

# Monthly Update – February 2013

## UN Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator's Office Nepal



*This report is issued by the UN RCHCO with inputs from its UN Field Coordination Offices and other partners and sources. The report covers February 2013. The next report will be issued the first week of April 2013.*

### CONTEXT

#### Political update

The Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) held its national convention from 2-7 February, the first since the launching its decade-long armed conflict and the subsequent Comprehensive Peace Agreement process. The party renounced armed violence, embraced “socialism” within a “capitalist” system, adopted a conciliatory approach to India and acknowledged the need for a “new synthesis” that is politically and ideologically suited for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nepal.

The end of the UCPN-M convention provided the opportunity for renewed negotiation between the main political parties to end the ongoing national political and constitutional crisis that began when the Constituent Assembly (CA) was dissolved at midnight on 27 May 2012 without agreeing to a new constitution. The latest proposal, to form a caretaker ‘election government’ under the leadership of the sitting Chief Justice was first publicly revealed at the Maoist convention and firmly backed by key national and international stakeholders. It met with strong resistance from several quarters, including from the Nepal Bar Association, sections of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist). A CPN-Maoist led alliance of several smaller parties carried out a series of protests and conducted a nationwide *bandh* on 19 February. Debate on the political proposal between stakeholders focused on the constitutionality of having a sitting head of the judiciary serve simultaneously as the head of government, which risks checks on the separation of powers and of politicising the judiciary. These questions will now be answered by the Supreme Court, which is hearing a writ petition against the proposal. A task force comprising the four major parties prepared a draft agreement on forming the proposed new government and conducting elections in a matter of weeks, achieving more substantive consensus than the parties had made in the eight months since the dissolution of the CA. However, several issues remained outstanding by the end of the month, including the terms for forming a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, determining voter registration (including the need of citizenship certifications), determining ranks for former Maoist combatants integrated into the Nepal Army and questions of sequencing in the removal of constitutional difficulties to allow for elections as soon as possible.

#### Operational space

Overall, there were few major operational space issues reported by the signatories to the Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs). The surge of donation demands by political parties and their affiliated groups in January subsided, with no major donation demands being reported by BOGs signatories during February. The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) enforced nationwide *bandh* on 19 February<sup>1</sup> had only limited impact on BOGs signatories. Only those BOGs signatories and implementing partners with red-plated vehicles faced difficulties moving or imposed self-restrictions on their vehicle movements; UN vehicle movements were not affected.

### EMERGING ISSUES AFFECTING PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Local grievances continue to create tensions in Far Western and Mid Western regions

As noted in January, different groups have been carrying out protest programmes across the Far Western Region (FWR) and Mid Western Region (MWR) pressuring local authorities to address their concerns. While

<sup>1</sup> Carried out in protest against the arrest of five Maoist cadres on charges of killing a local journalist in Dailekh District during the armed conflict and moves by the major political parties to form a Chief Justice-led government.

the protest programmes were initiated by activist and civil society organizations, some of them were supported by the political parties and their sister organizations. Such protests by different groups also continued during the month of February.

Landless people staged a sit-in at the Kanchanpur District Administration, District Land Revenue and Land Reform offices on 25 February. The protests were staged in frustration that identity cards still had not been issued to landless squatters even a year after the formation of the government's 'Landless People's Problem Resolution Commission'.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the Commission is to collect applications from landless people, issue identity cards to landless people (after verification) and recommend possible solutions to tackle landless people's issues. However, the term of the Commission has been extended three times in last 12 months and landless people in Kailali and Kanchanpur had already protested during January that the district-level committees for the Commission still had not issued identity cards. The 25 February sit-in programme was called off after an agreement was reached to accelerate the verification of landless people and distribution of identity cards in the districts. The FWR has witnessed many effective *bandhs* and other protest programmes enforced by landless people in the past, where the numbers of landless are potentially significant; staff from the Land Rights Forum estimate that more than 44,000 people in Kailali and 8,400 people in Kanchanpur districts have applied to be recognised as landless. Occasionally, the issue leads to conflict not only between landless and local authorities but also between landless peoples, local communities and Forest User Groups since most landless live in camps on government or forest land.

A *Dalit* family from Sittad VDC (Baitadi District) staged a hunger strike 'unto death' in front of the Baitadi District Administration Office (DAO) from 22-24 February protesting against those blocking *Dalits* from drinking water sources. On 22 February, ten human rights organizations jointly issued a statement expressing concern over barring *Dalits* from water sources. The hunger strike came to an end after assurances by local authorities to conduct a joint visit comprising members from the local administration, political parties, and human rights organizations to assess the situation.

Violent protests occurred in Tamghas, Gulmi District, on 13 February followed by a *bandh* on 14 February by local community members objecting to a new load-shedding schedule imposed by the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). The new load shedding schedule was seen as against an agreement made three years ago (after negotiations between the NEA, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Federation of Nepali Journalists) that Gulmi District would be 'load-shedding free' because it houses the Kali Gandaki Hydro Project. The demonstrators shut down the market, padlocked the NEA office and an estimated 3,000 people picketed the DAO (with some demonstrators reportedly pelting stones at the DAO and NEA offices, causing minor damage). Police used baton charges and tear gas to take control of the situation, with four police and nine demonstrators injured in the clashes. The demonstrators called-off their protests on 15 February following an agreement between the NEA and DAO to continue the district as 'load-shedding free'. Tensions related to load-shedding have increased over the last two months in the MWR; for example, violent protests against load-shedding also erupted in Pyuthan District during January.

Landless tenants in Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Surkhet and Dailekh districts have started consolidating their efforts to intensify protests programmes. From 25 to 26 February, tenants from these districts organized a regional conference in Nepalgunj and decided to put forward tenancy rights, fair land distribution and other demands to the government. The National Land Right Forum (NLRFF) and Freed Kamiya Land Rights Forum (FKLRF) have been supporting the movements. Similarly, demanding a 'Janata Awash' (Civilian Residence) Programme, landless, freed Kamaiyas and marginalized people in Bardiya District staged a demonstration in front of Gulariya Municipality office on 1 February. The government has been implementing the 'Janata Awash' programme in Siraha, Saptari, Kapilvastu, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts for three years, constructing cement houses for selected marginalized people below the poverty line. Demonstrators in Bardiya submitted demands for the programme to also be implemented there. Lastly, divorced Muslim women in Banke District also submitted a memorandum to the government on 12 February, demanding to ensure the inclusion of divorced women's rights in the new constitution and social security allowance, as well as inclusion of their children in the higher education quota.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Government of Nepal, *Nepal Gazette, part 61-number 30*, 2 February 2012. The national Commission is present in 25 districts including Kailali and Kanchanpur districts in the FWR through Landless People's Problem Resolution District Committees.

## **Emergence of ‘Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (Revolutionary)’ and links to IED incidents**

A newly emerged group, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (Revolutionary) (CPN-M (Revolutionary)), was reportedly linked to a series of improvised explosive device (IED) plantings across the country. IEDs (such as pressure cooker bombs) were planted in Kailali, Banke, Dang, Rupendehi and Morang districts throughout February, all defused by the security services without causing any casualties. At most sites, CPN-M (Revolutionary) pamphlets were found that outlined demands similar to those delivered by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist in 1996 just before it instigated its decade-long armed conflict. Details about the CPN-M (Revolutionary) and its intentions are unknown, so it is unclear whether these incidents indicate any new potential threat of political violence.

## **Increased reports of violence against women in the Mid Western and Western regions**

While national campaigns denouncing violence against women continue, there have been increased reports of violence against women across the MWR and some districts of the Western Region (WR) during February. Girls were reportedly raped in Dang and Pyuthan districts and there were reported attempted rapes in Kapilvastu and Nawalparasi districts. Additionally, a local teacher reportedly raped his student in Harnaiya VDC (Rupendehi District). On 14 February and 20 February, police arrested two persons (in Kohalpur VDC of Banke District and in Malgiri of Gulmi District, respectively) on charges of rape. In yet another incident, a 62 year old man reportedly raped a 12-year old girl of Dandagaun VDC in Salyan District. In Majkot VDC of Jajarkot District, it was reported that a rape victim was then married with the alleged perpetrator – a practice traditionally prevalent in isolated areas of the Mid West Hills. Furthermore, on 9 and 10 February, police arrested two men in Manma, Kalikot District and Rajhena, Banke District respectively on charges of killing their wives.

“Due to the ongoing campaign against violence against women the trend of reporting has been significantly increased,” said a representative of a local NGO working on women’s rights issue in the MWR. Nevertheless, the representative further asserted that, even today, perpetrators first attempt to suppress the case locally either by offering victims compensation (money or land/property) or threatening the victim’s family. The Chairperson of the Nepal Bar Association in Banke District said that, due to the increased campaigning and awareness, people are now willing to file the cases related to violence against women in court. Moreover, these days, courts are processing cases related to violence against women more quickly than before. However, a human rights activist in Banke District suggested that an in-depth study is needed to find out whether there is a trend of increasing violence against women itself or whether the increased number of cases is more of a result of increased willingness to reporting such incidents.

## **Opposition political parties conduct protests in the Eastern and Central regions**

Many districts of the Eastern Region and Central *Tarai* witnessed anti-government protests by opposition political parties including the NC, CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist, Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Madheshi People’s Rights Forum-Nepal (MPRF-Nepal). Opposition parties organized protest programs in districts demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister during the first two weeks of February. Clashes erupted between opposition party cadres and police when agitators tried to padlock the Khotang DAO on 9 February.

The Nepal Federal Peoples Republican Front (NFPRF), led by CPN-Maoist, protested against the decision of the four major political parties to form an ‘election government’ led by the Chief Justice on 18 February. CPN-Maoist cadres burned effigies of the President and Prime Minister and chanted slogans against them in Bara, Parsa, Morang, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Jhapa and Ilam districts on 21 February. Similarly, on 19 February, the Federal Limbuwan State Council-FDNF Affiliated (a member of the NFPRF alliance) burned copies of the political agreement between the main political parties to establish a Chief Justice led government in 9 districts of the Eastern Region and submitted a memorandum to the government. The FLSC-FDNF Affiliated plan to conduct an Eastern Region *bandh* on 6 March.

The Federal Democratic Alliance (FDA), led by the MPRF-Nepal, staged sit-in programs at DAOs in Sunsari and Dhanusha districts on 27 February. The protest program was led by MPRF-Nepal in Sunsari District and Tamshaling Rastriya Dal in Dhanusha District. To further demand the resolution of controversial constitutional issues, the filling of major vacant constitutional body positions and the formation of a neutral

government to hold timely elections, the FDA plans series of protest programs, including an all-Nepal *Bandh* on 7 March. So far, there has not been any report of violence or clashes during their protest programs.

Looking nationally, the CPN-M all-Nepal *bandh* conducted on 19 February (mostly in protest of the emerging agreement for a Chief Justice-led government) was largely effective. The *bandh* closed markets and education institutions and brought public vehicular movement to a standstill in much of the country. *Bandh* enforcers allegedly vandalised vehicles in Kathmandu and Dhankuta District, the District Agriculture Development Office in Kanchanpur and the District Election Office in Palpa for defying the *bandh*. The situation remained tense in Jajarkot District, where CPN-Maoist cadres threatened to set fire to those shops who defied the *bandh*. The CPN-Maoist plans to conduct another all-Nepal *bandh* on 6 March.

## HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

### **Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) is initiated by NGO sector in Kanchanpur District**

The formation of a 'Local Adaptation Plan of Action' (LAPA) has started in Kanchanpur District by the non-governmental sector. In the first phase, the Federation of Community Forest Users in Nepal (FECOFUN) has developed plans for the Brahmadev Corridor, particularly Bhimdutta Municipality and two Village Development Committees (Suda and Daiji). The Plans are a potential foundation for coordination among government and non-government agencies. District line agencies are reported to have expressed commitment to incorporate the LAPA into next year's planning process through a LAPA interaction workshop. It is noted that the government has listed the roll-out of LAPAs in 14 districts, not including Kanchanpur.

### **Regional Administration Office (RAO) in the Far Western Region has intensified Disaster Preparedness and Response (DPR) Plan monitoring**

Most districts in the Far Western Region are developing and reviewing their Disaster Preparedness and Response (DPR) Plans annually, though consistency in quality is yet to be guaranteed. These plans should be reviewed annually and endorsed by the district council with the required budget provision. The RAO has commenced monitoring the DPR Planning status of all districts in the Far Western Region. All districts have been asked to provide information on recent disaster incidents, response activities and collaboration among humanitarian actors. The Regional Monitoring Committee (RMC) is to support the RAO for information analysis and documentation which will be shared in the upcoming Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC) meeting and subsequent regional workshop. All District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs) have also been asked to have their DPR Plans endorsed by their respective district councils as envisaged by the Guidance Note on DPR (2011).

### **Accidental fires affect various districts in the Eastern Region**

Accidental fires gutted the houses of 87 families in the Eastern Region and 6 families in Central Tarai districts. An accidental fire also gutted around 30 hectares of forest in Solukhumbu District, with the DDRC coordinated the Nepal Army, Nepal police and locals to control the fire.

A large fire occurred at Fungling-7 in Taplejung District Headquarters, which gutted 8 houses with a loss of property worth tens of millions of rupees. The Nepal Army, Nepal Police and the local residents extinguished the initial fire. The Taplejung DDRC coordinated the Red Cross, government and civil society actors to supply food and non-food items to the fire victims, as well as cash support. A bank account has been opened in the name of the fire victim relief committee to collect the relief funds; while NRs. 128,000 has already been collected, additional support is still required for rehabilitation activities.

## RECENT MAPS AVAILABLE

The RCHCO IMU produced a number of mapping products, some of which are listed below and also available on the UN Nepal Information Platform: <http://www.un.org.np/resources/maps>.

Nepal: Report of Security Incidents February 2013

<http://un.org.np/maps/nepal-report-security-incident-february-2013>

Nepal: Reports of Bandhs/Strikes February 2013

<http://un.org.np/maps/nepal-reports-bandhs-strike-february-2013>

## RECENT REPORTS AVAILABLE

Some of the recent reports available on the UN Nepal Information Platform are listed below:

RCHCO Field Bulletin: Inclusiveness of the Nepal Army: Why is the Madheshi community under-represented? Issue #52

<http://un.org.np/headlines/rchco-field-bulletin-inclusiveness-nepal-army-why-madhesi-community-under-represented-issu>

UNDP Nepal Country Programme Action Plan 2013- 2017

<http://un.org.np/reports/country-programme-action-plan-2013-2017-0>

'Environmental impact assessment of industrial development around Lumbini, the birthplace of the Lord Buddha' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Nepal, on behalf of UNESCO

<http://un.org.np/reports/environmental-impact>

**United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office (UN RCHCO)**

GPO Box: 107, UN House, Pulchowk, Kathmandu

Email: [rchco.nepal@one.un.org](mailto:rchco.nepal@one.un.org)

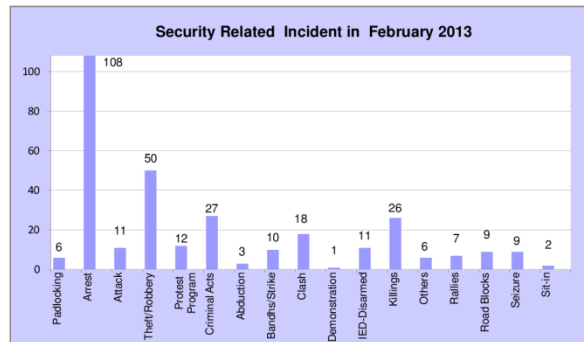
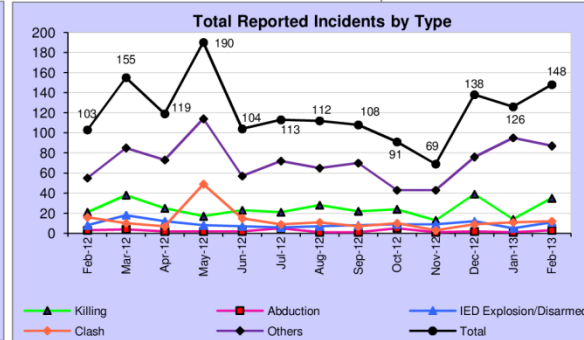
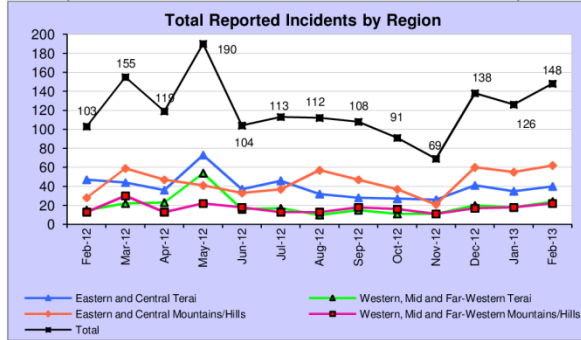
Phone: +977 1 5523200, Fax: +977 1 5523991

Visit the UN Nepal Information Platform at <http://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 the RCHCO aims to confirm reports independently, occasional factual inaccuracies can occur.*

# NEPAL - Reports of Security Incidents

1- 28 February 2013



**Legend**

**Administrative Boundaries**

- International
- Development Region
- District

**Types of Incidents**

- Reports of Abductions
- Reports of Killings
- Reports of Clash
- Reports of Criminal Acts
- Reports of IED-Disarmed/Explosions

**Number of Reported Incidents**

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 6
- 9 - 10
- 39
- No incidents reported

**Action Initiators (Symbol Colour)**

- UCPN-M/YCL
- Terai Groups
- Political Parties/Locals/Students/Teacher Union/Transport Union
- Tharuhat/ Bramhan Samaj/ Chhetri Samaj
- Other/Unidentified

Map Produced by RCHCO with information consolidated by UNDSS.

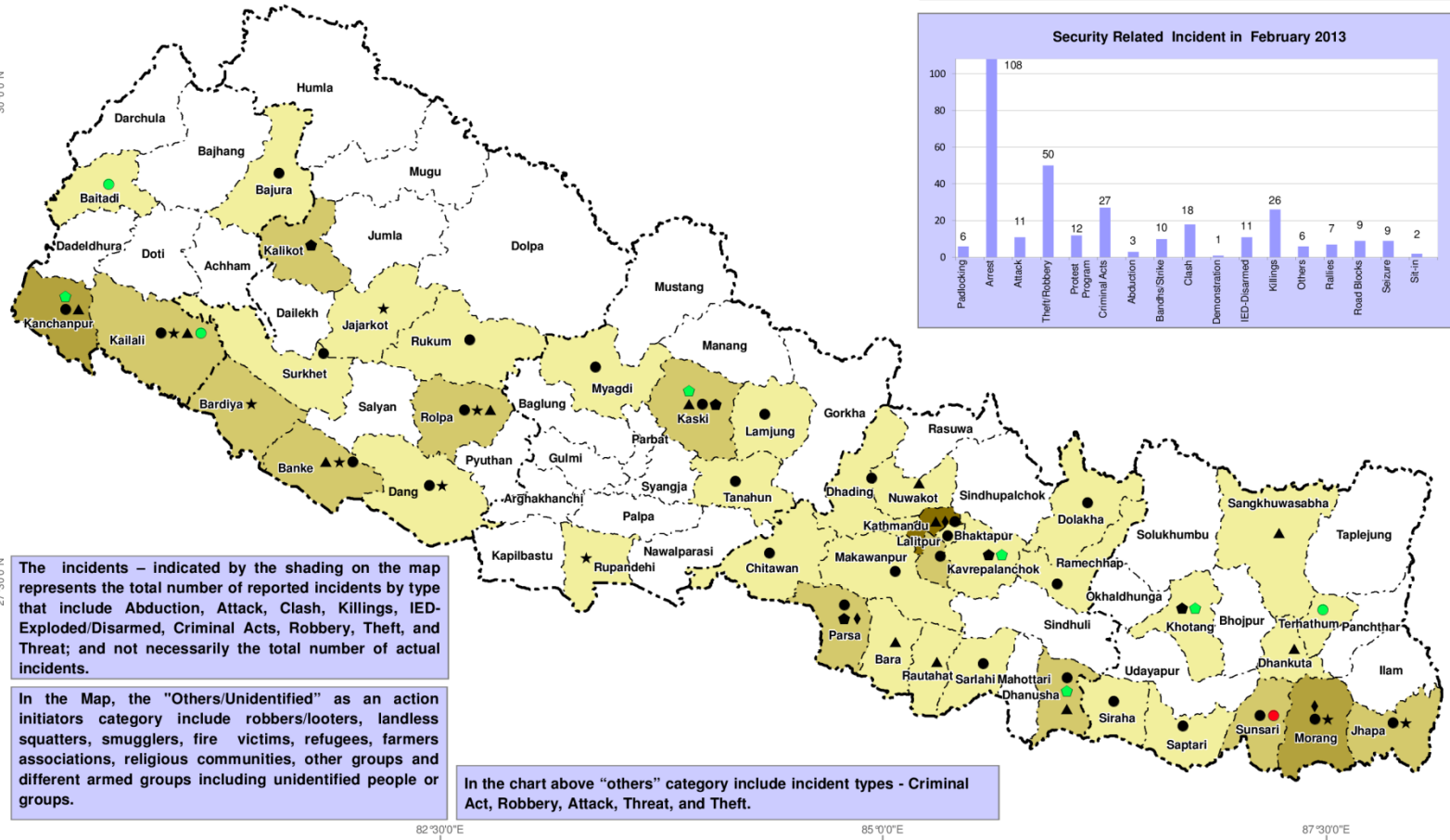
Department of Safety and Security

**Map Doc Name:** Security\_Incidents\_February\_2013\_A4\_6Mar2013\_v1  
**GLIDE Number:** N/A  
**Creation Date:** 6 March 2013  
**Projection/Datum:** UTM 44N/WGS84  
**Web Resources:** <http://un.org.np/resources/maps>

**Map data source(s):** International and domestic media and field reports from UN Agencies, DFID-GIZ/RMO, Donors and I/NGOs. Geodata: GIST, ESRI

**Disclaimers:** The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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 RCHCO Office, Nepal



The incidents – indicated by the shading on the map represents the total number of reported incidents by type that include Abduction, Attack, Clash, Killings, IED-Exploded/Disarmed, Criminal Acts, Robbery, Theft, and Threat; and not necessarily the total number of actual incidents.

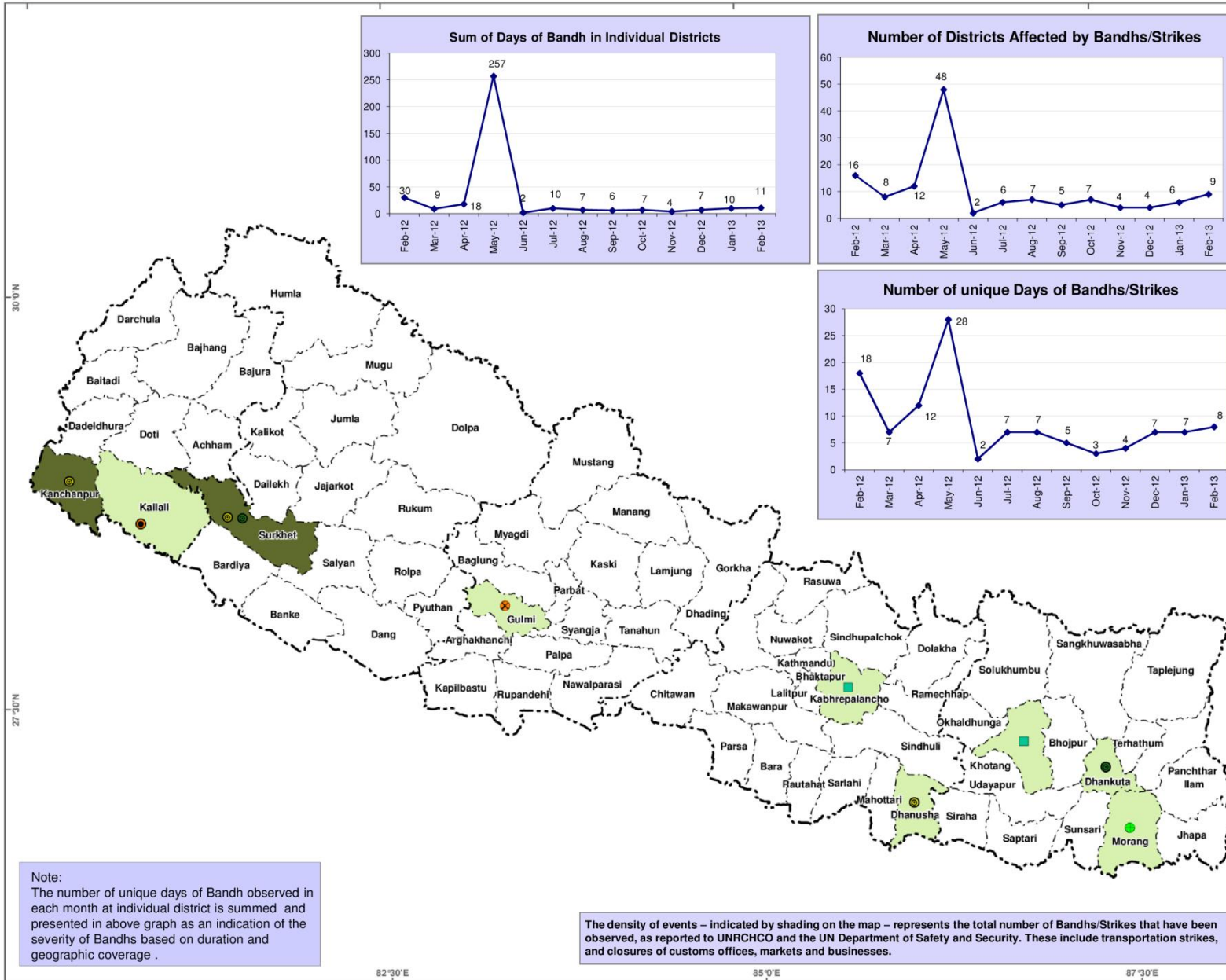
In the Map, the "Others/Unidentified" as an action initiators category include robbers/looters, landless squatters, smugglers, fire victims, refugees, farmers associations, religious communities, other groups and different armed groups including unidentified people or groups.

In the chart above "others" category include incident types - Criminal Act, Robbery, Attack, Threat, and Theft.



# NEPAL - Reports of Bandhs/Strikes

1 - 28 February 2013



Note: The number of unique days of Bandh observed in each month at individual district is summed and presented in above graph as an indication of the severity of Bandhs based on duration and geographic coverage.

The density of events – indicated by shading on the map – represents the total number of Bandhs/Strikes that have been observed, as reported to UNRCHCO and the UN Department of Safety and Security. These include transportation strikes, and closures of customs offices, markets and businesses.

Map Produced by RCHCO with information consolidated by UNDSS.  
 Department of Safety and Security

Map Doc Name: Bandh/Strike\_February\_2013\_A4\_6Mar2013\_v01  
 GLIDE Number: N/A  
 Creation Date: 6 March 2013  
 Projection/Datum: UTM 44N/WGS84  
 Web Resources: <http://un.org.np/resources/maps>

Map data source(s): International and domestic media and field reports from UN Agencies, DFID-GIZ/RMO, Donors and I/NGOs. Geodata: GIST, ESRI

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