 BS. The writ was filed on Mangsir 12, 2059 BS against the defendants, the then council of ministers, defense and home ministries and the District Police Office Hanumandhoka.

Brief News

Post Scribe Awarded

The Susmita Sandip Memorial Award which was set up in commemoration of 13 school children killed in tempo accident two years ago has been awarded to the Kathmandu Post correspondent of Sunsari district Shankar Kharel Amid a program at Jhumka of district. Director of SOS Itahari Ramesh Tamrakar and Member Secretary of Lions International here, Nand Kishor Rathi jointly gave away the award to Kharel.

The award comprises a certificate and cash prize of 4,444 Rupees. He was awarded for his excellent reporting in the media of the accident which claimed lives of innocent students.

Body Formed to Promote Community Radio Services

A gathering of managers of 23 development community radios held in Kathmandu on May 19 and 20 has selected a seven-member management committee under the convenorship of station manager of Radio Sagarmatha F.M., Ghamaraj Luintel.

The mechanism will, on behalf the community radios of the Kathmandu Valley, explore the common resources, and prepare news and programmes and also distribute them to the partner radios.

Journalist Shrestha No More

Ashok Shrestha, 49 and active journalist and former president of Federation of Nepali

Journalists (FNJ) Kathmandu chapter and active journalist passed away.

He has been actively working in favour of democracy through research and investigative journalism for the last three years. He is survived by his wife two sons and daughter.

Journalist Killed In Road Accident

Rangaraj Sapkota, correspondent of Gorkhapatra Daily and Janadesh Weekly and Editor of Nawapratibodh Weekly died in a road accident at Hetauda-11, Thanabhanjyang on May 16, Friday afternoon.

He died when the motorbike (Ba. 16 Pa. 8170) he was riding was hit by a truck (Na. 2 Kha 3248) and a tripper Ga.1 Kha. 714) at the same time, according to District Police Office, Makawanpur.

Constituent Assembly (CA) Elections Formally Concludes in Nepal

The epoch-making Constituent Assembly (CA) elections has formally ended in Nepal following the Election Commission (EC) announced the final list of the CA members elected under the proportional representation (PR) system on May 7, Thursday. Amidst a programme organized here today at the premises of EC, Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel gave away the certificates to the winning candidates from 25 various political parties.

According to Pokharel, the CA has represented 33.22 percent women, 34.09 percent Madhesis, 8.17 percent Dalits, 33.39 percent Janajatis and 3.83 percent candidates from backward regions while representation of other groups have stood at 33.91 percent. The CA Court has ordered to hold the result of Mahottari-6. Victory of Sarad Singh Bhandari of Madhesi Jahadhikar Forum from this constituency has been challenged at the court.

Other 26 members of the 601-member CA will be nominated by the council of ministers. The Prime Minister has to call the first sitting of the CA, which will take place within the next 21 days.

With this, Nepal has entered a new momentum to frame a new constitution through CA members for the first time opening up various avenues to chart out a prosperous and noble Nepal. The successful holding of the CA elections despite numerous challenges and strenuous tasks is highly appreciable and daunting.



Members of the Constituent Assembly (CA) in the first meeting of CA formally declaring Nepal a Federal Democratic Republic on May 28.

Nepal into Federal Democratic Republic

We feel it a great pleasure to share our joy and happiness to all Nepali people for the grand achievement of Nepal formally entering into a republic country confining Shah Dynasty to history. Nepal has become a Federal Democratic Republic from May 28 following the Constituent Assembly (CA) went in favour of abolishing the 240-year-old monarchy from the country. On the occasion, Freedom Forum would like to congratulate all Nepali people, Constituent Assembly members, political parties, civil society representatives and well-wishers for their indelible contribution to move Nepal towards the path of progress and transformation. We also wish that press freedom and civil liberties be guaranteed in full-fledged way to strengthen democracy and to enhance people's power.

- Freedom Forum

Pre-censorship of Film Violates Freedom of Expression

Film Development Board has imposed prior censorship and disapproved the film script developed for the production of film 'Kalapani'.

'We would have started shooting from Tuesday had the Board approved our project. But Board Chairperson Ishwor Chandra Gyawali has not yet granted permission to go ahead in this regard, however the script was registered before a week', producer Pokharel said.

The film includes some scenes in which Indian people are shown abusing Nepalis, so that we express our reservation for the consent, said Board Director Gyawali, adding, 'We are not obliged to grant permission in the same day the script got registered without once going through it. The board has its own registration process'.

The dillydallying on the part of the Board to pass the script has caused a financial loss worth 500 thousand to me, said producer Pokharel.

Freedom Forum expresses its concern over the pre-censorship imposed on the script as it violates people's right to freedom of expression. On the other hand, it is not compatible with the legal provisions specified by the constitution of Nepal and the international standards. A system of prior censorship for films is a breach of the guarantee of freedom of expression according to the international standard. In this context, the Forum urges development board to reconsider while taking such measure into account and request to review its decision.

Government not Protecting Journalists in Shreelanka

Sri Lanka's journalists reporting on the ongoing war between the government and Tamil rebels have become the latest target of attacks - and the government shows little interest in protecting them, say the Free Media Movement (FMM) and other IFEX members.

A Sri Lankan television journalist was stabbed to death on 28 May in the conflict-ridden north. According to news reports, police say a mob attacked P. Devakumar on his motorbike in Navanthurai village in the Jaffna peninsula.

Devakumar was among only a few journalists working in Jaffna, which has been under military control for more than a decade and has been a battle zone between Tamil Tiger rebels and the government. Many journalists living and working in Jaffna have given up their jobs, fearing for their lives, says FMM.

Senior Ministry of Defence officials then summoned two senior journalists who had helped organise a protest demanding an inquiry into Noyahr's case, telling them that it is unacceptable for journalists - especially those working for state media - to criticise the armed forces.

The government also said that it would be unable to prevent "actions" taken against the journalists should they continue to criticise government policy, says FMM.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Press Institute, an umbrella organisation of media groups including FMM, was unexpectedly visited by armed military personnel last week who inquired about key staff members.

In a separate case, FMM says unidentified men stormed the residence of Sirimevan Kasthuriarachchi, a senior defence reporter for "Sinhala Divaina" newspaper, on 29 May and warned him

against reporting on matters related to defence and the Sri Lankan Army.

IFEX members say **Sri Lanka is one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists. Nine reporters and media workers have been killed in Sri Lanka since fighting escalated in 2006,** says FMM.

Journalist gunned down in Pakistan

Express TV reporter Mohammed Ibrahim was shot dead near Pakistan's border with Afghanistan on May 22.

Ibrahim, a reporter for the Express News channel, was gunned down by unknown men outside Khar, the main town of the Bajaur tribal area in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, according to news reports. The journalist was returning by motorcycle from an interview with local Taliban spokesman Maulvi Omar, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and Imtiaz Ali, a Washington Post correspondent based in the nearby regional capital of Peshawar.

"We offer our condolences to Mohammed Ibrahim's family and colleagues," said CPJ Asia Program

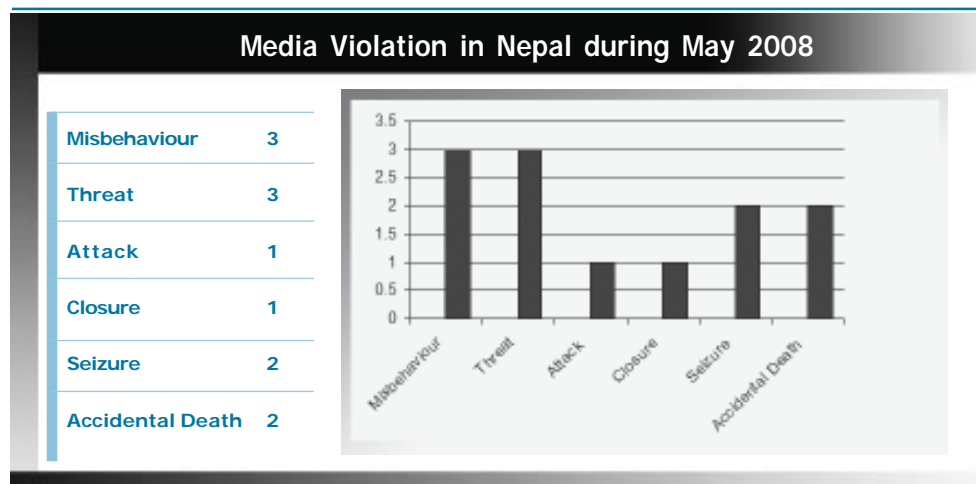
Coordinator Bob Dietz. "The new government must take immediate steps to investigate this murder and safeguard the journalists who are providing important reporting from this volatile border region."

Death of Photojournalist in India Mourned

Photojournalist Ashok Sodhi was died of bullet injuries sustained while covering an armed encounter in India's Jammu region on May 11. Sodhi, a 25-year veteran of the newspaper industry, was employed by the Daily Excelsior, a leading newspaper in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He was reporting on an armed encounter in Kashmir's Samba district, 45 kilometres south of Jammu, between security forces and militants who had allegedly infiltrated from Pakistan-controlled territory.

"The IFJ calls upon media organisations to increase safety awareness among professional staff and provide basic protective gear for all personnel deployed to cover situations involving lethal weaponry," said Jacqueline Park, IFJ Asia-Pacific Director.

Source : International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX)



Our Websites:



Published by:

Freedom Forum

P.O. Box: 24292, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel / Fax :977-1- 4102030 / 4102022

Email: info@freedomforum.org.np
freedomforum@enet.com.np

Website :
www.nepalpressfreedom.org
www.freedomforum.org.np

Editor
Krishna Sapkota

Graphics
Kiran Kandel