

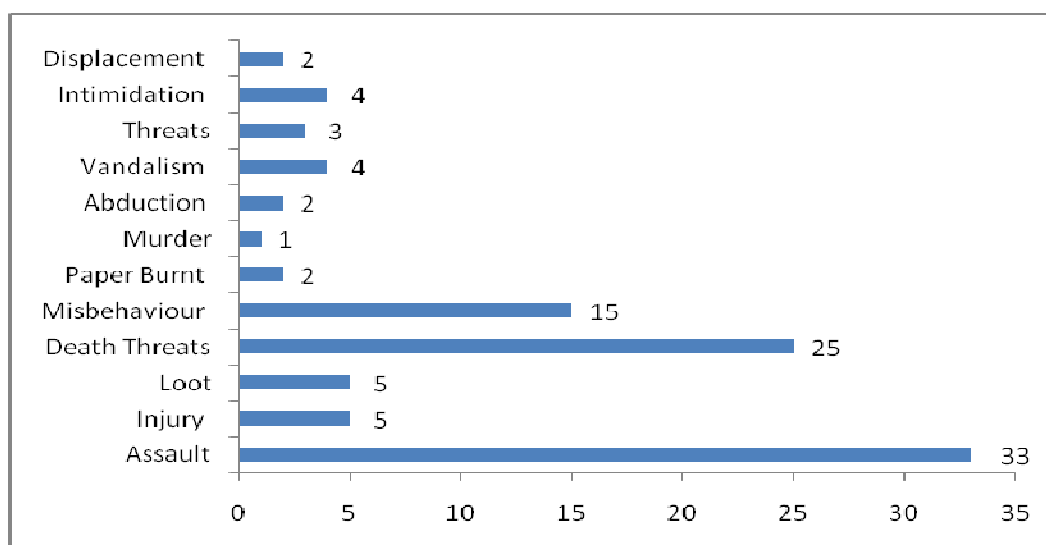
## Anti-Press Incidents and Self-Censorship dominate Nepali Media

(Nepali media in a year from May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011)

Nepali media has been gradually spreading its reach to the people year by year. With the amazing increase of media-both the print and electronic-in the country, people's access to right to information has obviously enhanced with their growing awareness to political and social level. However, the media situation in the country has not improved as per the expectation despite the country has ushered into a new political setup yielded by Popular Uprising in 2006.

- Although the country witnessed substantial decline in the number of incidents against press freedom during the year (101) as compared to the last year (215) with the spurt of media, this sector could not remain safe, and free and fair.
- No government efforts for the formulation and amendment to necessary laws regarding media and press freedom, growing insecure and unsafe working environment for journalists, rise of impunity, inadequate initiatives and struggles of the stakeholders concerned and the political instability were behind the unrelenting press freedom situation in Nepal.
- In the absence of clear law and policies, the new problems of cyber crime and defamation have remained unaddressed.

**Chart Reflecting Anti-press Incidents from 1 May 2010- April 30, 2011**



- Unequal treatment of government to the journalist has increased sense of insecurity among the journalists. Whether by political parties and their sister organizations or government employees and securities or by unruly gangs or others, the attacks, death threats, misbehaviour continued against journalists which obviously made media difficult to exercise the constitutionally guaranteed rights and its significant responsibility to

disseminate free flow of information. Due to these, self-censorship by the journalists might have been exercised though not visible.

- The credibility of media, especially in the concluding days of the year, could not escape the taint and sensation, and was questioned because a lot of media including the big ones also failed to pick accurate, balanced and credible news. As a result, they served as the 'populist media' which finally made them surrender before readers and make public apology. This is another important issue deemed unforgettable while going through the trend of news coverage by Nepali media.
- The media monitoring desk of the Freedom Forum has recorded altogether 101 incidents against press freedom including a murder of media person Devi Prasad Dhital (Hemraj) that occurred in the year (from May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011). According to the monitoring desk, there were 33 cases of attack on journalists while 25 death threats, 5 injures, 5 loots, 15 misbehaviour, 2 paper burnt, one murder, 2 abductions, 4 vandalism, 3 threats, 4 intimidation, and 2 displacements.

Willy-nilly, the media has tried to serve as a tool to build public opinion thereby upholding democracy and justice in the country.

Therefore, Nepali media has miles to go for prosperity- to be free, fair, safe and professional, concludes Freedom Forum.

