

This report is issued by the UN RCHCO with inputs from its UN Field Coordination Offices and other partners and sources. The report covers July 2011. The next report will be issued in the first week of September 2011.

CONTEXT

Political Update

July witnessed much activity in national politics, though with no tangible progress achieved by the end of the month. The political stalemate was dominated by the Maoists' internal debate on party work division and forging a uniform approach to the peace and constitution drafting processes. The Maoists' decision to reshuffle its Ministers instigated further disagreements between major parties; however, Prime Minister Khanal managed to induct new Maoist Ministers and resist the opposition of Nepali Congress (NC) as well as his own party leaders. This step is perceived by some observers as a last attempt to protect the existing coalition government and achieve some progress on the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist army and constitution drafting before the deadline of 31 August. Meanwhile, the main opposition NC has been pushing for the resignation of the Prime Minister as per the Five-Point agreement to extend the CA last May.

While some progress has been made on constitution drafting, there are major differences over the nature of the federal system to be devised. It is noteworthy that, at a meeting in Dhulikhel from 11-12 July, leaders from Madheshi-based political parties and prominent Tharu leaders agreed to form a joint taskforce with a view to forging consensus on issues related to state restructuring and a joint action plan for a post-August 31 scenario. The proposed taskforce would hold discussions with representatives of Muslim, Dalit and Pahadi communities living in the Tarai. A similar meeting was held between Madheshi-based political parties and a coalition of Janajati parties in Godavari at the end of July to generate a common basis for approaching federalism, though no specific agreement was reached. During July, however, it has been the negotiation for the future of the Maoist army that has faced the most significant challenges. Meetings of the Special Committee for the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army combatants were limited and no substantive discussions were held during July.

Having reshuffled the cabinet to appease its major coalition partner, Prime Minister Khanal is asking all parties to urgently find common ground on the modalities for integration and rehabilitation and constitution-drafting and show concrete progress before the constitution approval deadline of 31 August. The Prime Minister is reported to have presented a new 11-point proposal to enable the formation of a national unity government. In the absence of progress, he may decide to resign by the middle of August. It is generally uncertain how the next few weeks will unfold in terms of the peace process, government and the Constituent Assembly extension as the constitution approval deadline approaches.

Operational Space

There was only a low level of disruptive action and protests across the country during the month and there were few restrictions on movement reported by development or humanitarian partners. Notable *bandhs* included the halting of transportation in Dadeldhura District when the Ugratara Public Transport Entrepreneurs' Committee called a transportation strike from 8-12 July protesting against the registration of a new transportation committee in Dadeldhura. Once supported by a strike by the National Federation of

Transport Entrepreneurs on 10 July, vehicle traffic was severely impeded throughout the Far West and some agitating transport workers and entrepreneurs were reportedly injured in Dadeldhura while enforcing the strike. Public transportation resumed on 12 July after the association agreed a five point deal with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Public life in the Koshi zone was also disrupted by the general strike called by 16 various transportation entrepreneurs' associations from 15-17 July, demanding the release of the bus which was apprehended by the police following the rape of a Bhojpur resident Buddhist nun on 25 June. The *bandh* was called off on 17 July after the bus was released. All educational institutions and transportations remained closed and normal public life was crippled in Sunsari, Dhankuta and Bhojpur districts due to the *bandh* called by the Nepal Student Union (NSU) on 28 July demanding the release of their arrested cadres.

It is also notable this month that, on 25 July, the Hindu Security Force (*Hindu Surakchhya Bahini*) padlocked the Land Revenue Office in Tikapur (Kailali District) in support of complaints made by the Nepal Magar Association (*Nepal Magar Sangh*) that land belonging to it had been registered in the name of a local person. The office was re-opened by the police within an hour. This is the first reported incident linked to the Hindu Security Force, which first emerged in May and whose political programme is not yet clear.

A number of government services and offices were closed due to protest actions during July. The residents in Biun VDC (Baglung District) reportedly padlocked the village sub-Health Post on 7 July, alleging that health workers neglect patients. On 11 July, the NSU padlocked the Institute of Forestry Campus in Hetauda (Makwanpur District) after a dispute between student unions. It has been reported that the work of government offices in Makwanpur, Sunsari and Morang districts and Hetauda Municipality were halted from 19-20 July by employees protesting against the recent public sector salary increases.

During July, a total of 16 improvised explosive device (IED) incidences were reported across 12 districts in the country, with five of these incidences being explosions. A 12 year-old boy was killed and a five-year old girl was injured on 15 July when they handled and detonated an unexploded ordnance they discovered in a jungle area of Bindhabasani VDC (Achham District). A person was seriously injured at Ittihai Tole in Amarpatti VDC-3 (Parsa District) when an IED buried on the Birgunj-Pakaha stretch of the road exploded. The overall number of IED events is below the average of 18 per month for the previous two years and is a modest decrease in IED incidences for the same period last year. The greatest concentration of incidences (six) occurred in the eastern Tarai area and most IED incidences involved public, business and government spaces – only one IED was reported as being found at an overtly political target. There were notable increases in IED events in a few districts. Although there have been only two IED incidences in the previous two years to-date in Kanchanpur District, a '*sutali*' bomb was defused in a cowshed belonging to a Youth Force member (the CPN-UML youth wing) at Airi on 10 July. Only one IED event has been reported in Pyuthan District in the previous two years, but security forces defused three socket bombs on 2 July and another buried under the road near the District Police Office in Biraula VDC-7 on 29 July 11. While Sunsari District has reported only 11 IED incidences in the previous two years, four incidences occurred in July.

EMERGING ISSUES AFFECTING PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Continued obstruction of voter registration

Raising the issue of citizenship, Madheshi-based political parties continue to protest against voter registration in Banke and Kapilvastu districts. According to the local District Election Offices (DEOs), 28,825 voters (almost 20% of projected targets) were registered in 6 VDCs and 9 wards of Nepalgunj Municipality in

Banke and 49,870 voters (almost 24% of projected targets) were registered in 13 VDCs and 14 wards of Taulihawa Municipality in Kapilvastu as of 12 July.

The United Madheshi Democratic Front (UMDF) submitted a memorandum to the Banke District Administration Office (DAO) stating that it would obstruct the voter registration process until the citizenship certificate issue is resolved. The memorandum also demands citizenship certificates to be issued to the children of those who acquired naturalized citizenship certificates from the citizenship distribution team in 2007. The Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal (MJF-Nepal) in Banke estimates that up to eight thousand Madheshis in the district do not have citizenship certificates. The Terai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP) and MJF-Nepal are obstructing the voter registration process in Kapilvastu District raising the citizenship issue. Meanwhile, cadres of Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum-Democratic (MJF-D) threatened officials and vandalized equipment at a voter registration centre in Palhi Multiple Campus (Nawalparasi District) on 23 July demanding that their registration be accepted with photocopied citizenship certificates. Registration continued the next day as the parties and Chief District Officer guaranteed violence would not be repeated.

Local government and DEO officials in Banke and Kapilvastu continue to urge the parties to engage in talks (the Kapilvastu DAO and DEO had initial talks with TMDP and MJF-Nepal local leaders on 7 July) and to allow the voter registration process to continue. They argue that it is important for the registration process to continue as it is also attempting to document how many Nepalis lack citizenship certificates so that the problem can be properly addressed. The DAOs in Banke and Kapilvastu also emphasized that, in accordance with the Citizenship Act 2006, citizenship certificates would be provided for those eligible Nepali citizens approaching the DAOs.

Community-police tensions in Sunsari as one person dies in shooting

A resident of Devanganj VDC in Sunsari District died due to injuries from a shooting that occurred during a clash between police and local residents on 29 July. The clash erupted after police seized smuggled cotton from India. According to district level human rights organizations, villagers are angry with the police for allegedly conniving with smugglers while at the same time harassing local residents who import small amounts of utility goods from nearby Indian towns over the border. The NC, UMDF and local people obstructed the East-West highway for up to six hours on 31 July protesting that the victim was shot by the police. The district level human rights network has accused the police of using disproportionate force and said that the firing was not necessary. Police state that their investigation is on-going and that they believe the victim was shot by someone in the crowd. Tension has been simmering between police and local residents in some border areas of eastern Tarai districts after police started tightening border controls in recent months. Many local residents are traditionally dependent on buying more accessible and cheaper household utilities in nearby Indian towns. Clashes of this nature have happened many times in past months, particularly during the agricultural season when farmers usually buy fertilizer from the Indian market – in April 2011, a similar clash between police and local people took place near Kunauli in Saptari District in which the local police post was vandalized and at least five people were injured. While police and authorities are certainly entitled to stop illegal imports, such actions create local resentment. Madheshi-based political parties have regularly used this as an issue to mobilize people. In this case, the central level meeting of UMDF in Kathmandu has called for a judicial probe and a long-term solution of this issue. One leader accused the government of trying to create “disorder” in the Tarai.

Disputes over the composition of newly declared municipalities

In the recent budget speech, the government has declared the establishment of a number of new municipalities across the country. In both Achham and Lamjung districts, this has generated local disputes.

After Mangalsen and Sanfe municipalities were declared in Achham, residents from several surrounding VDCs have argued to be included in the new municipalities in the hopes of accessing better resources. They have demanded that Kuntimandali and Janalimandali VDCs be included in Mangalsen Municipality and that Nawathana, Bhageshor and Chandika VDCs be included in Sanfe Municipality. The protesting residents believe that the formation of the municipalities is based on outdated data from the 2001 census. Residents submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Local Development through the Achham District Development Committee on 22 July demanding the VDCs be included and stated that pressure groups formed in most of the concerned VDCs will protest if these demands are not met. A number of political parties in Lamjung District are also not satisfied with the creation of Lamjung Municipality (combining Besisahar, Gaunsahar and Udipur VDCs), claiming that the process was not based on comprehensive preparations. The parties argue that the name of the municipality should be changed into Besisahar and the town of Besisahar, rather than Ranikuwa, should be the municipal centre since it has historical recognition and a well-established base for infrastructure. Many local political and civil society activists contend that the declaration is against the principle of federalism; that it is against the spirit of the envisioned consultative and comprehensive federal state restructuring process. Some foresee that the current municipal boundaries will impact on future restructured federal boundaries. While some residents are satisfied with the currently drawn boundaries, many from Chandithan, Nalma and Baglung VDCs have demanded to be included in the new municipality.

The mixed reception towards the establishment of new municipalities indicates confusion and disagreements amongst communities, district level authorities and political leaders in matters related to changing the structure of the state. Some foresee that the current municipal boundaries will impact on restructured federal boundaries while others seem satisfied with the currently drawn boundaries. The high degree of opposition and tension surrounding a relatively minor instance of state restructuring does not bode well for the fundamental and much more ambitious changes that will eventually take place through the envisioned federal state restructuring process.

HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

Floods and Landslides

Current Situation

Floods and landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains since 1 June have caused various degrees of damage across Nepal. Incessant rain has swollen rivers, damaged several houses, flooded several bighas¹ of land and obstructed roads in parts of the country. A total of 364 families were affected by monsoon related calamities across the country, according to the National Emergency Operational Centre. To date, at least 113 people were reportedly killed, 56 injured and 42 missing across 59 districts (see attached map).

Response to date

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), local authorities in the affected districts are effectively overseeing the flood and landslide response efforts. The response capacity of local authorities was built through comprehensive district disaster preparedness for response exercises that engage all partners, including the UN, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), and non-government organisations (NGOs). A total of 28 districts have completed the preparation of District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans (DPR Plans) and 41 districts are at the final stages of completion. The remaining six districts are yet to start the process. This preparedness for disasters ensures that district authorities can manage and lead a rapid and

¹ 1 bigha equals 0.677 hectare (1.67 acres).

targeted response, which reduces the humanitarian impact of floods and landslides on families. The UN Field Coordination Offices (UNFCO) in Dadeldhura, Nepalgunj, Bharatpur and Biratnagar coordinate with all concerned agencies including District Disaster Response Committees (DDRCs), NRCS, UN, NGOs and others to monitor the monsoon and prepare for a potential response.

Regarding the floods and landslides in Rukum, the DDRC in coordination with NRCS, Nepal Army, Nepal Police, District Public Health Office, District Water Supply and Sanitation Office, Nepal Chamber of Commerce along with other humanitarian agencies are regularly monitoring the area and providing assistance to the affected. The Armed Police Force, NRCS and other humanitarian agencies supported the relocation of affected people. Humanitarian agencies including NRCS and Save the Children are conducting an initial assessment of the impact. The Chief District Officer established a temporary health camp close to the affected area and provided regular health check-up facilities, with 262 individuals being examined so far. There has been no serious health problems reported, the overall situation of the disaster is within the control of local capacities and no diarrhea outbreaks have occurred as reported by the media.

Cluster Update

Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock

The overall crop situation of both winter and summer 2010/11 across the country shows an improvement in production. Annual cereal production has increased by 10.9% to a total of 8.62 million MT compared to 7.76 million MT last year. Moreover, the prospects for the summer crops for the fiscal year 2011/12 appear favorable so far, with the timely start of the monsoon across the country. According to reports from WFP's district based field monitors, traders in many hill and mountain districts have stockpiled food stuffs in anticipation of possible disruptions to food supplies during the monsoon period.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Trained resource persons have been mobilised in organising regional/district level training events in WASH coordination, with 42 representatives (from WSSDO, DHO, NRCS and NGOs) in 11 disaster prone districts having been trained on WASH rapid response techniques and life saving skills. These resources are expected to further strengthen implementation and monitoring of ongoing humanitarian WASH campaigns in 15 districts. Over 1,200 Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) in 15 programme districts have received humanitarian WASH training and have been mobilized for organizing WASH campaigns and improved hygiene behaviours and practices. Life saving WASH supplies such as chlorine, soap and ORS for over 130,000 households in 120 VDCs of 15 districts has been procured and delivered.

In 2011, over 57,000 households in six Mid and Far Western districts have received mini hygiene life saving packages. The development of radio messages on preventative WASH has been carried out at national level and the airing of these messages is ongoing through 40 local FM stations.

Shelter

Under the relief, recovery and rehabilitation assistance to households affected by the August 2008 Koshi floods, 235 affected families at Haripur VDC have been resettled. Each family was supported with a newly constructed shelter in 676 sq. m of land. The project also secured land tenure and housing rights providing an improvement in the social status of the resettled families. Implemented by UN-Habitat, the project improved access to basic services such as clean water and sanitation.



(Photo: UNHABITAT)

UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

For more details, please visit meeting schedules at UN Nepal Information Platform:

<http://www.un.org.np/calendar>

- 22 July, IASC/HCT Operational meeting, UN House, Kathmandu (10:30-12.00hrs)
- 2-4 August, Nepal Disaster Response Simulation Exercise – Supported by the U.S. Embassy
- 5 August, Contact Group meeting, UN House, Kathmandu (10.30-12.00hrs)
- 5 August, DIPECHO Partners Meeting, CARE Nepal Office, Krishna Gully, Lalitpur (15-17:00hrs)
- 12 August, BOGs meeting, SDC/Swiss Embassy, Ekantakuna, Lalitpur (15-17:00hrs)
- 19 August, HCT/IASC Operational Meeting, Pulchowk (10:30-12:00 hrs)

RECENT MAPS AVAILABLE

The RCHCO IMU produces a number of mapping products, some of the most recent are listed below and more are available on the UN Nepal Information Platform: www.un.org.np/resources/maps

- Nepal: Floods and Landslides Affected Areas, 2011 (1 June – 3 August): <http://www.un.org.np/maps/nepal-flood-and-landslide-1june-3-august-2011>
- Nepal: Disaster Preparedness Activities, 2011 (as of 15 July): www.un.org.np/maps/nepal-disaster-preparedness-15-july-2011
- Nepal: Report of bandhs/strikes 01 January to 30 June, 2011: www.un.org.np/maps/security-incidents-01jan-30june-2011

RECENT REPORTS AVAILABLE

Some of the recent reports available on UN NIP are listed below.

- RCHCO Field Bulletin: Land Ownership Patterns and related Issues examples from Banke District, Issue #13: www.un.org.np/headlines/rchco-field-bulletin-issue-13
- RCHCO Field Bulletin: The Barghar System and Traditional Governance among Tharus, Issue #12: www.un.org.np/headlines/rchco-field-bulletin-issue-12
- RCHCO Field Bulletin: Longer-Term Disaster Displaced: A Forgotten Group, Issue #11: www.un.org.np/headlines/rchco-field-bulletin-issue-11
- RCHCO Field Bulletin: When the river is the encroacher: flood affected communities of Central Tarai, Issue #10: www.un.org.np/headlines/rchco-field-bulletin-issue-10
- RCHCO Field Bulletin: Workforce Diversity in NGOs: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion status of NGOs in an Eastern Hill district, Issue #9: www.un.org.np/headlines/rchco-field-bulletins-issue-9

CONTACT

United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office

GPO Box: 107, UN House, Pulchowk, Kathmandu, Nepal

Email: rchco.nepal@one.un.org

Phone: +977 1 5523200 Ext. 1518, Fax: +977 1 5523991

Visit the UN Nepal Information Platform at www.un.org.np

Disclaimer: The information in this report is consolidated from media, UN, NGO, and other development and humanitarian partners, subject to availability of data. Although RCHCO aims to confirm reports independently, occasional factual inaccuracies can occur.

NEPAL - Flood and Landslide Affected Areas

Period Covered: 1 June - 3 August, 2011

Total District Affected: 60
 Deaths: 113
 Missing: 42
 Injured: 56
 Affected Family: 364
 Houses Damaged/Destroyed: 70

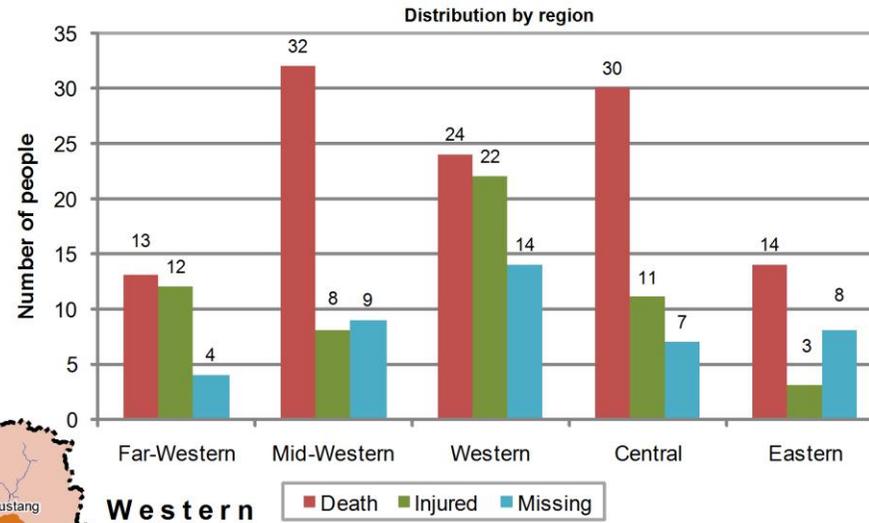
Far-Western

Mid-Western

Western

Central

Eastern



Legend

Administrative Boundaries

- International
- - - Development Region
- - - District
- Rivers

Affected VDC

- Flood and Landslide
- Landslide
- Flood

Affected District

- Flood and Landslide
- Landslide
- Flood