

SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS THIS FORTNIGHT



In this fast-paced world, people seldom have time to read the news every day. Fortnight Human rights update is a new INSECOnline series aimed at disseminating a brief overview of National and International Human rights situation once in every two weeks. The series will be covering severe cases of Human rights violations Nationally and Internationally.

Human rights violations noted this fortnight have been enlisted below:

NATIONAL UPDATES

1. ELECTORAL SILENCE PERIOD BEGINS

The electoral silence period started from midnight of 11th May. The local level election is scheduled for May 13, 2022. Although there will be no election campaign or door-to-door campaign during the electoral silence period, there are plenty of instances where voter-influencing activities such as gathering, financial temptations, intimidation and threats were witnessed in the last election.

2. DEATH OF FIVE TEMPORARY POLICE IN A WEEK

Amid forthcoming local level election, five temporary police (Myadi police) deployed in Lalitpur, Humla, Sindupalchowk and Nuwakot have lost their lives in last one week. As per Bishnu Kumar Kc, spokesperson of Nepal Police, among the five, one committed suicide while one died after falling off a slope, one in road accident, one was found dead in his bed and one died while on duty. Government will be providing NPR. 2 million each to the families of the deceased except for the one who committed suicide.

3. CHANCES OF INVALID VOTE DUE TO LACK OF VOTER EDUCATION

Both, the candidates as well as the political parties have failed to organize voter education campaign at Achham which has increased the chances of invalid votes in the district. Maina BK, 55 from Turmakhand Rural Municipality-1, stated that the candidates came asking for votes but didn't teach how to cast the vote.

Further, Min Bahadur Budathapa, 56, stated that the chances of invalid votes have increased since the voters have to pick different election symbols for seven different candidates due to electoral alliance. Political parties have also admitted that they failed to focus on teaching voting procedure.

However, Manoj Shrestha, chief election officer has informed that they are planning to educate voters in the polling centres before sending them to cast votes as they do not have enough time to run the voter education campaign effectively.

As per the District Election Office, the ballot papers sent to Achham contains 22 election symbols including the symbols of eight political parties contesting the election in the district, eight other national political parties and six independent candidates.

4. BIRTAMOD MUNICIPALITY LIMITS SERVICES

Prior four days of local level election, Birtamod Municipality has stopped the flow of all services except the emergency services. This has affected the beneficiaries. A public notice signed by Chief Administrative Officer Binod Kumar Neupane mentioned that all services except health, fire brigade and hearse have been closed till the final result of the election is out.

5. INSEC SUBMITTED PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION

INSEC submitted preliminary election observation report to the election commission. Report includes 21 points of observation. As mentioned in the report, except for few disputes and clashes, the election overall was peaceful. Institution has urged the commission to try and make election more disabled friendly among other things. Further, it has also urged the commission to conduct upcoming federal and provincial level election by making an action plan with due consideration to the lessons learned via former election.

6. PRESS FREEDOM IN NEPAL

As per the data revealed by the Foundation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, it has recorded 75 incidents of violation of press freedom in the interval of one year (from mid-April 2021 to mid-April 2022.) Further, the incidents reportedly targeted 272 journalists and nine media houses.

Among the cases of violation, three were of detention, nine were of obstruction, one of attack, 28 of abuse and threats and 31 related to the professional security of journalists.

Sources: INSECOnline, Ratopati, The Kathmandu Post

INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

1. **WOMEN SENTENCED OVER THE DEATH OF AN UNBORN CHILD**

As per the rights group, a woman in El Salvador has been sentenced to 30 years in prison following the death of her unborn child due to an obstetric emergency.

As per the Citizen Group for the Decriminalization of Abortion, 28 year-old woman, identified as 'Esme', has suffered a health emergency during her pregnancy in 2019 and sought local hospital's assistance. She was later convicted of homicide and kept on pre-trial detention for two years.

Abortion is illegal in El Salvador even in the case of rape or even when women's health is at risk.

2. **STUDENT KILLED OVER BLASPHEMY**

A female student was killed over the allegation of blasphemy in Northwestern Nigerian state of Sokoto. With an order from Aminu Tambuwal, Sokoto state's governor, the college has been shut indefinitely following this incident. The deceased was accused of insulting Prophet Muhammad. According to the reports of local media, her body was allegedly burned afterward within the school premises.

The state's commissioner of information Isa Bajini Galadanchi had urged everyone to maintain peace as the government would take appropriate actions on the investigation findings.

3. **CLIMATE CHANGE AND SCHOOL DROPOUT IN BANGLADESH**

Thousands of families from low-lying Bangladesh are moving to slums of Dhaka due to worsening flood, erosion and storms following extreme weather. The children in the families who moved out are deprived of education and are compelled to start a lifetime of hard labour. Report published by UNICEF had revealed that the children in South Asian nations including Bangladesh, Afghanistan and India are in extremely high risks of climate change impacts. UNICEF further added that most Bangladeshi children not attending primary school live in urban slums, or in hard-to-reach or disaster-prone areas.

4. **60 REPORTEDLY KILLED IN SCHOOL ATTACK AT EAST UKRAINE**

Following Russian air raid in the school of Eastern Ukraine, at around 60 people are missing and feared dead in the debris of a burned-out school after. Serhiy Haidai, the governor of the Luhansk region stated that death of two people has been confirmed and 30 civilians had been pulled from the debris. A video released by Luhansk military administration showed an unidentified person saying 'it is unlikely others have survived. The crater is down to the basement. It's horrible.'

5. **MARCH FOR JUSTICE IN MEXICO**

Amid the surging wave of violence and enforced disappearance in Mexico, thousands of women spent mother's day marching in the nation's capital, chanting and carrying the pictures of their missing relatives and demanding accountability. They marched under the banner 'March for National Dignity' chanting 'What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!'

As per UN, more than 95,000 people were registered as disappeared as of the end of 2021. National register of disappeared person stated that 8,000 new cases were reported each year over last five years.

6. **DEADLY ATTACK ON REFUGEE CAMP IN ITURI**

Around 14 people, including children have been killed by rebels in an overnight attack on a displaced person camp in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. According to Jules Ngongo Tsikudi, Army spokesperson, the rebels attacked the side outside the town of Fataki in Djugu region of eastern Ituri province where hundreds of civilians have sought refuge in recent months.

President of an association of civil society group in Djugu, Jules Tsuba stated that most of the victims of the attack were children. He also added that it was shocking to see children chopped up by machetes.

Sources: Aljazeera, BBC, The guardian

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