



Incidents Prior to Candidate Nomination for the First Phase National and Provincial Elections

Analysis Update – 14

Period: September 29 to October 21, 2017 | Published: October 25, 2017

Summary

There were six election-related incidents recorded between September 29 and October 21, a period before the nomination day for first past the post (FPTP) candidates of the first phase of national and provincial elections.¹ Of the six, three were related to the third phase local-level elections in Province 2. One incident involved election officials protesting for their pay, the second entailed a dispute over vote counting, and the third involved a clash between political parties during a victory rally. The other three incidents were related to the upcoming national and provincial elections. Two incidents concerned candidate selection, and one involved a political party cadre threatening voters.

There was a decrease in the number of election-related incidents from the last reporting period. The lower number of incidents during this period can largely be attributed to the low levels of campaign activity as parties were engaged in internal preparations for elections and candidate selection.² As the campaign period officially starts after the nomination day, it is anticipated that campaign activities will increase.

The number of election-related incidents during the period prior to candidate nomination for the first phase of national elections was lower than during any similar period of time prior to candidate nomination for all three phases of local elections.³

¹ National and provincial elections will be held in two phases. The first phase will be on November 26, and the second on December 7. Candidate nomination for the first phase was on October 22 and second phase will be on November 2. The elections in the first phase will be held in 32 districts of the hills.

² One of the major political events of this period was a formation of electoral alliance between Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) and Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist Center (CPN-MC). A Nepali Congress led alliance has also been formed.

³ There were 57 election-related incidents during the period prior to candidate nomination during the first phase of local level elections. Similarly, there were 55 incidents before candidate nomination during the second phase, and a reduced number of eight incidents during the period leading up to the third phase.

Incidents Related to the Local-Level Elections

- On October 8, a clash between Nepal Loktantrik Forum [NLF] and Nepali Congress cadres resulted into 24 injuries, including of seven children, in Johawa Municipality of Rautahat. NLF accused Nepali Congress cadres of assaulting them during their victory rally, which led to the clash. Police were deployed to defuse the situation.
- On October 8, at least 330 election officials protested in front of the Office of the Chief Returning (CRO) at Gaur of Rautahat. The protestors had reportedly not been paid more than two weeks after the third phase of local-level elections was completed. The protestors detained the office's accountant, and later released him after the Office of the CRO agreed to pay election officials.
- On October 8, a Nepali Congress candidate chewed and damaged a ballot paper during the counting of votes for the municipal executive committee election in Nagarain Municipality of Dhanusha. The candidate was arrested after the incident. Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) demanded a re-election, claiming that the damaged ballot paper was a vote for its candidate. The Nepali Congress candidate who damaged the ballot paper was eventually declared the winner of the election.

Incidents Related to the National and Provincial Elections

- On October 8, a Member of Parliament (MP) and a newly elected Ward Chairperson, both from Nepali Congress, physically assaulted each other during a dispute over the selection of candidates for federal and provincial parliament in Gulariya Municipality of Bardiya. The municipal chairperson of Nepali Congress in Gulariya said that the MP was expelled from the party because he assaulted the Ward Chairperson. The MP denies these allegations.
- On October 17, a group of Rashtriya Janta Party Nepal (RJPN) leaders and cadres staged a sit-in protest in front of their party headquarters in Babarmahal of Kathmandu. They accused party leadership of allocating candidacies to wealthy new cadres on the basis of monetary benefit, instead of genuine commitment to the party's principles.
- On October 18, Rajiv Gurung (alias Dipak Manange), a CPN-UML cadre with a criminal record, allegedly threatened residents of Manang district with severe consequences if they do not vote for him in the upcoming national election. The provincial committee of CPN-UML had recommended Gurung's name to the standing committee of the party. The standing committee rejected the recommendation on the basis of Gurung's controversial record. Following the decision, Gurung has decided to run as an independent candidate.

Note: Please look below to see the map of incidents enlisted in the report.

This is the fourteenth in a series of periodic analysis updates that Democracy Resource Center Nepal (DRCN) and the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) / NepalMonitor.org will be releasing during the upcoming elections period. This project receives financial and technical support from The Asia Foundation and The Carter Center.

Election Related Incidents, September 29 - October 21, 2017

