



## **Political Incidents after Parliamentary and Provincial Elections**

Analysis Update – 18

*Period: January 8 – February 7, 2018 | Published: February 9, 2018*

There were 32 political incidents recorded between January 8 and February 7, 2018. 29 incidents were related to protests over the location of provincial capitals, in at least four of those incidents the protesters clashed with police resulting into multiple injuries. Two incidents involved demonstrations against moving local level centers and one incident entailed a protest against the language used by provincial assembly members during the first province assembly meeting in Province 2.

The number of incidents related to the location of provincial capitals increased during this reporting period when on January 17 the government officially declared the location of temporary provincial capitals.<sup>1</sup> The announcement led to intensified protests in several places, where residents had been demanding that their city or district be made capital.<sup>2</sup> Out of 29 incidents related to protests for provincial capitals, 22 incidents occurred after January 17. Of 29 incidents demanding provincial capitals; 11 incidents occurred in Dhankuta of Province 1, seven incidents took place at Dipayal Silgadhi of Doti in Province 7 and four incidents occurred at Birgunj of Parsa in Province 2.

The inaugural meeting of all newly formed province assemblies was held at their temporarily assigned capitals in the first week of February amidst protests against the temporarily announced capitals in many provinces.<sup>3</sup> The constitution mandates that each provincial assembly will finally decide the capital of its province.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that protests may again rise when the provincial assemblies take the final decision on provincial capitals.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the government announcement of January 17, the following cities have been assigned as the temporary capitals of their respective provinces: Biratnagar of Province 1, Janakpur of Province 2, Hetauda of Province 3, Pokhara of Province 4, Butwal of Province 5, Surkhet of Province 6 and Dhangadhi of Province 7.

<sup>2</sup> Demonstrations demanding provincial capitals began in several places when the government made preparations to declare temporary provincial capitals during the first week of January. After the protests intensified, the government postponed the announcement of the capitals. 21 incidents related to demonstrations by residents demanding their cities to be the capital of their provinces recorded between December 8, 2017 and January 7, 2018. See <http://democracyresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Analysis-Update-17.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> On January 17, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) announced the final results of provincial assemblies. Article 183 of the constitution specifies that the first provincial assembly meeting be held within 20 days of announcement of election results.

<sup>4</sup> Article 288 of the constitution mentions that the two third majority of province assembly members shall take final decision on its capital.

Meanwhile, national assembly elections were held on February 7.<sup>5</sup> The elections were conducted peacefully with no incident reported.

## **Overview of Incidents<sup>6</sup>**

### Protests Related to Provincial Capitals

- On January 10, residents of Dhankuta Municipality held a torch rally to demand the city be made the capital of Province 1. The rally was carried out from Bhim Narayan Chowk. Nurses in the city also tied black armbands in support of the demand.
- On January 11, residents enforced a general strike in Dhankuta to demand its status as the capital of Province 1. The strike affected transportation, markets and schools.
- On January 17, residents of Dhankuta protested across the district against the government decision to assign Biratnagar Metropolitan City as capital of Province 1, instead of Dhankuta. The residents called an indefinite strike in the district. All businesses, educational institutions and transportation remained closed.
- On January 17, residents of Dang called an indefinite general strike in the district in protest of government's decision to announce Butwal as temporary capital of Province 5. Transportation, businesses, government offices and educational institutions were all shut down across the district. The residents of Dang demanded their district be made capital of Province 5.
- On January 17, 35 cadres of Nepali Congress including the district vice chairperson from Doti resigned. The cadres stated that the government's decision to announce Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City as the capital of Province 7 had hurt the sentiments of the people of Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality. The next day, cadres of Nepali Congress put a black flag at their party office to protest the government's decision.
- On January 18, residents of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City, Sunsari burned the government's decision that declared Biratnagar Metropolitan City as the temporary capital of Province 1. Their demand was to declare Dharan the capital instead.
- On January 18, residents of Birgunj Metropolitan City of Parsa protested against the government's decision to declare Janakpur Sub-Metropolitan City of Dhanusha as the temporary capital of Province 2. Protesters stopped vehicles at various places in the city and burnt tires on the road.

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<sup>5</sup> The results of the elections were released on February 8 with Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) securing 29 seats. Nepali Congress came second with 13 seats. Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Center (CPN-MC) secured the third position with 10 seats. Rashtriya Janta Party Nepal (RJPN) and Sanghiya Samajwadi Forum Nepal (SSFN) secured two seats each. The national assembly comprises 59 members with each (seven) province electing eight members and three members being nominated by the cabinet.

<sup>6</sup> For a complete list of incidents, see Nepal Monitor's records.

(<https://nepalmonitor.org/reports/index/?z=6&s=1514744100&e=1519841699&c=178&i=day>)

- On January 18, residents of Bhaktapur protested against the government's announcement that declared Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City as the temporary capital of Province 3. The protest was led by elected representatives including the mayor of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality and a member of federal parliament.
- On January 18, 13 persons were injured in a clash between police and protesters in Dipayal, Doti. The clash started when police attempted to stop protesters, who were throwing stones at Regional Administration Office (RAO). Police had to use tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. The protesters were demanding Dipayal Silgadhi to be made the capital of Province 7.
- On January 19, protesters in Dadeldhura burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba as the government declared Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City as the temporary capital of Province 7 instead of Dadeldhura. Prakash Saud, a central member of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industries, commented that protesters will now demand a separate province for far western hilly districts.
- On January 20, a clash between protesters and police resulted into 24 protesters and four police personnel getting injured in Silgadhi of Doti. The clash broke out when protesters started throwing stones at the District Administration Office (DAO). The protesters were demanding Dipayal Silgadhi to be made the capital of Province 7.
- On January 20, women in Tulsipur Sub-Metropolitan City of Dang protested with plates, spoons and other kitchen utensils against the government's declaration of Butwal as the temporary capital of Province 5.
- On January 21, protestors demanding Birgunj Metropolitan City be made the capital of province showed black flags to Upendra Yadav, the Chairperson of SSFN in Birgunj.
- On January 21, protesters in Doti vandalized vehicles in Bhimdutta Highway, accusing the drivers of defying the general strike being enforced to demand Dipayal Sigadhi be announced the capital of province 7.
- On January 22, residents picketed the RAO in Rajpur of Doti, demanding Dipayal Silgadhi be made the capital of Province 7. They also decided to close the markets for two hours.
- On February 4, protesters vandalized three vehicles to enforce general strike in Birgunj Metropolitan City of Parsa. The strike was organized to demand Birgunj be made the capital of Province 2 instead of Janakpur.

#### Demonstrations against Moving Local Level Centers

- On January 25, residents of Rukumkot in East Rukum protested the government's decision to move the district headquarters from Rukumkot to Golkhara in

Puthauttarganga Rural Municipality. Protesters halted vehicles, padlocked the DAO and burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

- On February 4, residents of Tilathi, Launiya and Sakarpura from Tilathi Koiladi Rural Municipality of Saptari protested against shifting the rural municipality center from Tilathi to Koiladi. The protesters vandalized the rural municipality office after padlocking it and set its banners and signboards on fire.

#### Protest against Language Used in Province Assembly

- On February 6, a group of youth in Janakpur Sub-Metropolitan City burnt effigies of leaders of Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum Nepal (SSFN) and Rashriya Janta Party Nepal (RJPN) at Janaki Chowk. The youth protested against some of the province assembly members from SSFN and RJPN taking their oath in Hindi language instead of Maithili, Bhojpuri or other mother tongues of Tarai.

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

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