

of the genocide under Germany's colonial rule – demanded renewed talks with the German government for reparations and the return of ancestral land. In a 2021 joint declaration between the German and Namibian governments, Germany had apologized for the genocide and committed to funding EUR 1.1 billion in development projects. Affected communities said that the negotiations between Namibia and Germany towards an agreed resolution excluded the meaningful participation of their representatives and the declaration failed to provide adequate reparation measures, including land restitution. In November, both countries reached the final stage of negotiations, and agreed the reparations fund. Pending sign-off of the agreement, the discussions continued but their completion was threatened by the collapse of the German coalition government in November.

## RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

In March the government secured a USD 10 billion investment from Hyphen Hydrogen Energy to develop so-called “green hydrogen” backed by Germany. While the end market for the hydrogen was unconfirmed, concerns were raised about its unproven status as a technology and the potential diversion of renewable energy from a country where many lack access to sustainable electricity.

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1. “Namibia: Decision to overturn ‘sodomy’ laws is a victory for human rights”, 21 June 1

# NEPAL

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## Nepal

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**Authorities used unlawful force against protesters and restricted freedoms of expression and assembly. A key step towards advancing transitional justice nonetheless contained significant gaps that could allow impunity. Violence against women and girls and caste-based**

**discrimination persisted across the country. Forced evictions continued. Illegal recruitment of migrant workers continued.**

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The government suppressed criticism by enforcing restrictions on protests, using unlawful force, and forcibly dispersing and detaining demonstrators.

In January, police arrested at least eight people for protesting in a “prohibited zone” at Maitighar, a landmark area near key government buildings in the capital, Kathmandu. In February, three people were arrested in the same place for protesting against the ban on demonstrations. On 26 February, police used force to break up a protest encampment in a public park where loan shark victims, who had marched barefoot to Kathmandu from across Nepal, had gathered. In response to a subsequent protest that saw 50 people enter parliament, authorities extended protest restrictions by expanding “prohibited areas”. On 6 March, 13 protesters were arrested and detained in front of the Prime Minister’s residence, a prohibited zone. In April, some protests were allowed in Maitighar, but areas around key government institutions remained prohibited areas. In May, 11 students protesting corruption in front of the parliament building were arrested for demonstrating in a prohibited area.

Police responded to protests with tear gas and lethal weapons. On 5 January, a man was shot dead by police during a protest in Barahathawa municipality, Sarlahi. In February, a journalist was assaulted and arrested in Kathmandu while reporting on police brutality against street vendors. In April, police in Kathmandu fired tear gas and water cannons and used batons against pro-monarchy protesters. In May, police in Kathmandu responded with unlawful force to a peaceful protest calling for disability rights. The National Human Rights Commission reported that police beat and detained 20 protesters, including persons with disabilities.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Journalists, activists and online critics faced intensified restrictions on freedom of expression. Between January and December, the Freedom Forum organization recorded 57 incidents of threats, arrests and mistreatment by local authorities and members of political parties, including gender-based violence towards female journalists.

In August, police arrested and detained three people for four days for chanting anti-government slogans during a Hindu festival in Kathmandu.

Online critics faced reprisals for posting criticism of politicians on Facebook. Two men were detained in August for criticizing former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his wife. On 5 September, a 21-year-old man from Bajura district was arrested under the Electronic Transaction Act for criticizing Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli in a Facebook post.

### Journalists

On 10 February, two journalists were arrested in Kanchanpur district for reporting on police mismanagement. In April, the Federation of Nepali Journalists raised concerns that a journalist was threatened for reporting on illegal riverbed mining. In May, the Chairperson of Kantipur Media Group, Kailash Sirohiya, was arrested and detained in Kathmandu in retaliation for the group's reporting on corruption.

The Media Council Bill was tabled in the National Assembly in May, retaining provisions from the previous version that severely restricted the independence of the media and freedom of expression.

## IMPUNITY

A Bill to Amend the Disappeared Persons' Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act was passed in August, with provisions that could help advance truth, justice and reparations for conflict-era atrocities. It nevertheless contained serious accountability gaps, including definitions of crimes that do not comply with international standards, reductions in sentencing for serious crimes, and other provisions that

could shield from prosecution those responsible for wartime crimes.<sup>1</sup>

## LGBTI PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Three same-sex marriages were officially registered in 2024; however, registration did not confer full marital rights.

In July, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of a transgender woman's right to have her gender identity recognized on official documents. Other individuals seeking legal recognition of gender identity continued to face obstacles.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Despite legal prohibitions against child marriage, child labour and *chhaupadi* (banishing menstruating women and girls to huts), harmful practices and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls continued. On 17 June, a 16-year-old girl was raped in a menstrual shed in Achham district. In July, a police inspector was remanded for repeatedly raping a 10-year-old girl working in his house for over three years. Between July 2023 and June 2024, police recorded over 16,000 domestic violence cases. Many incidents remained under-reported due to stigma and systemic barriers.

## DISCRIMINATION

Caste-based discrimination, including untouchability, persisted. Despite legal frameworks, widespread impunity for caste-based violence compounded the barriers to justice for Dalits, in particular Dalit women and girls.<sup>2</sup> In January, a man was arrested for the alleged murder of his 15-year-old daughter, due to her relationship with a Dalit youth. On 6 June, reports emerged regarding the lack of essential services – such as drinking water and electricity – in Dalit settlements in Mirchaiya Municipality-7, Siraha.

## FORCED EVICTIONS

Hundreds of families living in informal settlements remained at risk of forced eviction by local authorities. Although the National Land Commission (dissolved in

March) was brought back in October by the new government, there was no action by the Commission before the end of the year to ensure that land and housing was allocated to the landless, Dalits and people living in informal settlements.

In July, Dhangadhi city officials bulldozed the makeshift houses of 10 families living in informal settlements and forcibly evicted them in Kailali district. At least 500 flood-affected families in Kailali were rendered homeless in July when the District Forest Office forcibly evicted them by demolishing their shelters. Marginalized Tharu and Dalit communities were particularly affected by the subsequent humanitarian crisis.<sup>3</sup>

## MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

Thousands of young Nepalis continued to take on difficult and dangerous jobs in Gulf countries, Malaysia and elsewhere, paying illegal recruitment fees and working without proper labour protection (see Saudi Arabia entry).

## DETAINEES' RIGHTS

The government failed to prevent torture and end impunity.<sup>4</sup> In July, a man died in custody after being detained for four days. A man was found dead in police custody in October. On 5 November, a man was found dead in custody in Kapilvastu district. A clash at a juvenile correction centre in Banke in July resulted in 60 detainees escaping from the centre. In June, the National Human Rights Commission reported 55 investigations into complaints of torture.

## RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Torrential rains during the monsoon season in June and September caused flash floods and landslides, killing more than 300 people in Kathmandu and adjacent districts.<sup>5</sup> According to the World Weather Attribution initiative, this flooding was linked to urbanization and climate change.

2. "Nepal: Systemic descent-based discrimination against Dalits needs urgent action", 10 May 1
3. "Nepal: Preliminary findings of the joint monitoring of forced evictions by civil society organisations", 16 July 1
4. "Nepal: Government must fulfil its promise and end the use of torture and other ill-treatment", 26 June 1
5. "South Asia: Devastating Floods Yet Another Reminder for Urgent Human Rights-Consistent Climate Action", 12 July 1

# NETHERLANDS

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## Kingdom of the Netherlands

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**The new government announced proposals that would discriminate against refugees and asylum seekers. Racial profiling persisted in law enforcement and welfare fraud detection. Peaceful protesters were subjected to unlawful surveillance measures. A new sexual offences law included a consent-based definition of rape. Climate policies were weakened.**

## REFUGEES' AND MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

In April, a group of civil society organizations began legal action against the government for concluding and implementing a 2016 agreement whereby EU member states seek to outsource refugee protection to Turkey, despite the foreseeable human rights violations.<sup>1</sup>

The new government announced proposals to restrict the procedural position of asylum seekers, including limiting legal aid and removing their right to appeal a court decision on their asylum claim.

In Aruba, a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Venezuelan asylum seekers, including children, lacked access to fair and effective asylum procedures.<sup>2</sup>

## DISCRIMINATION

Racial profiling in law enforcement and welfare fraud detection remained a structural and government-wide problem.<sup>3</sup> Protection against the use of discriminatory risk models in the benefits system remained inadequate.<sup>4</sup>

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1. "Nepal: New Transitional Justice Law a Flawed Step Forward", 20 August 1