



FreeExpression

Issue 6 | January-March 2023

A NEWSLETTER OF FREEDOM FORUM

Civic Activism

Govt withdraws decision to classify policy level information

Right to information is essential to hold public agencies and officials accountable to people. It is one of the significant anti-corruption tools which helps promote transparency and good governance initiatives. Good governance is undoubtedly much needed in Nepal for the change in system that pays heed to people and props up democratic values together. It has been one and half decade that Nepal got RTI Act, thereby contributing hugely to good governance efforts in Nepal. Thousands of youths are trained and made aware on RTI by the CSOs like Freedom Forum. Similarly, even the public officials are made aware about it and prodded for implementation of RTI and promote it as anti-corruption tool. Dozens of information seeking requests are made every day across the country.

The relevance of RTI has further increased with the country adopting federalism. Since the introduction of RTI Act, establishment of institutional set up and thriving practices at public institutions and among citizens, large scam of non-transparency, tax evading business have been disclosed. Financial aberrations are exposed. Despite such tremendous befits of RTI for building good governance in Nepal, attempts are made from government sides to suppress this pro-public tool time and again in the name of privacy, confidentiality and security, thereby breaching citizens' fundamental rights. Freedom Forum was alarmed over the decision of a Committee for classification of information under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal. The Government Committee classified information on 87 different policy areas into five categories namely- national sovereignty and national security, social harmony, trade secret and property rights, individual privacy and crime investigation. The information have been classified as 'confidential' and should be kept secret thus, going beyond the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizen, and the rights provided by the



Right to Information Act, 2064. The Committee's classification was also against the verdicts of supreme court, Nepal's constitution and RTI Act. Information of public importance has also been classified as confidential which clearly indicates the government's intention to dent the RTI Act and impact adversely on transparency in public agencies. According to the Committee's decision, information about tax evasion, public procurement, meetings of dignitaries, any information submitted to the Nepal Government for decision, including others, should be kept secret for the mentioned years. The decision was sent to the National Information Commission on January 13, 2023, as per the media reports.

The classification of policy level information was unconstitutional and undemocratic effort

the government made. It is a serious blow to the RTI movement and transparency campaigns in the country. Here, the role Freedom Forum played to exert pressure on the government to reconsider the decision bears much significance. FF had underscored the need to review decision immediately and be canceled by the NIC so as to exert pressure on the government against undemocratic initiative. FF Executive Chief Taranath Dahal urged the government secretaries, including Chief Secretary that the decision was against constitution and RTI Act and it would badly impact the RTI regime in Nepal. Similarly, press release was issued and RTI campaigners prompted for cause of citizen's right to information. Several media made stories based on FF's concern too. Finally, following wide criticisms, the government withdrew the classification and halted its implementation on January 30. 🌱

Message from Executive Chief

Digital literacy to dispel disinformation



We are living in a digital age- a hyper-connected world indeed. Our activities are largely dependent on digital medium. Digital platforms, though owned and controlled by select tech companies, are developed as modern public spheres where we communicate and debate on any issue of our concern irrespective of time and space. Avoiding digital spheres is unimaginable at present. With the unprecedented opportunities for human activities, thereby contributing to the enhancement of human rights on the one hand, the downside of digital age is however growing challenging day by day.

Among several digital evils, spread of mis/disinformation has been a headache to us. The spread of fake news in a coordinated manner and with malafide intention- to deceive people- is the disinformation, which has polluted information ecosystem. When bad intention prevails, it is disinformation, while misinformation is also fake information. A kind of information disorder is created due to mis/disinformation, putting common people at the receiving end. The atmosphere of trust and truth is in casualty with the deluge of disinformation in online/digital media. Time has come for all sides concerned to create massive media and digital literacy so that deluge of disinformation would be controlled. The ignorance to the spread of disinformation leaves public institutions severely dented. A collective and broader approach is imperative to address this problem.

Together with this, narrative has been made blaming technology as a sole reason behind creation and spread of mis/disinformation, which, however, is faulty. The more we research, the more remote we reach on roots of disinformation. It was already the problems in the pre-digital age. At the same time, it is indeed true that digital technology has significant role to scale up the problem. Of course, the speed and scale of information has been unprecedented in the digital age, which has taken toll on information ecosystem.

In addition to the actors working for truth as media persons, university teachers, researchers, the mis/disinformation has been a concern for many others as health workers and scientists. As science depends on evidences generated from experiment, the information spread on science without any fact and evidence has further concerned scientific community. The spread of mis/disinformation gains momentum when there are huge national and international events or crisis like elections, earthquakes, natural disasters, political movements etc. The most worrying is that even the government and vested groups create and spread mis/disinformation to achieve certain goal. They even adopt fake news as part of conspiracy theory. It is fatal when public figures are misused to spread mis/disinformation on any agenda because making trend with mis/disinformation creates a false narrative. When people are made victims of false narrative, they are deprived of freedom of thoughts. So, blaming only digital technology is sheer ignorance.

Undoubtedly, trust and truth are essential elements in any society and system. They are more essential in a democracy. So, creating massive literacy and education is must against mis/disinformation. Only atmosphere of credibility builds harmony among people and community, foster public trust on institutions and prop up democratic values. In this connection, much has been talked on digital evils in Nepal too. However, substantive debates and initiatives are still awaited to dispel disinformation. It is worth mulling: how we can regulate the information ecosystem where mis/disinformation would be suppressed, and at the same time citizen's freedoms are respected.

Open and multi-stakeholder approach is imperative to regulate it. Citizen's freedoms of expression, press, and privacy can not be comprised and critical thoughts silenced while regulating information ecosystem or digital spheres in the name of suppressing mis/disinformation. Current approach of controlling social media as part of controlling mis/disinformation is wrong. So, the broader approach with utmost cooperation can work with synergy to this regard. Freedom Forum always advocates for multi-sectoral dialogues, study, research on this pressing issue. Government can take a concrete initiative for it. What we must not ignore is Nepal is an open and liberal country, so no authoritarian approach is acceptable. Our constitution and system have finely protected free flow of information, which must not be blocked at all with the initiatives. Freedom Forum's readiness is intact for cooperation to well manage social media to bolster citizens' rights and curb digital evils. 🌱

- Tara Nath Dahal

Ensure budget credibility to achieve SDGs

Freedom Forum has released a research analysis brief on Nepal's federal government's spending in six key sectors that relate to nine SDGs, examining budget credibility trends in 2018, 2019 and 2020 in collaboration with International Budget Partnership. The brief compares budget deviations and the share of government spending in each sector to the progress reported on achieving the SDG as reported in the SDG Index 2021 so that it can be understood how these spending patterns relate Nepal's efforts to achieve the SDGs.

The analysis brief adopts the methodology of SDG indicator 16.6.1, which recognizes the importance of budget credibility. It is currently reported only at the level of the aggregate budget at the federal level without exploring the variation in budget credibility patterns in the six key sectors which are agriculture and food, education, environment, health, social protection, and water and sanitation. Budget Appropriation as approved by the parliament and Consolidate Financial Report by Financial Comptroller General Office Nepal are two budget information that are analyzed and included while forming this brief.

Despite increased budget allocation, Nepal continues to face headwinds in its efforts to achieve the SDGs. A series of natural calamities that have set back development progress over the last five years, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Government challenges with accurate forecasting and budget assumptions in both revenue generation and expenditure allocations, capacity constraints, including limitations in personnel and infrastructure as well as political disruption in Nepal as lack of agreement on decentralization are some challenges that need to be addressed for better budget credibility to achieve the goals.

There is need for bolstering PFM capacities, especially on budget forecasting, and improving resource mobilization as well as improving the role of the audit institution and legislature to curb government plans that lack feasibility and provide checks and balances against executive decisions on shift or delay in program funds. Localizing SDG plans and goals is equally important to yield more success than a centralized approach and ensure coordination of funding toward the SDGs, as per the analyses brief.

Complete report on it is available at Freedom Forum's website, and also at <https://internationalbudget.org/publications/nepal-budget-credibility-and-the-sustainable-development-goals/> 🌱

Press Freedom Violations



PROVINCE 1

No incident of press freedom violation was recorded this quarter in this province. It is welcome in deed that journalists and media houses did not face any obstruction, threat and intimidation. It suggests journalists' rights are respected here.

MADHESH PROVINCE

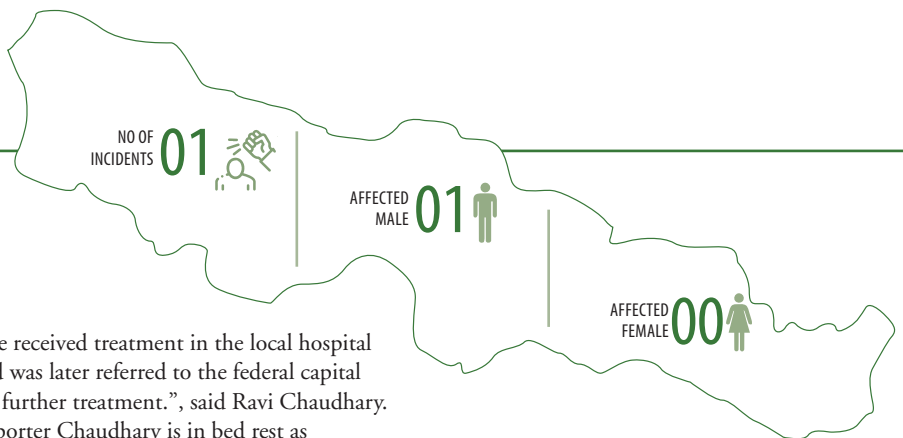
Attack

Mahottari based reporter at AP1 Television Nabin Chaudhary was brutally attacked in Jaleswor on March 8. Jaleswor lies in Madhesh Province of Nepal.

Chaudhary's brother Ravi Chaudhary informed Freedom Forum that a group of drunk people attacked reporter Chaudhary with glass bottles while he was returning his home. He sustained major injuries on his head due to glass pieces.

"He received treatment in the local hospital and was later referred to the federal capital for further treatment.", said Ravi Chaudhary. Reporter Chaudhary is in bed rest as recommended by the doctor.

Police have arrested two attackers, informed reporter Chaudhary.



Bagmati Province

FF condemns use of force to silence protesters

Freedom Forum was concerned over police suppression on a peaceful protest against the government in Kathmandu on March 21. Kathmandu is the federal capital of Nepal.

On the day of incident, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal arrived at a program organized to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at New Baneshwor, Kathmandu at around 2:00 pm. At the same time, a youth at the program stood up and started shouting slogans against bank's interest. He also demanded the government to lower current bank's interest rate. Then, police officers on duty forcefully took him under control.

Police officers arrested three youths- Uddhab Basnet, Biplav Khadka and Som Sharma."They

have been charged with 'indecent behaviour' and will be kept in detention", local police station, New Baneshwor informed.

After seven days of arrest, on March 27, they were granted bail with compensation amount Rs. 5,000. But, the youths denied to pay the bail amount and were sent to jail again. On March 28, they were released after depositing the bail amount.

The incident depicts sheer intolerance of the government towards public voice. Nepal's constitution guarantees citizen's right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression. Suppressing public voice with the use of power is silencing citizen's rights.



Wish
you a
**Happy
Nepali
New
Year
2080**



FREEDOM FORUM

Businesspersons attack reporter in Dhading

A correspondent at Galaxy 4K television, Bikash Rauniyar, was attacked in Dhading on March 25. Dhading lies in Bagmati Province of Nepal.

Rauniyar shared with Freedom Forum that he had reported on illegal excavation by the crusher industries three days back. He, then, informed the local police about the excavation.

Following this, people related to crusher business reached his home and called him for a meeting at around 10:30 pm. As Rauniyar met them, they punched him on his face. Rauniyar received injury.

"With bleeding mouth, I, however, countered their attack and protected myself from further injury. Then, I filed a First Information Report at the Area Police Office, Gajuri, Dhading. I will go to Kathmandu for further treatment and assistance in the case. I will not stay silent", said Rauniyar.

Police arrested two persons and released them on April 3 after reconciliation. 🌱

Speaker's statement discredits media

Freedom Forum was alarmed over the statement of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Devraj Ghimire, on March 18.

With a delegation of the Federation of Nepali Journalists on a discussion on formulation of media related laws and policies, Speaker Ghimire said, "Journalists are on hire."

His views took the media fraternity, rights defenders and FoE advocates by surprise. It resulted in furor.

Speaker's statement discredited the role of media persons and press freedom in Nepal which is worrying that such abuse has direct role to demoralize the professional journalists.



FF shows severe concern over the Speaker's statement and urges for the respect of press freedom and media persons which have a significant role to promote democracy and rule of law in the country. Belittling free press is betraying democratic values and system. 🌱

Gandaki Province

Misbehavior

News Chief at Fewa Television Prahlad Chandra Ghimire was misbehaved while reporting in Syangja on January 25. Syangja lies in the Gandaki Province of Nepal.

Journalist Ghimire shared with Freedom Forum that he had reached the site to report on a drinking water project being implemented in a rural municipality of Syangja. Locals of the municipality obstructed him from reporting and also abused the journalist.



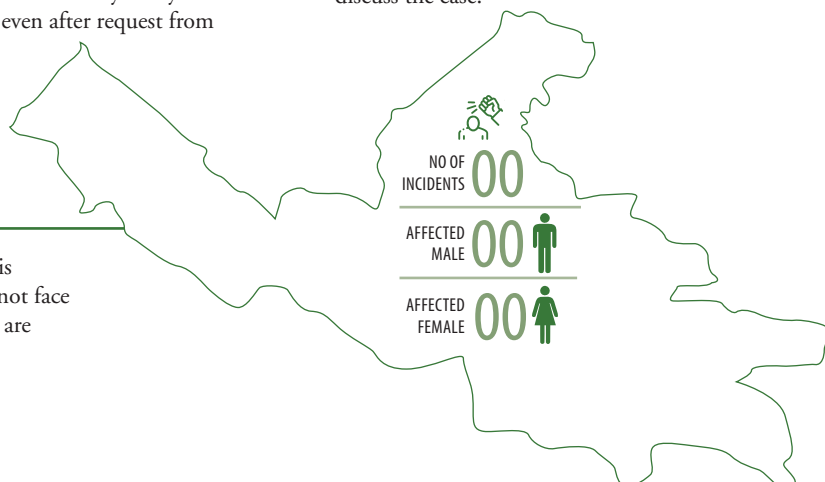
"Local people in the village said that news about their village should not be published anywhere and in whatever way. They did not let me report even after request from

the ward's vice chairperson", Ghimire added, "As the case about irregularities in the project has already been registered in the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority, I went there to report it."

Journalist Ghimire reported the incident at the local police station. Police called a meeting among locals and journalist on January 29 to discuss the case.

Lumbini Province

No incident of press freedom violation was recorded this quarter in this province. It is welcome in deed that journalists and media houses did not face any obstruction, threat and intimidation. It suggests journalists' rights are respected here.



Karnali Province

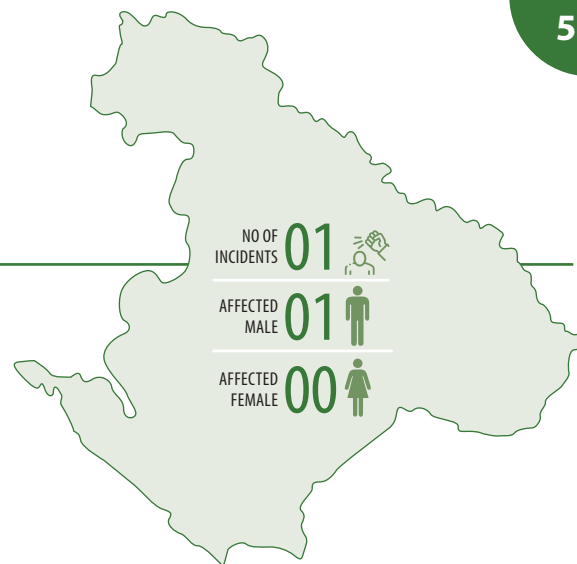
Attack

Reporter at <https://laikakhabar.com/> Bal Bahadur Thapa was attacked while reporting in Surkhet on February 13. Surkhet lies in Karnali Province of Nepal.

Reporter Thapa was attacked while reporting on a protest in Birendranagar, Surkhet. Local people had staged a protest following a road accident, causing death of a woman. After her death, relatives of deceased blocked the road section since February 12, demanding compensation and punishment to the driver.

During the protest, clash broke among the relatives and transport entrepreneurs' staffs. Reporter Thapa was recording video of the victims being attacked by the staffs. Meanwhile, the staffs threatened Thapa to stop recording the video and delete it. As Thapa refused to stop reporting, they pounded him with iron rod, bottle and shovel.

Worryingly, Thapa received injuries on his head and back. The incident took place in front of police persons. 🌿



Sudurpaschim Province

Locals burn national daily

Some locals burnt the copies of the Kantipur national daily in Kailali on February 6. Kailali lies in the Sudurpaschim Province of Nepal.

Freedom Forum's representative from the province Min Bam informed that a local businessman Padam Sapkota along with his friends burnt the newspapers following their debate on a political leader Rabi Lamichhane. Sapkota burnt old copies of the newspapers available at his and his friends' shops.

During a press conference held in federal capital, Kathmandu, on February 5, President of Rastriya Swatantra Party and Former Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane had accused Nepali media of defaming him, and had publicly threatened the media.

Representative Bam also quoted Deputy Superintendent of Police Bed Prakash Joshi, Spokesperson at District Police Office, Kailali as saying, "We learnt about the incident from social media and no complaint was registered at the police station on the case. Hence, no action has been taken yet."

According to Ayer, he was attacked at around 9:00 pm while returning home from a hotel after attending a province level conference on management of sickle cell disease in the province.

An unknown person suddenly hit him on head from behind. Ayer sustained severe injuries on his head and had to receive five stitches for the treatment.

Ayer has been reporting on the health sector for long and during the program too, private hospitals' owners and journalists had critically discussed current issues in health sector, said reporter Ayer. "We have lodged a complaint at District Police Office, Kailali about the incident and the Superintendent of Police has initiated the investigation", informed Ayer. 🌿



Reporter attacked

Reporter with Radio Dhangadhi 90.5 MHz and <https://dhangadhikhabar.com/>, Sher Bahadur Ayer, was severely injured in an attack on March 11. The incident took place in Kailali district, Sudurpachim Province of Nepal.

CPJ Provides Digital Safety Tool Kit in Nepali

Digital age is full of promises and perils. With increased digital presence of people, journalists' safety can be compromised and profession challenged. On the one hand, journalists can reap huge benefits from digital platforms and resources, they are at risk from multiple sectors on this new space on the other. So, digital safety has been prime need of journalists across the globe. Needless to say, Nepali journalists are in dire need of digital skills and knowledge so that they can prevent from various digital threats and save life, family and profession. Credible resources on digital safety are therefore essential to digitally enable journalists and commoners as well.

In this connection, a US-based organization working for the journalists' rights across the globe, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), has recently made available the digital safety tool kits even in Nepali language. It's in deed a matter of celebration for Nepali journalists to get access to such credible resources to empower themselves to negotiate digital world safety. Freedom Forum as the organization working for journalists' rights and freedom of expression, urges all Nepali journalists to visit CPJ's websites (<https://cpj.org/ne>) and read the resources available. Even the Freedom Forum has updated these safety kits here: <https://bit.ly/3L0WWS3> 🌿

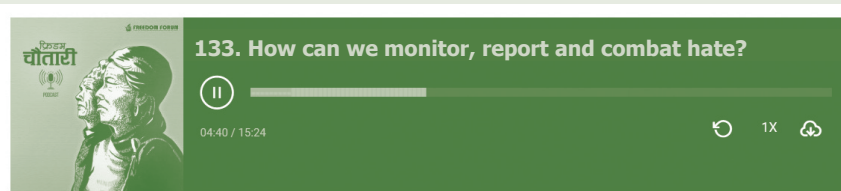


Freedom Chautary podcast series reaches 133 episodes

Freedom Chautary is a podcast series of Freedom Forum. FF features current issues related to press freedom, freedom of expression, right to information, and internet governance, among others. The podcast has also been an important means to share FF's research, reports, reviews and comments on the aforementioned issues in a more convenient manner. Freedom Chautary podcast has reached 133 episodes till date. Thanks to all the listeners!!

In these three months (January 2023 to March 2023), FF released four episodes of podcast. Two episodes, one in Nepali and another in English language, were based on Freedom Forum's annual media monitoring report 2022. The podcast contained thorough discussion on the report's findings and analyses. Along with the incidence of press freedom violations trend, the podcast also features how citizen's right to free expression online was subjected to surveillance during general elections.

Listen to Freedom Forum Podcast- Freedom Chautari



<http://freedomforum.org.np/content/podcast/>

Hate speech online and its impact offline has become a major challenge all over the world. Nepal has witnessed its impact in politics and society as well in the recent days. Hence, FF included United Nation's Uniting Against Hate podcast's two episodes in the next two episodes of Freedom Chautary.

One is about how it is spreading rapidly all over the world and the other deals with ways to report, monitor and combat the hate speech. In both the podcasts, free speech advocates and activists share their experience, views and way forward on how hate speech online and offline can be countered. 🌱

RTI Nepal App-Updates

As in the past, news, opinion articles and success stories on use of right to information were updated on the RTI Nepal App in the past three months. The application can be downloaded in both Andoid and IOS systems.

A news on National Information Commission's suggestion to those holding public positions to avoid 'oath of secrecy' was published on February 2. The news stated that due to this oath of secrecy the public officials are reluctant to respond to the RTI information requests reasoning the information as confidential. Nepal's constitution guarantees citizen's right to information on the issues of public concern. Hence, NIC brought forth this sug-

gestion for proper implementation of Right to Information. Two stories were published where NIC decided to impose a fine of Rs. 15,000 to the information officers at local levels in Siraha and Saptari districts. Both the information officers denied information requested by the requesters using RTI. NIC decided to punish the officers on the basis of appeal filed by the respective RTI activists.

An important incident challenging constitutional provision on RTI was also recorded where a Government Committee classified information on 87 different policy areas as 'confidential' and should be kept secret. However, following criticism from activists, citizens and civil society including Freedom Forum, the government withdrew the



classification. This has been marked as a success story.

Similarly, two news came up disclosing important information at the local levels with the use of RTI. One was about local representatives receiving multiple services beyond their salaries from the taxes paid by the citizens. All the contents updated on the App are also shared via Twitter account of RTI Nepal App @rti_nepal 🌱

Self disclosure update

Type and Nature of Organization	NGO working for Democracy, Right to Information, Freedom of Expression, Fiscal Transparency and Open Data, Media Policy and Law, Internet Freedom		
Legal Status	Registered at District Administration Office Kathmandu. DAO Registration Number: 127/062/63, SWC Affiliation Number: 18518		
Location	Adarsa Marga, Prasuti Griha Road, Thapathali, Kathmandu		
Staffs and Roles	Taranath Dahal: Executive Chief, coordinates overall organizational and administrative affairs		
	Aruna Adhikari: Finance and Administration Officer, looks after accounting and administrative affairs and performs responsibilities as the Information Officer.		
	Nanu Maiya Khadka: Gender Monitoring Officer, responsible for monitoring media content on gender perspectives		
	Aditya Dahal: RTI App and website operator		
	Manju Ojha: Front Desk Assistant, Ganga Kumari Gurung: Office Assistant		
Consultant/Researchers	Krishna Sapkota, Narayan Ghimire, Subash Dahal		
Ongoing Project Information	Project Name	Supporting Agency	Date of start of project
	Open Budget Survey	International Budget Partnership (IBP)	1st January 2023
Services and Activities	Research, capacity development and policy advocacy including media monitoring, trainings on RTI and journalism, meetings, workshops, seminars and other campaigns to promote issues of democracy, RTI, FoE, fiscal transparency, human rights, local governance. It also provides legal aid to journalists, media and information seekers.		
Responsible Authority	Chairperson: Hari Binod Adhikari, Executive Chief: Tara Nath Dahal		
Decision Making Process	General Assembly: Making policies, rules and regulations of organization Executive committee: Formulation of action plans as per constitution of organization, rules and regulation Management team: Running projects and daily operational affairs and reporting timely to the Executive Committee.		
Past/Current Activities	Please follow the link: http://freedomforum.org.np/content/category/activities/		
Information Officer	Aruna Adhikari		
Financial Information	Freedom Forum received grants amounting Rs. 195203.25 (January to March 2023).		
Official Website	www.freedomforum.org.np		
Publications of Freedom Forum	Freedom Forum has over 50 Publications (printed) Please Follow the Link: http://freedomforum.org.np/content/publications/		
Annual Report	http://freedomforum.org.np/content/publications/reports/annual-reports/		
Information Dissemination	Websites- http://www.freedomforum.org.np/ ; www.nepalpressfreedom.org , and Newsletter-Free Expression		

Summit for Democracy 2023

States, investors urged to curtail abuse of spyware

The governments convening the Summit for Democracy 2023 have been called to prioritise human rights due diligence for spyware technologies on the Summit's agenda. The spyware has been repeatedly used to silence journalists, surveil human rights defenders, muzzle dissent, suppress freedom of expression of minorities, target LGBTQ+ persons and women, intimidate academia and discourage peaceful protests. To achieve greater transparency, accountability, peace and a more prosperous future for all, in alignment with the stated objective of the Summit, states and investors must act to prevent the proliferation and abuse of spyware.

Global Watch

The unlawful and arbitrary use of spyware has a direct and often disproportionate impact on the right to privacy and degrades other human rights and civic freedoms. For example, NSO Group's Pegasus spyware is linked to at least 300 acts of physical violence in more than 45 countries worldwide. Women, LGBTQ+ persons and other vulnerable communities targeted by spyware face distinct risks of social exclusion, physical, psychological and sexual violence.

Companies have haphazardly sold and exported hacking technologies, impacting democratic processes, deepening authoritarian rule, and degrading human rights around the world (with some companies evading export licenses all together). Of the cases that have come to light, at least 14 world leaders, government officials and allies have also been identified as potential targets, putting their security and rights at risk. Investors, too, increasingly recognise that the human rights risks related to these technologies represent a material risk to their portfolios and they have an ethical, normative and fiduciary responsibility to address

them. This is further evidenced by the fact that shareholders from some of the largest tech companies filed proposals on various human rights issues at the upcoming 2023 Annual General Meeting season and during the past 2022 Annual General Meetings season. The bottom line is that states and investors, including venture capital (VC) firms, have a critical role and shared interest in preventing the abuse of spyware.

Early-stage investors ultimately influence which tech startups receive funding and which ideas are deemed worthy of developing. VC firms help shape the future of technology, and with it the future of our economies, politics and societies, and the realisation of human rights.

In accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, VCs have a responsibility to undertake human rights due diligence when investing in spyware due to the scope, severity of impact and low likelihood for remedy when the technology is abused. VCs, particularly those based in the Global North, must address the imbalance of power that spyware imposes on at-risk communities within their own countries and those in the Global South. This entails taking steps to identify, prevent, mitigate, remedy and account for human rights impacts through meaningful stakeholder engagement with affected communities—including during the iterative phases of product development prior to deployment.

States have an obligation to regulate the spyware industry, as well as their investors, to prevent and mitigate human rights harms. States must therefore strengthen the collective enforcement of legal, operational and financial impacts for spyware companies who operate outside of international human rights standards. Towards



In this photo illustration the Summit for Democracy logo is displayed on a smartphone and in the background, Brazil, 9 December 2021. Rafael Henrique/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

this aim, we recommend that states:

- Ban the sale of spyware until a system of safeguards is in place to prevent human rights abuses and hold companies liable for their negative human rights impacts.
- Ensure that all companies, including VC firms, domiciled in their countries are required to undertake human rights due diligence in respect of their global operations and investments.
- Ensure that all companies, including VCs carry out stakeholder engagement with a wide range of actors, especially those most impacted by their products and services including at-risk individuals in the Global North and those disparately impacted in the Global South, to understand the implications of their investments and evolve their practices.
- Ensure that government agencies carry out effective human rights due diligence as a , especially surveillance-tech and cybersecurity companies.
- Hold corporate entities, including VC firms, accountable for human rights abuses that amount to criminal behaviour. Commit to cooperating in good-faith investigations about the abuse of spyware in other jurisdictions. 🌱

(Source: <https://lifex.org/summit-for-democracy-2023-states-and-investors-have-a-responsibility-to-curtail-the-abuse-of-spyware/>)

Freedom Forum is an independent, non-governmental and not-for-profit civil society organization working for the cause of social accountability, democracy and human rights focused on press freedom, freedom of expression and right to information in Nepal. Incepted in 2005, Freedom Forum has emerged as a prominent national organization in promoting access to information and freedom of expression through dialogue, research, training, public advocacy and campaign and programme implementation. Currently, the organization is working on the issues of public finance management, budget transparency, open data and aid governance, political and parliamentary accountability, freedom of expression online and open government partnership (OGP) based on its on-hand experience and learning.



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