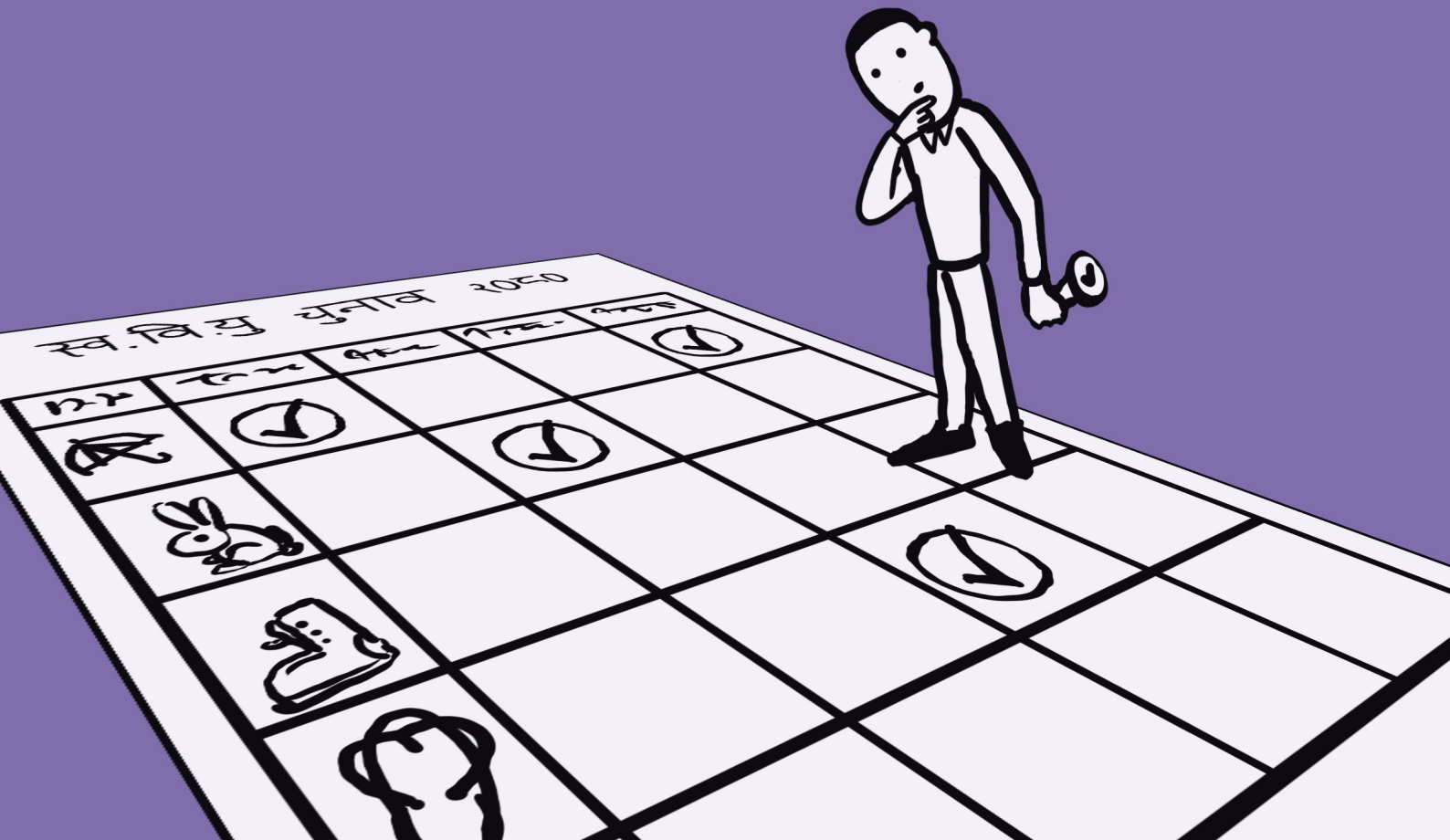


# GOVERNANCE WATCH

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

ISSUE - 03

APRIL 2023



# Governance Monitoring Centre Nepal

## Media Monitoring Report

**Governance Monitoring Centre Nepal (GMC Nepal)** is a research initiative led by Kathmandu-based NGO Centre for Social Change (CSC). Using a variety of investigative methods and the latest in qualitative & quantitative research tools, GMC Nepal is dedicated to strengthening the newly established federal democracy and empower its citizens through up-to-date information relating to the status of governance related conflicts and peace in Nepal.

While the first phase of this initiative successfully looked into the governance aspects of the Health, Education, and Migration sectors in Nepal, GMC Nepal Phase-II takes a closer look at the four major mutually non-exclusive arenas of governance conflicts in the Nepali federal context:

- a. Natural Resource Conflicts
- b. Development Conflicts
- c. Ethnocultural Conflicts
- d. Political Conflicts

The '**Governance Watch**', a bi-monthly periodic report represents GMC Nepal's attempt to understand the major conflicts occurring within and beyond the federal structures and systems. Through vigilant media monitoring mechanisms, this report analyzes the changing dynamics of governance related conflicts and elements associated with these conflicts, emphasizing the crucial role of media in reflecting where latest developments and interests are focused. Here is how the methods have defined the major governance areas selected by this report and major indicators it is looking into:

Governance areas	Definition
Natural resource governance	Norms, institutions and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over natural resources and climate are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens (including women, men, youth, Indigenous peoples and local communities) participate in and benefit from the management of natural resources.
Development governance	Governance of social and infrastructure development through appropriate procedures comprising policy formulation, program design, budgetary allocation, and administrative reforms parallel to annual targets and/or short-term, mid-term and long-term goals and objectives set for social and economic development.
Ethnocultural governance	Accountability of authorities and government institutions to ensure rights, opportunities and security of all citizens, especially of historically marginalized and minority groups without imposing violence or discrimination on anyone based on their identity, culture, gender, region, language and ethnicity.
Political governance	Practices of federalism among different tiers/organs of governments and between the government and people.

## Major Indicators

The media monitoring methods adopted have assessed the following major indicators to understand the four areas of governance and governance related conflicts:

Indicators	Definition
Legal and policy frameworks	Enforcement of laws and regulations, policies and procedures enacted by the legislative bodies in accordance with broader governance and societal reform.
Government bodies and	Institutional arrangements of government bodies and autonomous bodies under federal structure and their interaction.
Roles and responsibilities	Power relations and functions of government bodies (both executing and implementing agencies) along with civil society, international bodies, media for fully functional of federal structure, better governance and rule of law.
Conflict resolution/ transformation	Existing mechanisms and provisions dedicated to resolving conflicts, providing access to justice and ensuring participation and representation of marginalized communities and indigenous people.

The media monitoring methods analyze the above indicators to understand the gaps and challenges existent within the federal governance system. Understanding effectiveness in formation as well as implementation of the indicators is the major focus of this report to derive governance related conflicts and also, relevant opportunities.

## Actors Involved

This report attempts to understand the role or potential roles of various actors in accelerating or decelerating governance conflicts. It mainly includes citizens, individuals, groups or designated bodies relevant to governance of the 4 areas focused by this report. Example, government bodies at all three tiers, judicial bodies, civilians, various ethnic and political groups etc.

Also, this study records **wild animals** as significant actors and **wild animal attacks** as important indicator to demonstrate humans and natural resource conflict, that are reportedly threatening to life and property of local citizens. Likewise, illegal poaching and hunting of wildlife is another key marker of this attempt that demonstrates atrocities on wildlife posed by humans. These events are recorded to draw attention to the roles and responsibilities of authorities, compensation or reparation provisions and even awareness of governing bodies at local, provincial and central levels in promotion of human-animal conflict resolution, transformation or management mechanisms. It is also observed that these conflicts have unprecedented probabilities of overlapping with habitat conservation laws and policies, development trends and controls and ethno-cultural challenges and displacements. Hence, this reference is crucial to illuminate and further emphasize government efforts to understand and manage this ongoing human-nature conflict.

## Media Outlets Monitored:

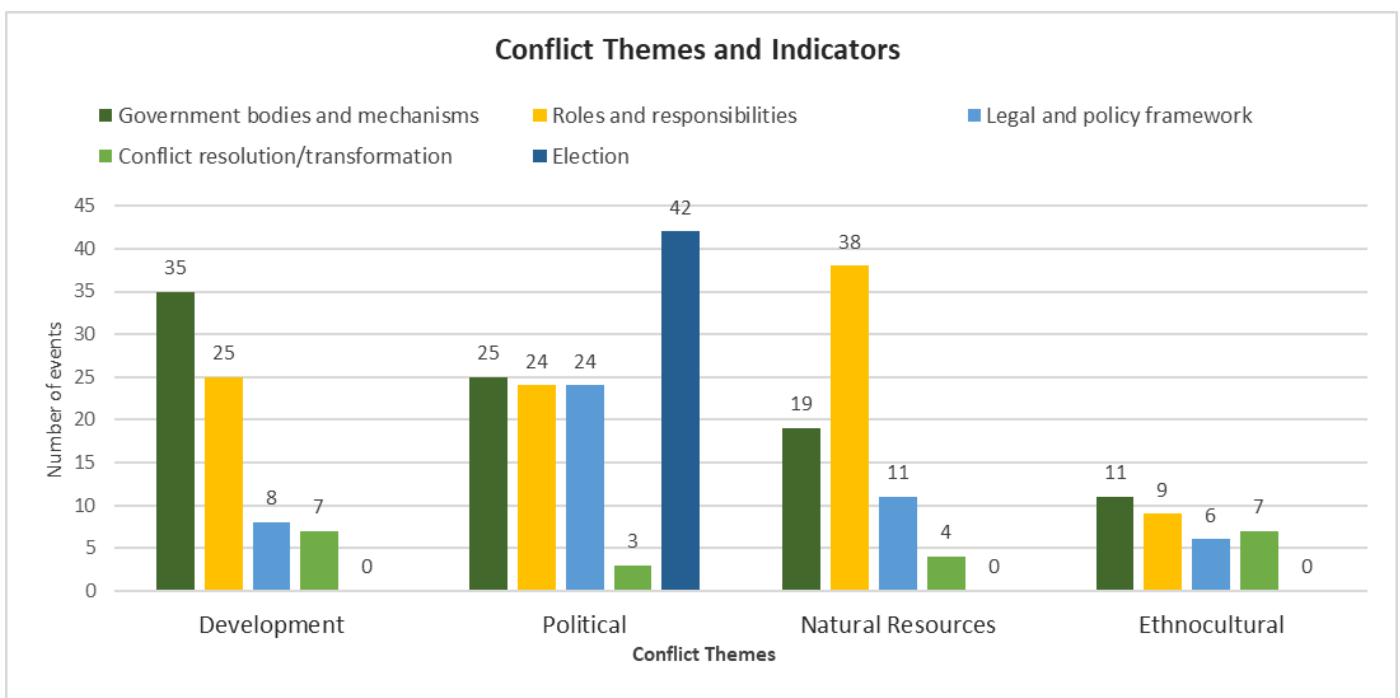
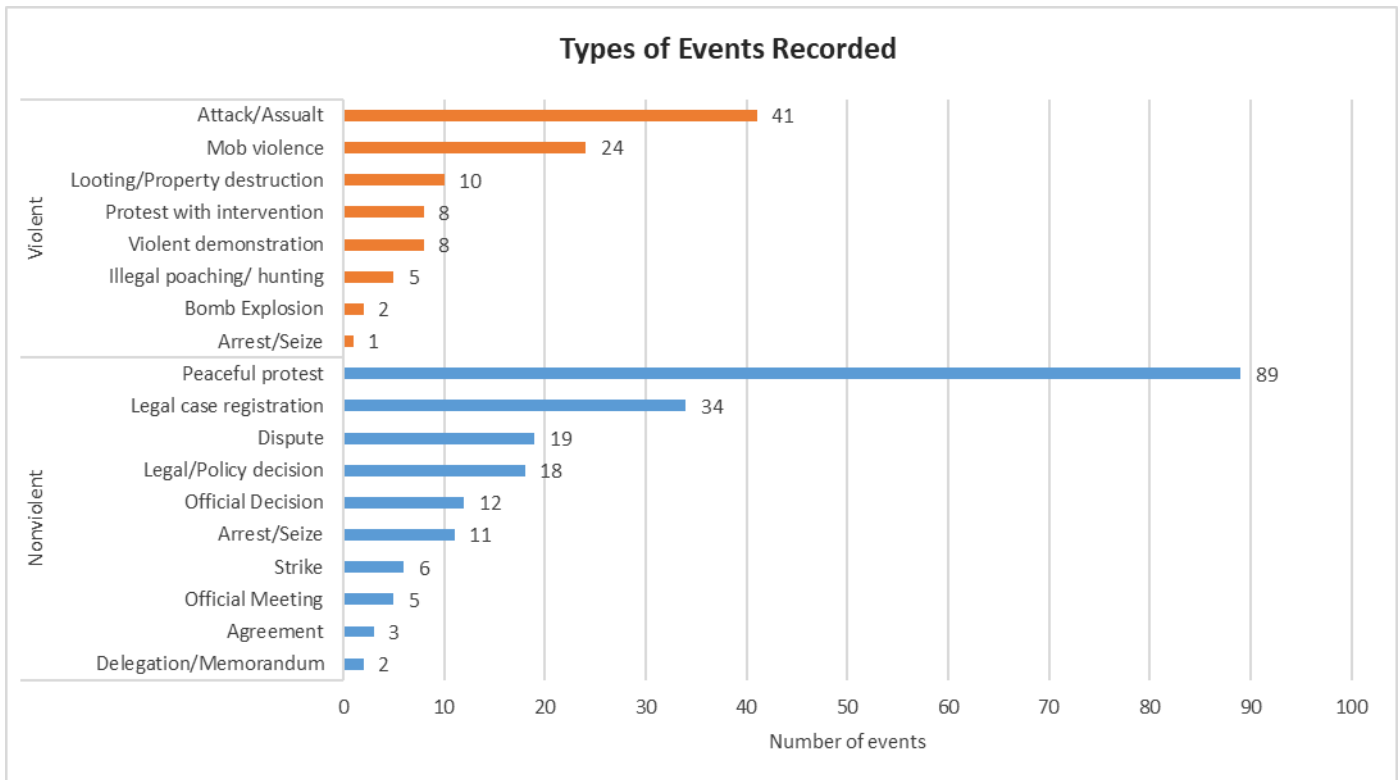
The Kathmandu Post/ Kantipur Daily/ Annapurna Post/ Online Khabar/ SetoPati.

# A Cumulative Snapshot of Recorded News and Events

Media Coverage: October 2022 - January 2023

Starting from month of October 2022 to March 2023, in the past six months, a total of 298 events have been recorded under this media monitoring initiative under GMC Nepal. Below is a numeric snapshot of the observations so far.

Event Type	Events Recorded
Nonviolent	199
Violent	98
Total Recorded Events	298



Access detailed analysis of the report here: [Governance Watch Series Archives - GMC Nepal](#)

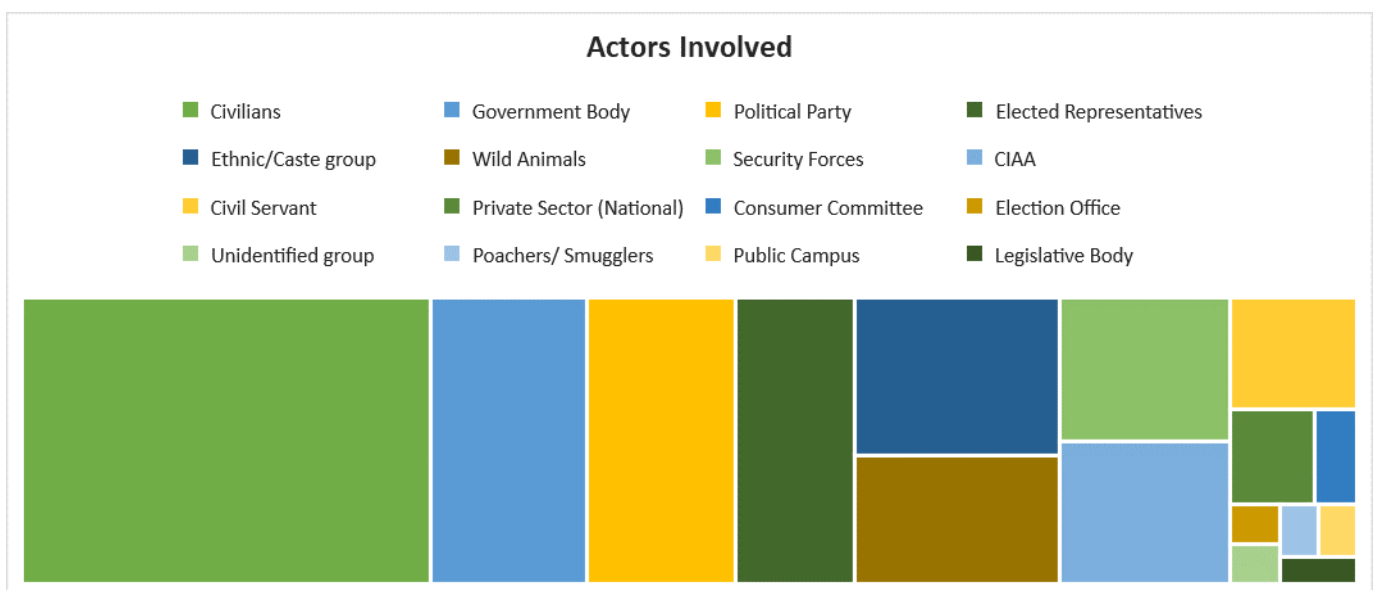
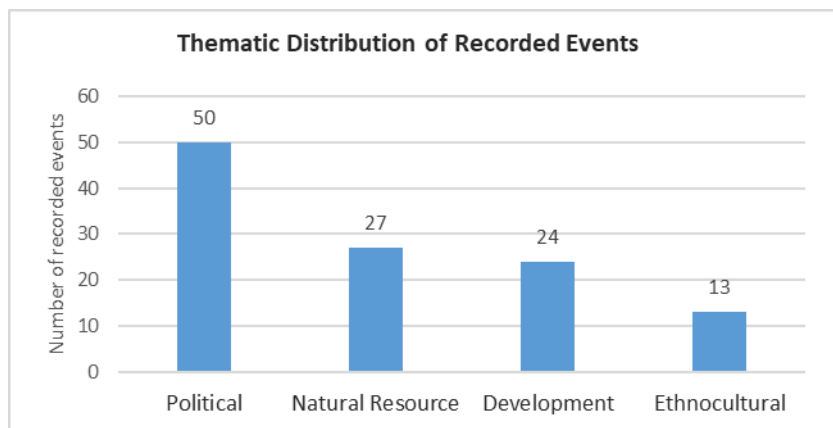
# Overview of Recorded Events

## Media Coverage: February 2023 - March 2023

This third issue of GMC Nepal’s media monitoring report observed a total of 114 events in the months of February and March 2023, as covered by the five major news portals of Nepal. An overall observation of the news and events focused in the four governance areas (natural resource, development, political, ethnocultural governance) in these two months showed occurrences of political conflicts were relatively higher. These conflicts were dominated by cases relevant to electoral environment induced by student elections and public and political dissatisfactions in official naming/renaming of Province 1 to Koshi Province. On the other end, consistent to previous issues of the report, the least reported issues were concerned with ethno-cultural governance issues in Nepal. However, fewer coverage of ethnocultural issues by media further emphasizes the need to bring forward stories that are relevant to gender, caste-ethnicity and minority groups as they are potential grounds for increased structural inequalities and bigger conflicts in the future.

An overall observation suggests that major actors involved in these conflicts are government authorities and institutions, civilians and political groups and majority of these conflicts occurred due to ambiguity, misperceptions and even unwillingness to fulfil one’s roles and responsibilities within the three tiered governance structures. This report shows that the majority of events were nonviolent in nature ranging from peaceful protests to legal case registrations to padlocks, etc. while the violent events included attempts of assault, wildlife attacks, mob protests, etc. A graphical representation of this summary is presented as below:

Type of Events	No. of Events
Nonviolent	79
Violent	35
Total Recorded Events	114





# A Glimpse of the Most-Covered News in February—March 2023.

## Student Union Elections 2023

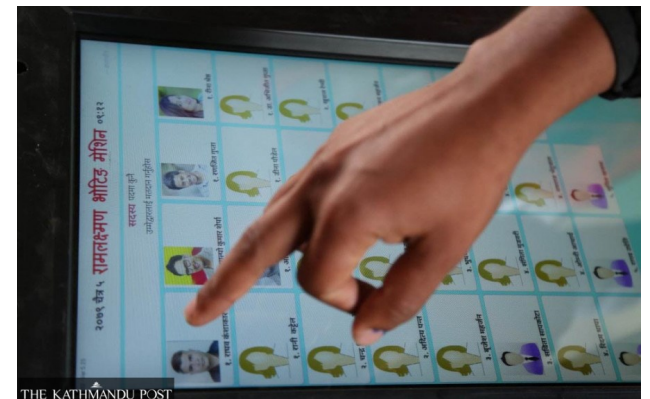


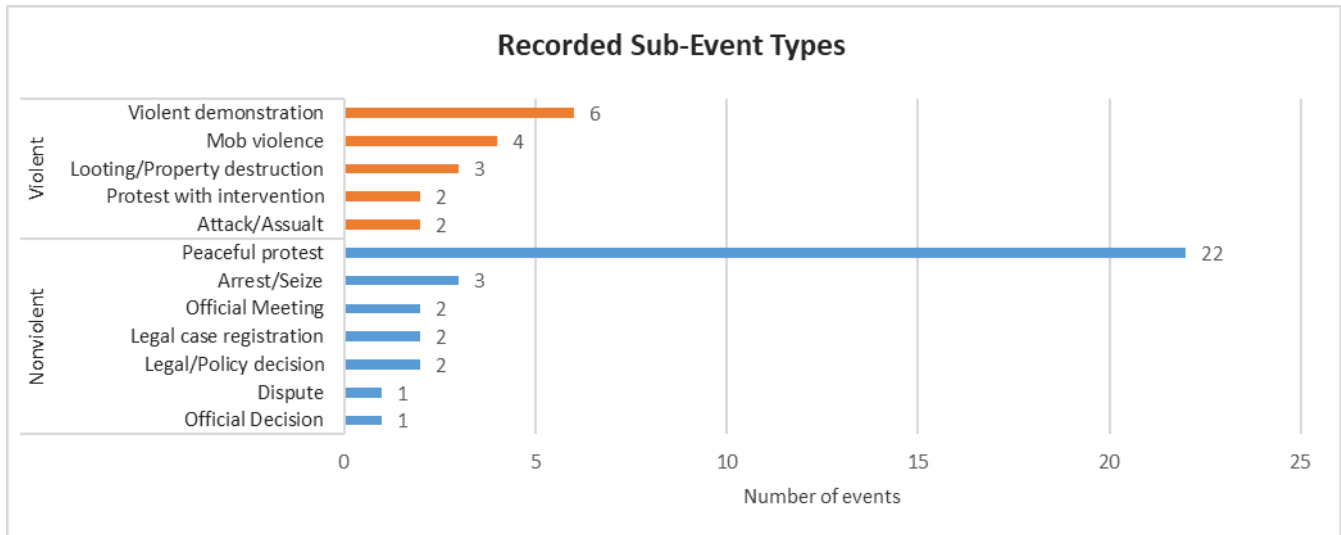
Image Sources: The Himalayan Times, Ekantipur, The Kathmandu Post.

From observations of five news portals in the months of February and March 2023, events related to students' elections in Nepal held on March 19th, dominated the news coverage. Student election in Nepal was supposed to be held every two years but hasn't been held since 2017. Results of the Free Students Union election showed that student union wings of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML emerged as two largest student organizations and many disputes were relevant to the rival groups' differing claim of votes, especially from university constituent and affiliated campuses across Nepal. Recordings of this period shows that elections in many of the Nepali campuses were postponed due to disputes between rival unions, disputes with campus administrations and disputes with the governing authorities. Students' elections relevant events faced multiple incidents of violence and tremendously affected the timely conclusion of the elections. The occurred events of conflict and relevance of multiple actors, more so in acts of violence, raises serious questions about the indulgence of students and educators into politics, their unionization and overall culture of politics that has seeped into the higher education system of Nepal.

# Political Conflicts

Media Coverage: February 2023 - March 2023

Presidential election, naming of Koshi Province, vote of confidence by the Prime Minister after withdrawal of government support by some allies and student union elections were the major political events that were reported by media in the months of February and March 2023. Official naming of the Koshi Province, which was the last province to be named, and student union elections, a biennial election, were long-pending issues and the majority of the events recorded were associated with them.



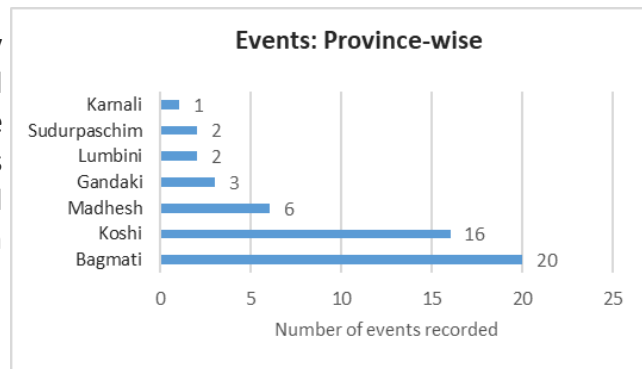
As presented in the chart above, the majority of the events recorded in the months of February and March 2023 were nonviolent (64% of the total events) in nature. Demonstrations, both peaceful and violent, account for more than half of the total recorded political events. The bulk of the violent events recorded were related to student union election and the province name<sup>1</sup>, while nonviolent events incorporate diverse topics, like police violence against civilians<sup>2</sup>, People's War Day<sup>3</sup>, voting rights<sup>4</sup>, new amendment bill on the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act<sup>5</sup>, etc., all while including the nonviolent events related to student union election and the province naming. Additionally, first Sub-Metropolitan First National Conference<sup>6</sup> held in Butwal released a '7-point declaration' demanding better governance including immediate enactment of the Federal Civil Service Act. Second assembly of the National Federation of Rural Municipalities<sup>7</sup> was also held in Butwal city, office bearers stating that the lack of timely legislation on issues is hindering the implementation of federalism at the local level, leading to problems with service delivery.

## Province-wise Media Coverage

The majority of the political events covered by the media were concentrated on Bagmati and Koshi provinces, i.e., 72% of total recorded events. Demonstrations by civilians against the Police violence<sup>8</sup>,

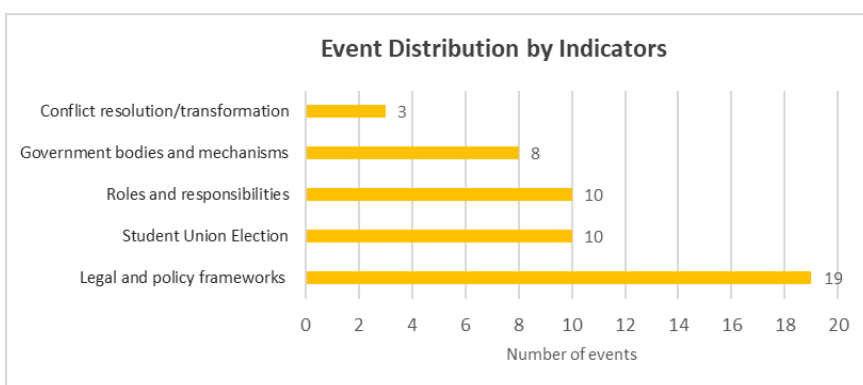
1. The Kathmandu Post (March 24, 2023) [Man injured during Biratnagar protest demanding renaming of Koshi province dies \(kathmandupost.com\)](https://www.kathmandupost.com)
2. Setopati (February 10, 2023) [राष्ट्रपति सवारी भएको समयमा हिंडेको भन्दै टमा सेन्टरका डाक्टरमाथि प्रहरीको कुटपिट \(भिडिओ\) :: नवीनबाबु गुरुङ :: Setopati](https://www.setopati.com)
3. The Kathmandu Post (February 12, 2023) [Government announces public holiday to mark 'People's War Day' \(kathmandupost.com\)](https://www.kathmandupost.com)
4. Ekantipur (March 1, 2023) ['नो भोट' को अधिकार माग्दै जुम्लाका नन्दराज धर्नामा- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार \(ekantipur.com\)](https://www.ekantipur.com)
5. OnlineKhabar (March 9, 2023) [Govt decides to register truth and reconciliation law amendment bill in parliament - OnlineKhabar English News](https://www.onlinekhabar.com)
6. Ekantipur (March 6, 2023) [महानगर र उपमहानगरका लागि छुट्टै ऐन जारी गर्न माग- लुम्बिनी - कान्तिपुर समाचार \(ekantipur.com\)](https://www.ekantipur.com)
7. Ekantipur (February 19, 2023) [गाउँपालिका पदाधिकारीहरूको माग- 'स्थानीय सरकारको स्रोत र बजेट नखोसियोस्'- लुम्बिनी - कान्तिपुर समाचार \(ekantipur.com\)](https://www.ekantipur.com)
8. Ekantipur (February 11, 2023) ['भीभीआईपी चाहिँदैन. जनता कुट्न पाइँदैन'- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार \(ekantipur.com\)](https://www.ekantipur.com)

violent demonstrations<sup>9</sup>, looting and property destruction<sup>10</sup> by agitated Transport workers and demonstrations by armed-conflict victims<sup>11</sup> were observed in Bagmati province. Almost all events observed in the Koshi Province, both peaceful and violent, were related to the public dissatisfaction with the province’s name.



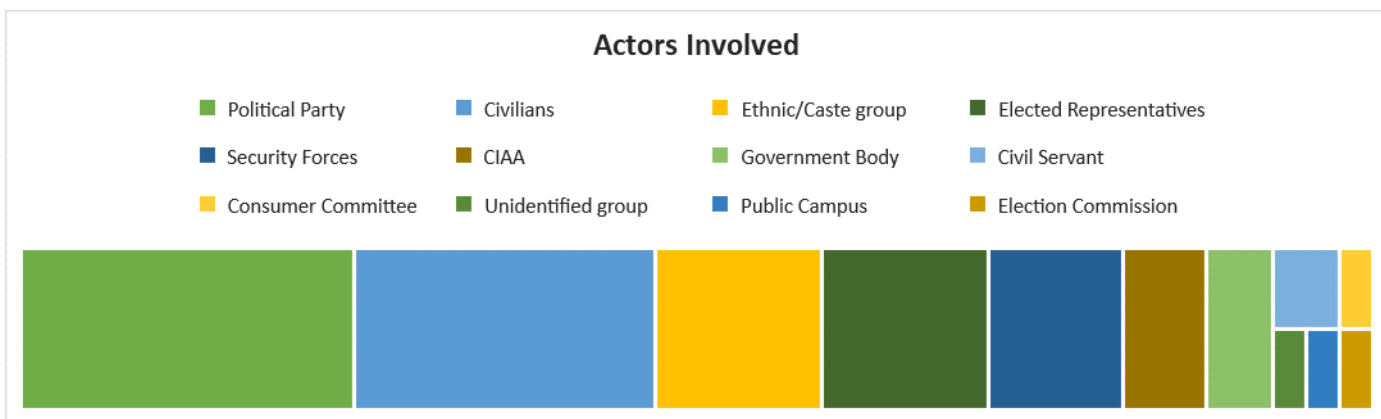
### Event Distribution by Indicators and Major Actors Involved

Events related to legal and policy frameworks were most prominent in these two months, that include naming of Province 1<sup>12</sup>, transport workers against increased traffic fines<sup>13</sup>, elected representatives’ demands for voting rights for Nepalese living abroad<sup>14</sup> and armed-conflict victims’ demands for revision of amended bill on the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation and Commission Act<sup>15</sup>.



‘Province 1 Renaming Joint Struggle Committee’, which is demanding the name of province based on Identity, was the most active actor in demonstrations against the provincial government declaring ‘Koshi’ as province name. Supporters of the committee were involved in a range of activities, peaceful protests, strikes, padlocking ward offices, property destruction and assaults.

Observing events related to conflict resolution/transformation mechanisms, there were two successful discussions between the government and the agitating actors, doctors<sup>16</sup> and transport workers<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, Home Ministry formed an investigation committee to investigate the death of a protestor during demonstration in Biratnagar city<sup>18</sup>.



9. Setopati (February 13, 2023) [बालाजु घटनामा २० प्रहरी घाइते, ९ जना प्रदर्शनकारी प्रहरीको नियन्त्रणमा :: सेतोपाटी संवाददाता :: Setopati](#)

10. Setopati (February 18, 2023) [बसपार्कमा लुटपाट, तोडफोड र आगजनी गर्ने ४० जनामाथि अनुसन्धान सुरु :: रासस :: Setopati](#)

11. The Kathmandu Post (March 30, 2023) [Conflict victims divided over amendment bill \(kathmandupost.com\)](#)

12. OnlineKhabar (March 12, 2023) [कोशी प्रदेशमा हडताल, सार्वजनिक सवारी साधन सञ्चालन हुन सकेनन् - Online Khabar](#)

13. OnlineKhabar (February 13, 2023) [आन्दोलनरत यातायात मजदुरले जलाए प्रहरी भ्यान - Online Khabar](#)

14. Ekantipur (March 1, 2023) [‘नो भोट’ को अधिकार माग्दै जुम्लाका नन्दराज धर्नामा- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार \(ekantipur.com\)](#)

15. The Kathmandu Post (March 30, 2023) [Conflict victims divided over amendment bill \(kathmandupost.com\)](#)

16. OnlineKhabar (February 12, 2023) [चिकित्सकहरुको आन्दोलन स्थगित, सरकारसँग ६ बुँदे सहमति - Online Khabar](#)

17. OnlineKhabar (February 14, 2023) [आन्दोलित यातायात मजदुर र सरकारबीच सिंहदरबारमा वार्ता जारी - Online Khabar](#)

18. Setopati (March 25, 2023) [कोशी प्रदेश नामकरण आन्दोलनमा पदमको मृत्यु-प्रकरण: छानबिन समिति गठन :: सेतोपाटी संवाददाता :: Setopati](#)



## Major Challenges in Political Governance

Some of the major challenges highlighted in the news coverage are as follows:

- a. Lack of transparency and the government's inability to understand public sentiments leading to conflicts between the public and the government, which has further possibilities for ethnic tensions if not resolved timely.
- b. Lack of legislations at central and the provincial levels has created problems and confusions in local governance and service delivery. Both the central and the provincial governments must prepare and enact required laws, with clear distinctions of authorities and power.
- c. Amendments in legislations, and official decisions encroaching the sentiments of conflict victims is poor governance and poor conflict resolution process.
- d. Poor security enforcement have created tensions with the public, leading to violence and even deaths. Security forces need to have better mechanisms to manage mob violences and avoid violence targeting the public.

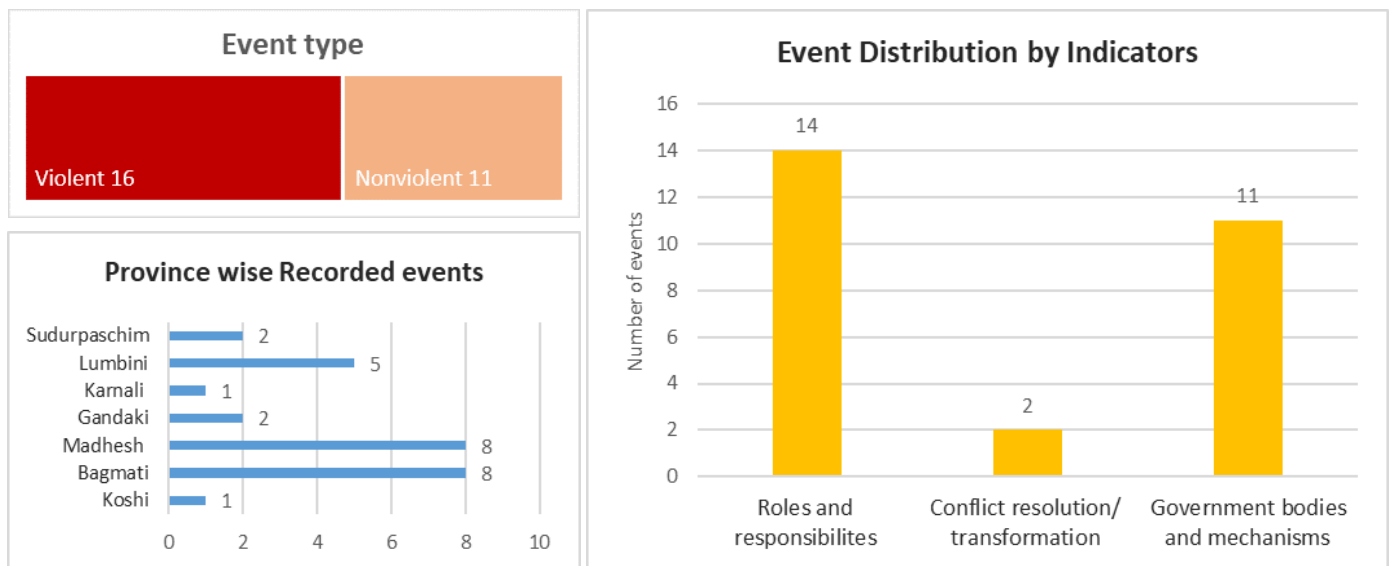
# Natural Resource Conflicts

## Media Coverage: February 2023 - March 2023

During the two months of media observations, a total of 27 news and events were reported as conflicts relevant to governance of natural resources in Nepal. Observations show that, power clashes within the governance structures, lack of strict monitoring mechanisms for proper use of allocated budget at local levels and ill-identified roles and responsibilities of authorities continue to fuel conflicts within and around natural resource governance, as highlighted by the media. Additionally, events of wild animal attacks and poaching, killing and hunting of wild animals continue to be consistent with previous reporting, highlighting human-nature conflict as one of the most pressing issues that needs urgent attention of government authorities.

Here is a snapshot of the conflicts within and corresponding to governance of natural resources as highlighted by five major news portals of Nepal:

### Natural Resource Governance Conflicts



Of the 27 news observed relevant to natural resource governance, the majority of events were violent in nature that includes wild animal attacks<sup>19</sup>, illegal hunting, poisoning and killing and poaching of wild animals<sup>20</sup>, and attempted assaults between elected representatives<sup>21</sup> over extraction of river-based materials. The nonviolent events include involvement of government authorities in corruption related activities and illegal trades of timber<sup>23</sup> among others.

Also, an analysis of the indicators of the media monitoring shows, majority natural resource governance conflicts occurred due to lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities of government and other authorities in ensuring protection of lives and properties of the locals against wild animal attacks, conservation and protection of wild animals against violent and illegal actions of people, and proper declarations regarding use of natural resources. This unclarity has significantly fueled governance conflicts as this has allowed authorities to transfer their obligations to another department or jurisdiction, creating uncertainty in conclusion of functions and accountability.

19. Ekantipur (February 20, 2023) हात्तीको आक्रमणबाट महिलाको मृत्यु, स्थानीयले चेकपोस्ट तोडफोड गरे- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

20. Ekantipur, The Kathmandu Post (February 10, 2023) खाग तस्करीको आरोपमा १५ जना पक्राउ- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

21. Setopati (March 3, 2023) गाउँपालिका अध्यक्षलाई कार्यक्षमै टेबल उठाएर हान्न खोजे वडाध्यक्षले :: नारायण खड्का :: Setopati

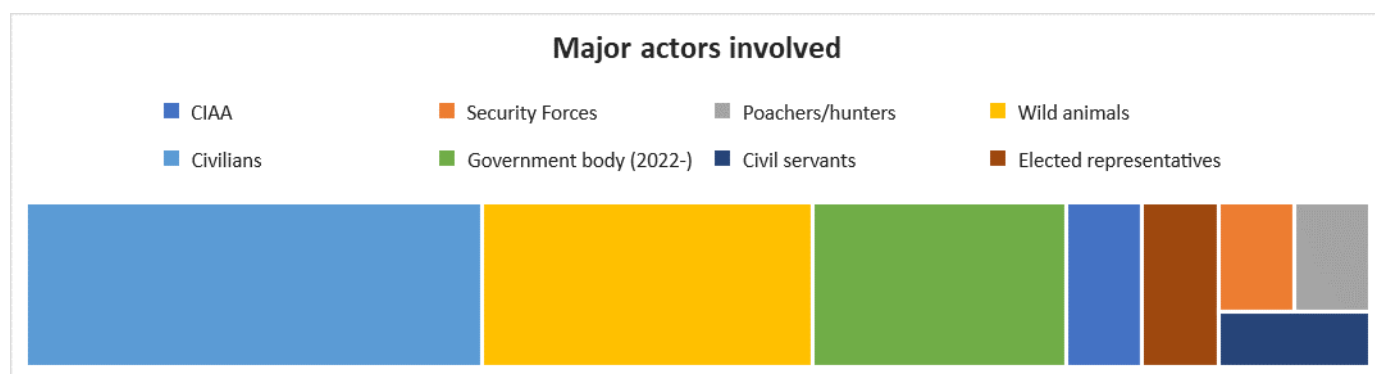
22. Setopati (March 23, 2023) घुस लिएको प्रमाण भेटिएपछि डिभिजन वन कार्यालयका अधिकृत निलम्बित :: सेतोपाटी संवाददाता :: Setopati

23. Ekantipur (February 3, 2023) पर्सा निकुञ्ज तस्करी प्रकरण : २ सांसद, पूर्वगाउँपालिका अध्यक्षसहित ४७ जनाविरुद्ध मुद्दा दायर- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

On positive notes, events that were consistent with conflict resolution mechanism included local initiatives taken by forest officers to stop timber log smuggling<sup>24</sup>. Also, to ensure protection of Seti River, Pokhara High Court gave interim order to immediately stop extraction of minerals, sand and rocks. Such cases can exemplify the effectiveness of local efforts and leadership in managing human-nature conflicts.

Furthermore, a province level analysis shows that the majority of natural resource related governance conflicts in the past two months occurred in Bagmati and Madhesh Province. Events in Bagmati province include wild animal attacks in Makwanpur and Chitwan districts, legal charges against government employee for their involvement in smuggling of rhino horns and illegal mining of minerals. Likewise, in Madhesh Province, cases of corruption charges against forest officers<sup>25</sup>, forest encroachment<sup>26</sup>, and wild animal attacks were recorded.

## Major Conflict Actors



Consistent to previous observations, this issue of media monitoring also shows civilians were on the receiving ends of the impacts ensued by poor natural resource governance. Following suit, wild animals and the government were other major actors involved in the conflict. Hence, the unquestionable role of government bodies, policies and mechanisms was highlighted by these cases both as potential instigators of conflict and also as possible solution bearers.

## Challenges in Natural Resource Governance

Some of the major challenges highlighted in the news coverage are as follows:

- Distinct guidelines and parameters of accountability need to be properly implemented by responsible authorities in cases of damage, injuries and casualties caused by wild animal attacks.
- Roles and responsibilities regarding monitoring of extraction of minerals and rocks from major rivers is a serious concern that needs to be urgently addressed among federal, provincial and local governments.
- In cases of conflicts between locals and forest officials, a distinct conflict resolution mechanism is required to deescalate the impacts of the conflict.
- Stricter laws and regulations need to be implemented to criminalize illegal poaching, hunting and trapping of wild animals and illegal trading of timber.

24. Ekantipur (February 14, 2023) काठ तस्करी रोक्न जंगलमा खाडल- मधेस - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

25. Setopati (March 23, 2023) घुस लिएको प्रमाण भेटिएपछि डिभिजन वन कार्यालयका अधिकृत निलम्बित :: सेतोपाटी संवाददाता :: Setopati

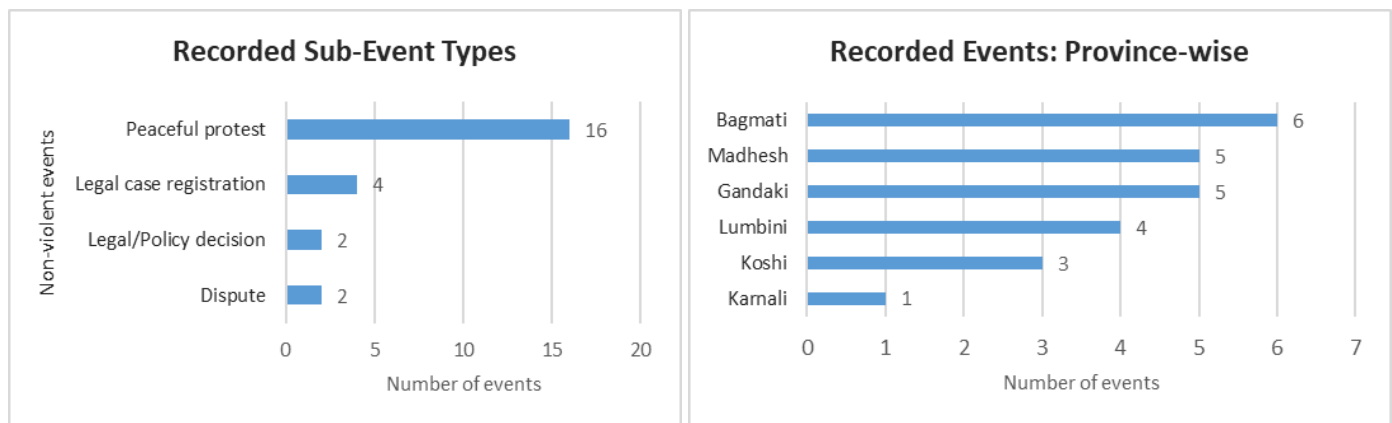
26. Online Khabar (March 11, 2023) कोल्हबी-५ का वडाध्यक्षविरुद्ध वन मुद्दा चलाइने - Online Khabar

## Development Conflicts

### Media Coverage: February 2023 - March 2023

The latest world bank report mentions that the chronic underspending of the capital expenditure budget has limited progress on development goals and prolonged the duration of infrastructure gaps throughout the country<sup>27</sup>. Duplication of spending infrastructure budget is higher. Among other factors, this has reportedly contributed to increase in occurrence of development conflicts in Nepal. Even more development conflicts are rising in rural areas of Nepal due to quest of urban development and modernization. From February 2023 until March 2023, the media monitoring under GMC Nepal has recorded a total of 24 news coverage in development conflicts, which were nonviolent in nature.

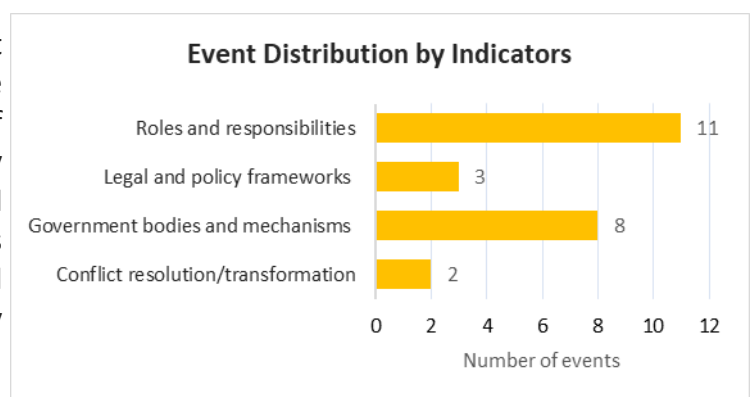
The graph below provides detailed characteristics of news coverage which were monitored and recorded in the past two months.



While assessing all the recorded news coverage, it was observed that the high concentration of development conflicts is centered around delayed expansion of road network particularly in Lumbini province<sup>28</sup> and Gandaki province<sup>29</sup>. Affected people demonstrated for timely completion of road constructions. For instance, locals protested against the stranded dusty four lane road construction on the Ghorahi-Tulsipur road section of Dang. Furthermore, some news coverage continued to focus on land governance issues that occurred in metropolitan cities like land rights, compensation, evacuation of illegal structures and resettlement for squatters and landless people<sup>30</sup>. Few events were concentrated around public service delivery of Nepal Electricity Authority.

### Event Distribution by Indicators

Although three layers of federal government accompanied by multiple stakeholders are responsible for effective implementation of infrastructural development projects, ambiguity was observed regarding their roles and responsibilities. Most of the monitored news coverage showed dissatisfaction of general public over the responsiveness, accountability and efficiency of the implementing agencies.



27. WB (2023). *Nepal Development Update*. [Nepal-Development-Update-April-2023-Digital-Version.pdf](#)

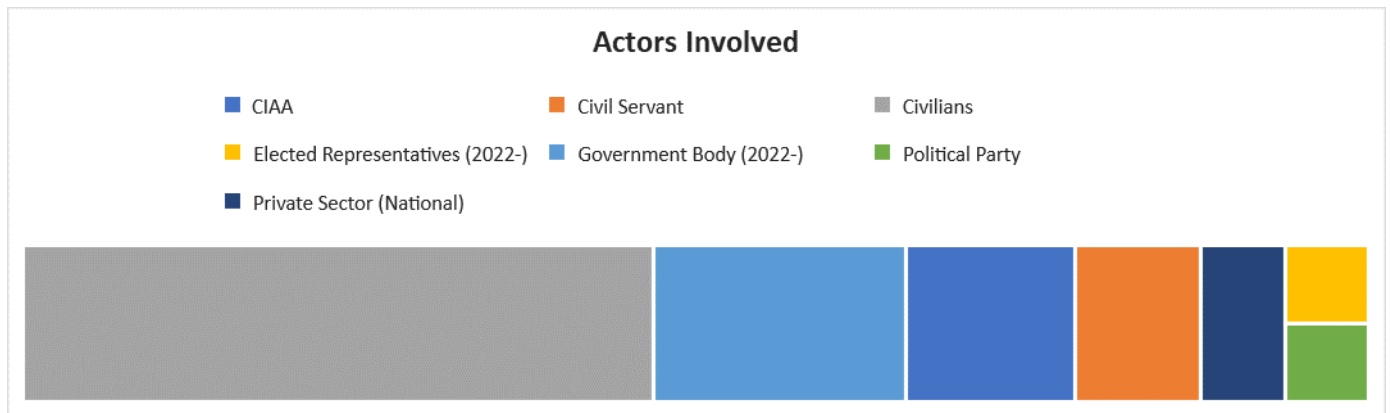
28. Online Khabar (February 20, 2023). दाङको सडक कार्यालयमा स्थानीयले लगाए ताला – Online Khabar

29. Kantipur (March 10, 2023). निर्माण सम्पन्न नगरेको भन्दै स्थानीयद्वारा महेन्द्र राजमार्ग अवरुद्ध- गण्डकी - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

30. Setopati (March 27, 2023). 'काठमाडौं महानगर आफ्नो काम गर्दैन ,सुकुम्बासी लखेट्न मात्र खोज्छ :: 'सेतोपाटी संवाददाता :: Setopati

Their demonstrations suggested that designated agencies were not concerned about determinants of development management and support systems and effective operational and procurement processes that ensures the timely completion of development projects and distribution of compensation for the affected families.

## Major Conflict Actors



As the chart shows, civilians were recorded as the dominant, highly impacted by mismanagement of development projects and unregulated urban development processes. Civilian groups were mostly engaged in conflicts with demands for resolution options like permanent rehabilitation with land ownership and speedy and timely road construction, etc. Following civilians, different layers of government bodies were engaged in conflicts with each other over power, authority and ownership.

## Challenges in Development Governance

Some of the major challenges highlighted in the news coverage as listed below:

- a. Inadequate data-driven assessments during road network expansion have increased delayed road construction process, time and cost.
- b. Poor designing and implementation of organized urban settlement in developed cities has resulted in increasing development conflicts.
- c. Lack of strong conventional regulatory mechanisms to check and balance the development fund and control corruption.

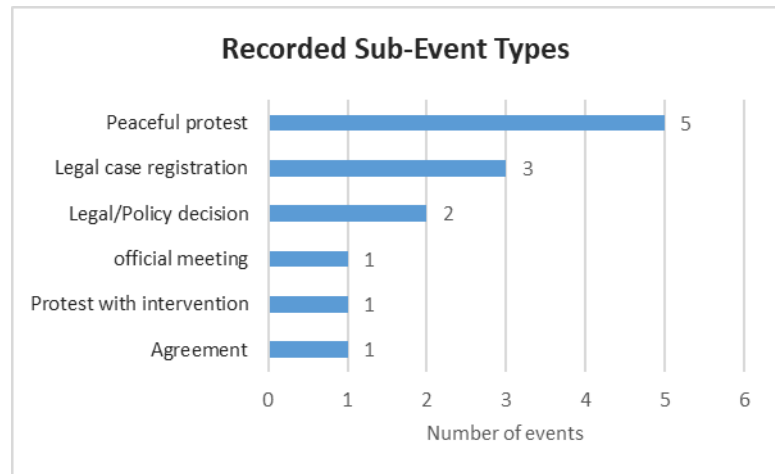


# Ethnocultural Conflicts

## Media Coverage: February 2023 - March 2023

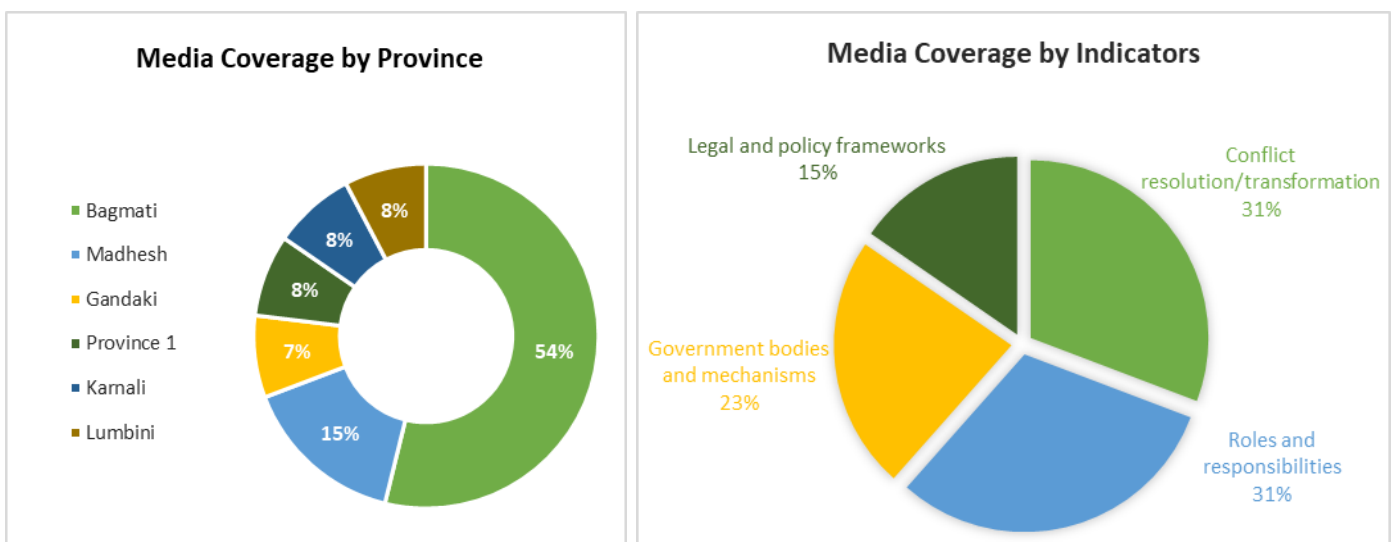
Observing the overall scenario of ethnocultural issues in Nepal, 13 news events were covered by the five media portals selected by this study, in the month of February and March 2023. The majority of conflicts recorded were non-violent in nature, among which ethnic and cultural groups mostly opted for peaceful protest (38%). Yet these groups reportedly faced injustice<sup>31</sup>, violation of rights<sup>32</sup>, and caste and gender-based discrimination<sup>34</sup>.

Event Type	Percentage
Nonviolent	85%
Violent	15%



### Event Distribution by Province and Indicators

As shown in the figure, the majority of media coverage on ethnocultural governance was observed in Bagmati province. Also, ethnic conflicts were reported in all provinces except Sudurpaschim. Also, categorizing the observed conflicts, this monitoring phase showed conflict resolution/transformation approaches with court cases or writ petition being submitted. Meanwhile, government entities not having clear mandate of their roles and responsibilities acted as catalyst in ethno-cultural conflict.



31. Annapurna Post (February 20, 2023). जातीय विभेदको घटनामा मेयर र सीडीओ बसेर मिलापत्र

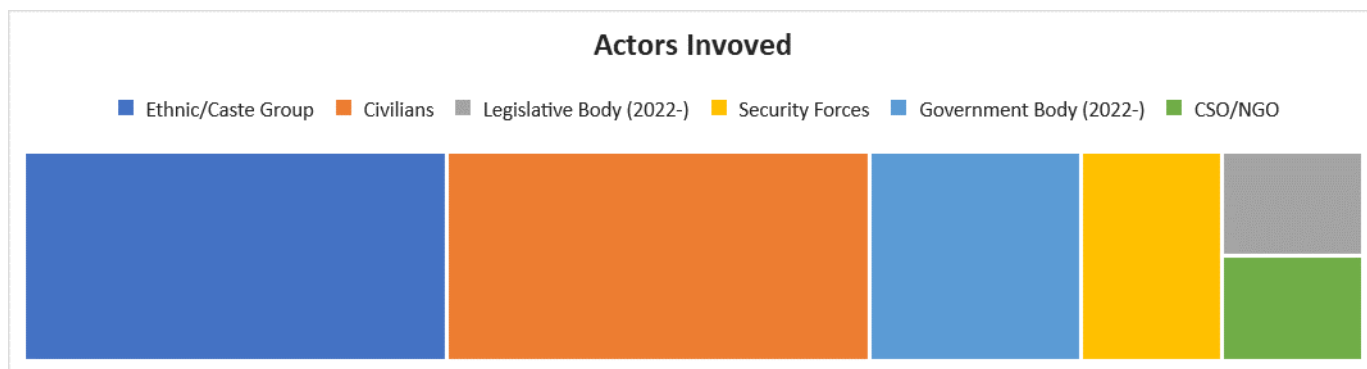
32. Setopati (February 23, 2023). उच्च अदालत पोखरा अगाडि नारा-पल शाहलाई सफाई दिने नजिर हेरेर अरु पीडकले सफाई नपाऊन्

33. Annapurna Post (March 5, 2023). दलितलाई महायज्ञ प्रवेशमा रोक, न्याय माग्दै सडकमा

34. Ekantipur (February 15, 2023). संसद् भवन अगाडि प्रदर्शनमा उत्रिएका महिलाहरू पक्राउ

35. Annapurna Post (February 7, 2023). समानताको माग गर्दै सर्वोच्चमा रिट

## Major Conflict Actors and Relevant Issues



Majority of the ethno-cultural governance conflicts recorded in the past two months show that ethnic/caste groups were highly affected due to caste-based and gender-based discrimination and violence<sup>36</sup>. Multiple cases relevant to such issues was reported, where the local representatives created a conducive environment for compromise rather than justice. Events of caste-based discrimination can be credited to lack of implementation of existing legal frameworks. For instance, the National Assembly passed relation to make the government responsible for implementation of the existing law (particularly; to end discrimination and oppression against the Dalit community and ensure socio-cultural, economic, political equality, prosperity and social justice<sup>37</sup>) but lack of compliance shows government's inefficiency and negligence to end caste-based discrimination.

## Major Challenges in Ethnocultural Governance

Some of the major challenges highlighted in the news coverage are as follows:

- Government bodies and institutions prioritizing compromise over justice makes discriminatory practices more relevant in societies. Such acts make historically marginalized groups more vulnerable to caste-based discrimination.
- Exclusion of LGBTQ community in Civil code 2074, section 67 shows negligence of government towards the community. Section 67 includes marriage provision between man and women only and completely excluding the LGBTQ community.
- Government institutions and bodies working to protect and serve the people work against them and induce physical as well as sexual violence.

36. Ekantipur (February 11, 2023). बासगढी-८ का अध्यक्षमाथि जबरजस्ती करणी मुद्दा- लुम्बिनी - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

37. Ekantipur (March 22, 2023). दलित समुदायमाथिको विभेद र उत्पीडन अन्त्यसम्बन्धी संकल्प प्रस्ताव पारित- समाचार - कान्तिपुर समाचार (ekantipur.com)

## Key Conclusions and Recommendations

Observing the 114 news and events recorded in this issue, civilians are recognized as the most engaged actors in the governance related conflicts. Similar observance was recorded in the previous issue too. It is thus important to clarify that these actors as reported by this study are not necessarily instigators of conflict, but they are also agents of change and also the victims of the corresponding events. In the reported events in this issue, civilians and civilian groups are involved in wide array of conflicts varying from dissatisfactions caused by government-led haphazard development projects to conflicts over natural resources, to structural discrimination and grievances of vulnerable and marginalized communities, and much more. This record of majority of civilian engagement in governance conflicts thus suggests a larger civil unrest, either affected by the governance related conflicts or as ones influencing the governance relevant conflicts.

Through these observations, this report also tries to highlight that conflicts are often experienced differently, based on their backgrounds, experiences, identities, regions, orientations, etc. While one issue maybe be protested among some groups, it maybe widely accepted by others. Hence their accounts of conflicts and its impacts is important to record. Also, cumulative data (Oct 2022- Mar 2023) shows that majority of grievances, demands and issues of public were displayed through peaceful protests. This emphasizes the tendency of civilians to be inclined towards nonviolent outlets to address contemporary governance issues.

Furthermore, following key recommendations are drawn that serves as a way forward:

- a. A strong coordination and precise definition and demarcation of the roles of elected representatives and bureaucrats holding different positions in each layer of the government is required for efficient fulfillment of designated responsibilities. Also, strict monitoring mechanisms need to be implemented to enhance transparency and accountability in the performance of duties in all 3 tiers of government.
- b. Authorities concerning security forces in Nepal need to have precise and strategic guidelines when it comes to dealing with violent incidents. Such security measures and additional conflict resolution processes/ mechanisms/ legal provisions led by the government authorities must have the clarity to deescalate violence but at the same time be mindful of the public's democratic display of demands. Hence such strategies must be sensitive and inclusive of conflict affected victims, especially of ones belonging to vulnerable and marginalized communities.
- c. Nonviolent measures like strategic and meaningful dialogues on occurring governance related conflicts are necessary to ensue among multiple layers of actors. By fundamentally filling the communication gaps among the conflict relevant actors, such dialogues can provide opportunities to not only identify the existing problems in the federal governance systems but also clarify their roots and their relevant solutions.

## About CSC

Centre for Social Change (CSC) is a non-profit making social think-tank based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Since its establishment in 2015, CSC has been actively working to bring positive transformation in the socio-political dynamics of Nepali society through involvements in the fields of research, development practice, education, advocacy, and community mobilization. CSC's current works are focused on issues surround conflict transformation, peacebuilding, democracy and governance, migration, labor and employment, civic space, civil society development, public policy, climate change, and social development.

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