



International
Federation
of Journalists

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Journalist injured in Nepal during international press freedom mission

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) claims the latest attack against the media in Nepal is further evidence of the dire situation facing Nepalese journalists and media professionals and supports the international mission's conclusions that the press freedom situation in Nepal has deteriorated in the past eight months.

On March 23, Satya Prasad Shrestha, district correspondent of *Nepal Samacharpatra*, and three other people were injured when Maoists fired bullets in front of a newspaper shop at Bharat Chowk in Bara district.

According to IFJ's affiliate in Nepal, Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), the Maoist's have since released a statement expressing regret for their unintentional injuring of Shrestha.

Shrestha is currently being treated for his injuries at Narayani sub regional hospital in Birgunj.

The attack occurred during the international advocacy mission for press freedom and freedom of expression in Nepal. The mission from March 20 –25 met with a broad cross-section of the Nepalese national media community to discuss the press freedom and freedom of expression situation, as well as senior officials to stress the need to respect press freedom and freedom of expression. In addition, the mission visited three districts in Nepal - Pokhara, Surkhet and Birtamod - and met with local civil and army authorities and representatives from the local media in these areas.

Participating organisations included Article 19, Free Voice, IFJ, International Freedom of Exchange Network (IFEX), the International News Safety Institute, International Press Institute (IPI), Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF), South Asia Press Commission, UNESCO, World Association of Community radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC). The mission was coordinated by International Media Support (IMS) and organised locally by the Federation of Nepalese Journalists in collaboration with 28 Nepalese organisations.

On March 24, a national conference on press freedom was held in Kathmandu to announce the mission findings.

The mission found the continuing military and civil, authorities' harassment, attacks and detention of media professionals, and seizure of equipment particularly in the districts, as having a devastating affect on independent media. Journalists are also under attack from Maoists, which has escalated since the ceasefire withdrawal in January.

Of particular concern is the increasing involvement of the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) and armed police forces in press freedom and freedom of expression violations, as well as interference in the media sphere.

See [http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/Nepal%20International%20Mission%20Statement%20-%20Final%20Draft.%202005%20\(PDF\).pdf](http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/Nepal%20International%20Mission%20Statement%20-%20Final%20Draft.%202005%20(PDF).pdf) to read the mission statement in full.

See <http://www.ifj-asia.org/page/nepal.html> for more information on the situation in Nepal.

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The IFJ represents more than 500,000 journalists in over 110 countries

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