



“WE WENT THERE TO RAISE OUR VOICE, NOT TO BE KILLED”

**NEPAL’S DEADLY CRACKDOWN ON
PROTESTERS**

**RESEARCH
BRIEFING**

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Cover Photo: People light candles and lamps in front of the Federal Parliament to pay tribute to those killed in the September 8 Gen-Z movement, which brings regime change in Nepal, on September 17, 2025. Photo: Subaas Shrestha/NurPhoto via Getty Images

This briefing exposes Nepal's failure to uphold peaceful assembly during "Gen-Z" protests on 8 September 2025, where 19 were killed and over 300 were injured. It reveals systemic policing failures – unjustified restrictions, unlawful force, and weapon misuse against largely peaceful protesters – and urges independent investigation, better facilitation of assemblies, and legal reforms to align policing with international human rights standards.

GLOSSARY

WORD	DESCRIPTION
FIREARM	A firearm is a weapon that by nature of its ammunition is designed to take a life. A rifle or pistol is almost always a firearm, as its standard load of live ammunition is only designed to be lethal. A shotgun may be a firearm, if loaded with slugs or other lethal ammunition, but may not be, if loaded with tear gas, pepper spray or other less lethal payloads.
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
KIPS	Kinetic Impact Projectiles (KIPs) include plastic and rubber bullets, as well as other forms of impact munitions such as bean bags, foam rounds, and large or small rubber balls and are typically fired from a launching weapon. Their use must be strictly limited to situations of violent disorder posing a risk of harm to persons.
LESS LETHAL WEAPONS	Less lethal weapons, such as pepper spray, kinetic impact projectiles or batons, are weapons used by law enforcement agencies as a less lethal alternative to firearms. Less lethal weapons include all weapons that are designed to only injure and not to kill, even though they may have fatal consequences depending on the circumstances and manner of use.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 8-9 September 2025, a wave of youth-led protests – widely referred to as the “Gen-Z protests” – swept across Nepal. The uprising, which took place against a backdrop of growing public discontent against corruption and mounting economic disparity, was ultimately triggered by the imposition of wide-ranging government restrictions on social media. Throughout the country, peaceful protests were met with a heavy-handed police response in the first two days. General unrest persisted until 13 September, and at the end of the six days, at least 76 people had been killed, including three police officers, with more than 2,000 people injured.

This briefing focuses on the unlawful use of force by units of Nepal’s security forces during protests that occurred on 8 September in the capital Kathmandu, which resulted in at least 19 deaths and more than 300 people injured. While this briefing does not document incidents that occurred later, primarily involving violent protesters, this does not diminish the gravity of those incidents. They must also be subject to an independent, impartial investigation, and those responsible should be brought to justice through a fair trial.

Based on evidence including eyewitness testimony from protesters, protest organizers and hospital staff who treated the wounded, and analysis of open-source videos and photographs, the briefing assesses the conduct of Nepal’s security forces against the country’s international human rights obligations in relation to the policing of protests. Amnesty International found that law enforcement officials used unnecessary and excessive force, including the misuse of less lethal weapons and the use of lethal weapons, against largely peaceful protesters.

The briefing documents the timeline of the 8 September protests, which started in Maitighar Square, and moved towards the parliament complex in New Baneshwor. The protest had begun in the morning without incident, but tensions rose when a section of protesters dismantled a police barricade erected by police less than 500m from the parliament. The Nepal Police, in their response to Amnesty International, asserted that the erection of the barricade was in compliance of its local laws. However, the erection of such a barrier is incompatible with the right to freedom of peaceful assembly under international law as it restricted the protesters from being within sight and sound of the parliament which was the intended target of the protest. Security forces responded with unnecessary and excessive force that quickly escalated over the next five hours, first using less lethal weapons, then deploying live ammunition. These weapons were deployed even though the demonstration remained peaceful.

Moreover, the placement of the barricade only heightened the anger and frustration of the protesters and proved to be a counter-productive measure – bearing the risk of escalating the situation and therefore just the opposite of what a law enforcement approach seeking to maintain public order should do.

Police first used a water cannon against protesters, in some instances firing high-pressure jets at people stuck against railings on the side of the road. Then, after protesters had surrounded the parliament building, police fired tear gas grenades at protesters from elevated positions. Some of these grenades were discharged inside and around hospitals and obstructed urgent medical care. After some protesters started to scale the parliament gate, police then resorted to firing rubber bullets into the crowd, without providing any warning.

In the early afternoon, after some protesters engaged in stone-throwing, the security forces started to fire live ammunition. Amnesty International found evidence of the use of lethal force by police in circumstances that did not involve an imminent threat of death or serious injury, resulting in arbitrary deprivations of life. Testimonies from protesters and healthcare professionals reveal that police repeatedly resorted to the unlawful use of lethal force, firing live ammunition into crowds and seriously injuring and killing protesters and bystanders. Amnesty International, through testimonies from

medical workers, protesters, and journalists, as well as through photographic and video analysis, found that the police repeatedly shot the wounded and the deceased in the head, chest, and neck, clearly indicating an intention to kill.

Amnesty International found that the actions of Nepal's security forces on 8 September constituted grave violations of international human rights law. The research findings show that law enforcement officials unlawfully used tear gas, water cannon and kinetic impact projectiles, including rubber bullets and rubber-coated metal bullets fired from close range directly towards protesters, often without warning or genuine efforts at de-escalation. In several instances, such weapons were deployed in circumstances where their use was either wholly unnecessary or excessive, contravening international human rights law and standards enshrined in the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

The use of firearms against protesters who posed no imminent threat of death or serious injury, and which resulted in bystanders – including children and journalists – being hit, constituted a totally unnecessary and therefore unlawful use of force. The manner of the deployment of lethal weapons in the circumstances all indicate extrajudicial and arbitrary killings and contravene Nepal's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.

By dispersing overwhelmingly peaceful assembly participants with unnecessary and excessive force, the authorities also undermined the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly guaranteed under the ICCPR. These patterns of unlawful killings, excessive force, and attacks on and near hospitals point to a systemic disregard for Nepal's obligations under international law and demand urgent accountability and reform.

Amnesty International makes several recommendations in this briefing including: ensuring that prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigations are carried out into the numerous allegations of unlawful use of force, including those involving the unlawful use of firearms, tear gas, water cannon and kinetic impact projectiles by law enforcement officials against protesters and bystanders on 8 September; publishing the findings in a timely manner through a medium widely accessible to the public; holding those responsible – whether senior or junior officers – to account and ensuring they are brought to justice in fair trials; amending domestic laws and regulations on the use of force that do not comply with international human rights standards and adapting the policing approach towards facilitation, amongst others. It also calls on the other governments to use all bilateral, multilateral, and regional platforms at their disposal to urge Nepali authorities to respect, protect and facilitate the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

2. METHODOLOGY

The briefing examines human rights violations by units of Nepal's security forces during Gen-Z protests that occurred in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu on 8 September 2025 because the documented actions by security forces reveal serious violations of international human rights law, including patterns of unlawful use of force that demand independent, impartial investigations and accountability. These events also highlight systemic shortcomings in the policing of assemblies, which contributed to the escalation of violence and must be addressed through policy and operational reforms to ensure non-recurrence. The aim of this briefing is therefore to highlight serious violations by security forces and the urgent need for rights-respecting policing and accountability. While this briefing does not document incidents that occurred later, primarily involving violent protesters and mobs, this does not diminish the gravity of those incidents. They must also be subject to an independent, impartial investigation, and those responsible should be brought to justice through a fair trial.

Specifically, the briefing addresses the protests on 8 September that started in Maitighar, and moved to the parliament complex in New Baneshwor, which is located roughly 1km to the east, in central Kathmandu. This briefing documents certain emblematic cases that reflect the systemic failures in policing of protests and use of force but does not aim to be exhaustive.

The briefing is primarily based on interviews and analysis of open-source videos and photographs, as well as a literature review that includes government notifications and legislation, Supreme Court of Nepal judgements, news articles, social media posts, medical documents and reports by other organizations. The research was conducted in accordance with Amnesty International's methodology and verification standards. Between 16 and 19 September 2025, Amnesty International interviewed 25 people, of whom 23 were male and two were female. The reason for this disparity is gendered inequality in political and public activism in Nepal, which may have resulted in men constituting a visibly larger portion of protest participants in photographic and videographic evidence. Those interviewed included seven doctors and two healthcare staff from Civil Service Hospital, the National Trauma Centre, Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital and Everest Hospital; six protesters, including two organizers; two observers associated with civil society organizations, including Amnesty International; four journalists who covered the protests and were also injured; two police officials, and relatives of two deceased protesters. The interviews were conducted in person at secure locations.

All findings were triangulated across independent sources, drawing on eyewitness and medical testimony, government notifications and data, hospital records, and digitally available photographic and video evidence. Amnesty International's Evidence Lab, the organization's digital investigations team, verified 33 videos and 25 pictures taken in the surroundings of Nepal's parliament and published on social media on 8 September 2025 or shared directly with researchers between 16 September 2025 and 19 September 2025.

All interviews were conducted in Nepali and translated into English. Pseudonyms have been used instead of real names, and other identifying details have been omitted to protect the identities of interviewees for security and confidentiality reasons.

On 26 November, Amnesty International sent letters to the Nepal Police, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, and the Home Ministry outlining the preliminary findings of the briefing and requesting a response. At the time of publication of this report, Amnesty International had only received a response from the Nepal Police which is reflected in the briefing.

3. BACKGROUND

The events of 8 September in Nepal, which resulted in at least 19 deaths and more than 300 people injured, occurred amid rising public discontent against corruption and mounting economic disparity in the country, and were triggered by escalating tensions over government restrictions on social media. Dubbed the “Gen-Z protests” due to the participation of largely young Nepalis, the protests occurred on 8 and 9 September with wider social unrest lasting until 13 September.¹ Over the six days, a total of at least 76 people were killed, including three police officers, more than 2000 people were injured, and about 1580 properties including 688 government offices, 259 private residences, 128 businesses, 198 political party offices and 307 police stations were either completely destroyed or faced widespread arson and vandalism.² Media reports citing official sources indicate that 22

¹ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Home Affairs, Press Release, 09/06/2022, Nepal Sambat 1145, <https://www.moha.gov.np/post/pa-ra-sa-va-ja-niapa-ta-187>

² Rising Nepal, “Signs of Gen-Z protest were visible, but it unfolded abruptly: Army”, 18 October 2025, <https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/69825>; Reuters, “Death toll from Nepal's anti-corruption protests raised to 72”, 14 September 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/death-toll-nepals-anti-corruption-protests-raised-72-2025-09-14>; Kathmandu Post, “A third of buildings torched in Gen-Z protests fully destroyed”, 9 October 2025, <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2025/10/09/a-third-of-buildings-torched-in-gen-z-protests-fully-destroyed>; The Hindu, “A month since Gen-Z protests, Nepal faces a tough road to democratic reform”, 10 October 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/a-month-since-gen-z-protests-nepal-faces-a-tough-road-to-democratic-reform/article70144854.ece>; Kathmandu Post, “Relatives, well-wishers hold candlelight vigil

protesters were killed on 8 September; on 9 September, 17 protesters were shot dead, 10 inmates fleeing prisons in different parts of the country amid the unrest were killed after being shot by police (six inmates) and army (four inmates), three police officials were beaten to death by angry mobs, while 24 people were found dead in various buildings set ablaze by violent crowds across the country.³ As the Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli resigned on 9 September and there were incidents of violence against the police in several places, the Nepal Army was deployed from 10pm on 9 September to patrol the streets of Kathmandu and other cities across the country. The “Gen-Z” groups spearheading the protests distanced themselves from the violent acts, stating the movement has been “hijacked by ‘opportunist’ infiltrators”.⁴ On 12 September, President Ram Chandra Poudel appointed former Chief Justice Sushila Karki as the new prime minister to lead the interim government with a mandate to organize elections for the House of Representatives within six months.⁵ This briefing focuses on the events of the first day of the protests which started peacefully and only started to turn violent after police started to use lethal and less lethal weapons.

Efforts to apply tighter regulations on social media platforms had started in 2023 when, on 27 November, the Government of Nepal published the 15-point Social Media Management Directive 2080⁶ under the Electronic Transaction Act 2063.⁷ The Directive mandated social media platforms to enrol with Nepal’s Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (“Ministry” hereafter). Any platform that failed to comply would have its operations suspended.⁸ The Directive prohibited users from creating fake accounts, spreading hate speech, misinformation, or obscene and defamatory content, and engaging in activities such as cyberbullying, phishing, or promoting illegal acts.⁹ It also restricted publishing private or manipulated images without consent.¹⁰ To enforce compliance, the Directive mandated a Social Media Management Unit under the Ministry to address user grievances and instruct platforms to remove prohibited content.¹¹

In September 2024, the Supreme Court of Nepal, while hearing a contempt of court petition filed against the website Sidhakura.com for allegedly publishing defamatory written, audio and visual material against the judiciary, ruled that online and social media platforms must register before operating.¹² The Court further stressed the need to make social and digital media networks accountable and to discourage the creation of false accounts. However, the full text of the verdict was published only on 16 August 2025. Although the Court upheld the registration requirement, it did not explicitly authorize a blanket ban on unregistered platforms.¹³

Five months earlier, in March 2025, the Government of Nepal had already called on social media platforms to register with the Ministry within 30 days, citing the 2023 Social Media Directives.¹⁴ Later,

for Gen-Z protest victims”, 10 October 2025, <https://kathmandupost.com/visual-stories/2025/10/10/relatives-well-wishers-hold-candlelight-vigil-for-gen-z-protest-victims>

³ Kantipur, “Post-mortem confirmed that 39 people were killed by bullets, all of whom were hit in the waist”, 11 October 2025, <https://ekantipur.com/news/2025/10/28/postmortems-confirmed-that-all-39-people-killed-by-guns-were-shot-in-the-waist-03-11.html>

⁴ BBC, “Nepal protests ‘hijacked’, Gen-Z claim, as army patrols the streets”, 10 September 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cjd1ndmrej0o>

⁵ Amnesty International, *Nepal: Protesters Demand Integrity, Rights, Rule of Law*, 13 September 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ASA3102972025ENGLISH.pdf>

⁶ Nepal, Directives for Managing the Use of Social Networks, 2023, <https://mocit.gov.np/content/8361/8361-directives-for-managing-the-us>

⁷ Nepal, The Electronic Transactions Act, 2063 (2008), <https://lawcommission.gov.np/content/13397/electronic--electronic--traded-international-act-2063>

⁸ Nepal, Directives for Managing the Use of Social Networks, 2023 (previously cited).

⁹ Nepal, Directives for Managing the Use of Social Networks, 2023 (previously cited).

¹⁰ Nepal Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Directive to Regulate the Use of Social Media, 27 November 2023, https://giwmscdnone.gov.np/media/app/public/22/posts/1701329617_80.pdf

¹¹ Nepal Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Directive to Regulate the Use of Social Media, 27 November 2023, https://giwmscdnone.gov.np/media/app/public/22/posts/1701329617_80.pdf

¹² *Govindprasad Ghimire v. Sidhakura.com and others* (08-CF-0012), Supreme Court of Nepal (2024), <https://supremecourt.gov.np/web/assets/downloads/080-CF-0012.pdf>; Kathmandu Post, “Top court says all social media, online sites must register”, 17 August 2025, <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2025/08/17/top-court-says-all-social-media-online-sites-must-register>

¹³ Kathmandu Post, “How top court helped government implement social media blockage”, 5 September 2025, <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2025/09/05/how-top-court-helped-government-implement-social-media-blockage>

¹⁴ Nepal Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Notice from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology regarding the Regulation of Social Media Platform Usage, 27 November 2023, https://giwmscdnone.gov.np/media/pdf_upload/sen_zm5nguu.pdf

on 25 August 2025, the government again issued a directive under the same framework, requiring all social media platforms to register with the Ministry and appoint a local representative within seven days, citing the Supreme Court's ruling.¹⁵ Officials stated that these measures were necessary to counter fake news, hate speech and the criminal misuse of online platforms, along with raising tax revenue.¹⁶

When companies failed to register within the seven-day deadline, the government imposed restrictions.¹⁷ On 4 September, authorities ordered a ban on all unregistered platforms.¹⁸ By midnight, 26 platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, LinkedIn, Reddit, Signal and Snapchat, were blocked.¹⁹ This abrupt disruption to communication, commerce and education provoked widespread anger, particularly among young people who rely heavily on digital networks.²⁰

In parallel to these events, the #NepoBaby trend, which first gained traction in Indonesia after student-led protests,²¹ had also become popular in Nepal.²² It exposed the stark contrast between the lavish lifestyles flaunted online by the political and business elite and the daily struggles of ordinary Nepalis, fostering widespread resentment against the ruling class, particularly among young people.

Against this backdrop, the government's social media ban was widely seen as yet another attempt to stifle freedom of expression. In response, diverse movements and groups united to protest against mounting corruption, economic disparity and repression in Nepal.²³

Despite restrictions, protests continued to be coordinated online through Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and encrypted apps. Hashtags such as #UnbanSocialMedia and #NepoBaby gained momentum before platforms were fully restricted, while discussions on online platforms like Discord and Reddit encouraged young people to mobilize offline on 8 September 2025.²⁴

4. TIMELINE OF PROTESTS: A RAPID ESCALATION OF UNLAWFUL FORCE

4.1 BREACHING OF BARRICADE AND LOSS OF POLICE CONTROL

Evidence gathered by Amnesty International shows that people began gathering at Maitighar Square in Kathmandu before 10am.²⁵ Initial numbers were small, but within half an hour the crowd, reportedly grew to an estimated 2,000-3,000 participants.²⁶ Various organizers had originally planned to begin

¹⁵ Republica, "Nepal gives social media platforms seven days to register or face ban", 27 August 2025, <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/nepal-issues-fresh-seven-day-ultimatum-for-social-media-platforms-to-regist-47-63.html>

¹⁶ Republica, "Nepal gives social media platforms seven days to register or face ban", (previously cited); Nepali Times, "Protest grows against Nepal's social media ban", 5 September 2025, <https://nepalitimes.com/news/protest-grows-against-nepal-s-social-media-ban>

¹⁷ Fiscal Nepal, "Nepal government orders social media platforms to register within 7 days or face deactivation in Nepal", 27 August 2025, <https://www.fiscalnepal.com/2025/08/27/21960/nepal-government-orders-social-media-platforms-to-register-within-7-days-or-face-deactivation-in-nepal>

¹⁸ Kathmandu Post, "Nepal's social media ban explained in six questions", 4 September 2025, <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2025/09/04/nepal-s-social-media-ban-explained-in-six-questions>

¹⁹ NDTV World, "Facebook, WhatsApp, X: List Of 26 Apps Banned In Nepal", 8 September 2025, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/facebook-whatsapp-x-list-of-26-apps-banned-in-nepal-9237116>

²⁰ Gulf News "Explained: Why Nepal's social media ban triggered deadly Gen-Z protests", 9 September 2025, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/explained-why-nepal-s-social-media-ban-triggered-deadly-gen-z-protests-1.500261317>

²¹ BBC News, "How the death of a delivery driver ignited Indonesia", 1 September 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2dj9w306wzo>

²² India Today, "Behind Nepal's Gen-Z protests is a nepo-kid trigger", 9 September 2025, <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/nepal-gen-z-protests-kathmandu-social-media-trend-nepo-kids-nepo-baby-corruption-reasons-demands-explained-2783822-2025-09-08>

²³ BBC News, "What we know about Nepal anti-corruption protests as PM resigns", 9 September 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crkj0lzf3ro>

²⁴ Interviews with organizers of protests, 18 September 2025.

²⁵ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International. <https://x.com/setopati/status/1964898995559686470>; https://x.com/Rato_pati/status/1964898834548760789; https://x.com/Online_khabar/status/1964901616148259065

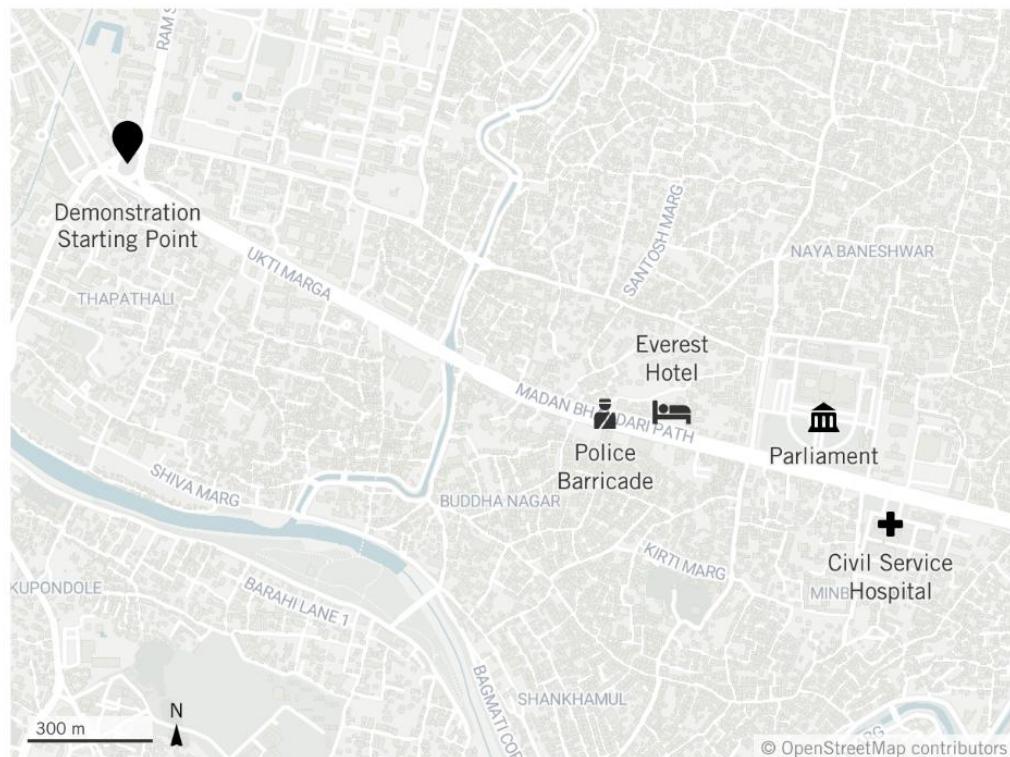
²⁶ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025; Interview with "Prakriti Rai", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Ganesh Adhikari", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Prajwal Khadka", 19 September 2025; YouTube, The Gen-Z Revolution 2082 - Full Documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lFBAzuFKS5M&t=891s>

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marching later in the morning, but the scale of the gathering made it difficult to remain stationary.²⁷ By 10.30-11am, the march proceeded towards New Baneshwor Chowk via Madan Bhandari Road, which can be traversed in a largely straight line.²⁸

Key Locations



Map indicates the protest route and key incident locations verified by Amnesty International. © Amnesty International

Drone footage shows that the protest was peaceful and that the police initially accompanied it closely.²⁹ The procession passed the Kathmandu District Court and Bijuli Bazar, where the police presence increased slightly according to one of the organizers.³⁰ Near the Everest Hotel, the crowd swelled further. The area beyond Everest Hotel is generally designated as a restricted zone because of its proximity to the parliament, which is incompatible with the right to freedom of peaceful assembly under international human rights law.³¹

The organizers told Amnesty International that they called for peaceful action, encouraging protesters to sit down, but tensions rose when groups arriving from side streets attempted to dismantle barricades.³² Organizers also reported that police numbers remained limited and that requests for additional deployment by the protesters to the police officials who were present at the scene were disregarded.³³ Videos and pictures taken at the time show the police built a barricade on the road less

²⁷ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025.

²⁸ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025; photos published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://x.com/setopati/status/1964922542231265690>

²⁹ Video published on social media on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International. <https://x.com/setopati/status/1964933521463517524>

³⁰ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025.

³¹ CCPR, GC 37, Peaceful Assembly, CCPR/C/GC/37, para. 54; HRC, Joint report SR, A/HRC/31/66, para. 30.

³² Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025.

³³ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025.

than 500m from the parliament and protesters tried to push forward.³⁴ One video shows the moment when protesters managed to reach the barricade from the other end of the road and forcefully removed it. Outnumbered, officers turned their backs to the crowd and left.³⁵



Video shows the moment protesters toppled a police barricade less than 500m from the parliament building.

© Amnesty International

As the protesters advanced towards the Parliament, the police resorted to the use of a water cannon. Videos and photos show high-pressure water jets being fired directly at protesters, knocking some of them to the ground.³⁶ In some instances, the jets were aimed at protesters stuck against railings on the side of the road, which is a dangerous practice that violates international human rights standards, including the UN Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement (UN Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons).

By late morning, videos and pictures show demonstrators had surrounded the parliament from several directions.³⁷ Police fired tear gas grenades at protesters from elevated positions, in violation of the UN Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons, including from the top windows of the building opposite the parliament premises.³⁸ Some protesters climbed onto a water cannon truck that was parked in front of

³⁴ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://x.com/ANI/status/1964981002562121891> <https://www.gettyimages.com.br/detail/foto-jornal%C3%ADstica/an-aerial-view-shows-demonstrators-gathered-outside-foto-jornal%C3%ADstica/2233761207?adppopup=true> <https://www.gettyimages.com.br/detail/foto-jornal%C3%ADstica/nepali-student-protestors-clash-with-police-near-the-foto-jornal%C3%ADstica/22337521207?adppopup=true> <https://www.gettyimages.com.br/detail/foto-jornal%C3%ADstica/the-gen-z-group-protests-against-corruption-and-the-foto-jornal%C3%ADstica/2233752312?adppopup=true>

³⁵ Video originally published on YouTube on 10 September 2025 and later deleted, on file with Amnesty International.

³⁶ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC7Cs1BV_k4

<https://x.com/setopati/status/1964946176551059591> <https://apnews.com/article/nepal-protest-social-media-ban-1ac9efd7d2f28783cc9f2be60edfa1da> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Zhg9nkwUYE>

³⁷ Interview with “Bibek Rai”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025 and media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://x.com/Online_khabar/status/1964941645029548426 <https://nepalkhabar.com/society/249561-2025-9-8-13-54-57>

³⁸ Interview with “Bibek Rai”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025; Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

the parliament's main gate and unfurled a banner, while others scaled a single-story security building at the south gate of the parliament.³⁹ Police did not intervene in these instances.⁴⁰ Throughout this time, the students and other protest leaders continued to call for peaceful demonstrations on their loudspeakers.⁴¹

4.3 THE USE OF FIREARMS

Between noon and 1.30pm, a section of the assembly participants turned violent. Some protesters engaged in stone-throwing.⁴² Witnesses reported hearing gunfire and observed "commando-like" personnel in firing posture.⁴³ Unlike the public order police, the personnel used lethal rounds in addition to shooting rubber bullets as indicated by the interviews with the protesters, doctors and other hospital staff who treated the wounded and the Nepal Police's own admission.⁴⁴ Army vehicles began arriving from Old Baneshwar, indicating the involvement of additional security forces.⁴⁵

Several videos show police officers in and around the parliament equipped with or firing lethal weapons such as FN FAL rifles and a Sterling submachine gun,⁴⁶ which are both lethal weapons that have no legitimate use in policing protests. Drone footage shows an officer firing an FN FAL at protesters who had climbed the parliament's main entrance and who did not present an imminent threat of death or serious injury to police⁴⁷ Another video shows a protester being shot at head level with a shotgun at close range after throwing a rock towards the parliament gate.⁴⁸ The protester is later seen heavily bleeding from the head. While Amnesty International is not in a position to assess what the shotgun was loaded with, shots at head level, even with less lethal rounds, are a violation of international human rights law and standards on the use of force and firearms, as they should only inflict blunt trauma but not cause serious injury. Hence, they should only be aimed below the waist level and not from a close range to avoid penetration.⁴⁹

By 12.30pm, the Chief District Officer of Kathmandu district declared a curfew in the area around the parliament.⁵⁰ Over the next few hours until 4pm, a curfew was also declared in other parts of Nepal, including Birgunj, Pokhara, Bhairahawa, Butwal, Itahari, and Damak.⁵¹ Injured protesters ran or were taken to the nearby Civil Service Hospital where, according to witnesses, the situation remained chaotic with police firing tear gas in and around hospital premises. (See p. 17).

By the end of the day, security forces had killed 19 people and injured at least 347.⁵² In their response to Amnesty International, Nepal Police stated that 295 security personnel were also injured,

³⁹ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025 and media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_9u2wGkR7A

⁴⁰ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025.

⁴¹ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025; Interview with "Aarati Gurung", 19 September 2025 and media published on 8 September 2025, <https://x.com/ANI/status/1964982703121731945>

⁴² Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025 and media published on 8 September 2025 <https://x.com/ANI/status/1964972809861603575>

⁴³ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025; Interviews with "Prakriti Rai", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Prashant Lama", 19 September 2025.

⁴⁴ Gaurav Pokhrel, "Internal police report: 2,642 rounds of bullets fired during Gen-G movement", *Kantipur*, 26 September 2025, <https://ekantipur.com/news/2025/09/26/internal-report-of-the-police-2642-rounds-fired-in-gen-g-movement-18-42.html>

⁴⁵ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025.

⁴⁶ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://www.tiktok.com/@gen.z_aaron/video/7547673761865141511 <https://www.facebook.com/RanjanKaarki/videos/1271897934238574>

⁴⁷ Video published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://x.com/Online_khabar/status/1965055376124268861

⁴⁸ Video published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://x.com/SGnepal/status/1967633976652337259>

⁴⁹ HRC, SR on Assembly, Crisis Protests, A/HRC/50/42, para. 45; OSCE-ODIHR, HR Handbook on Policing Assemblies, p. 81.

⁵⁰ Onlinekhabar, X post: "Curfew Order Issued in Kathmandu", (Image of official curfew order in Nepali,) 8 September 2025 https://x.com/Online_khabar/status/1964943053040525801

⁵¹ Nepali Post, "Curfew Order Issued In Kathmandu, Pokhara, Itahari, Butwal And Bhairahawa", 8 September 2025, <https://thenepalipost.com/details/44088>

⁵² UN, "UN ready to assist Nepal following deadly protests", 8 September 2025, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165796>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/nepal-call-prompt-transparent-investigation-killings-protesters>

including 211 from Nepal police and 84 from Armed Police Force including exposure to tear gas and head injuries, amongst others.⁵³

5. KEY FINDINGS

Under both international and domestic law, the rights of people to gather peacefully and to express ideas and opinions are protected, and states have a duty to respect, protect and facilitate the exercise of these rights. General Comment 37 of the UN Human Rights Committee clarifies State parties' general obligations under Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which protects the right to peaceful assembly, stating that "isolated instances of [violent] conduct will not suffice to taint an entire assembly as non-peaceful."⁵⁴ Rather, only if violence by assembly participants is "*manifestly widespread within the assembly*" would participation in the gathering no longer be protected by the right of peaceful assembly.⁵⁵ The General Comment further states that violence in the context of assemblies entails the use by participants of physical force against others that is likely to result in injury or death, or serious damage to property.⁵⁶

Only in exceptional cases may an assembly be dispersed.⁵⁷ Since the right of peaceful assembly protects peaceful assembly, not merely lawful assembly, a protest that remains peaceful (where violence by participants is not manifestly widespread) should continue to be protected and facilitated. Where a decision to disperse is taken in conformity with domestic and international law and standards, use of force should be avoided. Where that is not possible in the circumstances, only the minimum force necessary may be used.

As far as possible, any force used should be directed against a specific individual or group engaged in or threatening violence. Force that is likely to cause more than negligible injury should not be used against individuals or groups who are passively resisting. Even where the conduct of an individual protester is no longer peaceful (placing that individual outside the protection of the right of peaceful assembly), they retain other rights under the ICCPR, including their rights to life and to freedom from torture and other ill-treatment, which must continue to be protected.⁵⁸

Amnesty International found that Nepali law enforcement officials committed grave violations of international human rights law in policing Gen-Z protests in Kathmandu on 8 October, using unnecessary and excessive force, including misuse of less lethal weapons and use of lethal weapons, against largely peaceful protesters.

Testimonies from healthcare professionals, protesters and protest organizers reveal that police repeatedly resorted to the unlawful use of lethal force, firing live ammunition into crowds and striking protesters and bystanders in the head, neck and chest in clear violation of the right to life protected under Article 6 of the ICCPR.⁵⁹

Less lethal weapons, including water cannon, tear gas, and kinetic impact projectiles such as rubber bullets, were deployed recklessly and contrary to international standards, causing life-threatening injuries and permanent disabilities, thereby breaching the principles of necessity and proportionality enshrined in the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.⁶⁰ The police fired tear gas

⁵³ Response on file with Amnesty International

⁵⁴ General Comment 37 (2020), para. 19.

⁵⁵ General Comment 37 (2020), para. 19.

⁵⁶ General Comment 37 (2020), para. 15.

⁵⁷ General Comment 37 (2020), paras. 85 and 86.

⁵⁸ General Comment 37 (2020), para. 9.

⁵⁹ Article 6 (1), Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life,

⁶⁰ Principles 4 and 5, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials; Amnesty International, Use of Force:

Guidelines for Implementation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, 2015, pp. 47 and 49,

<https://policehumanrightsresources.org/use-of-force-guidelines-for-implementation-of-the-un-basic-principles-on-the-use-of-force-and-firearms-by-law-enforcement-officials>

inside and around hospitals and obstructed urgent medical care, exposing the injured to what could amount to torture or cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment prohibited under Article 7 of the ICCPR.⁶¹

By dispersing peaceful assemblies with unnecessary and excessive force, the authorities also undermined the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly guaranteed under Articles 19 and 21 of the ICCPR.⁶² These patterns of unlawful killings, excessive force, and attacks on and near hospitals point to a systemic disregard for Nepal's obligations under international law and demand urgent accountability and reform.

6. ABUSE OF LESS LETHAL WEAPONS

WHAT ARE LESS LETHAL WEAPONS?

The UN Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement defines less-lethal weapons as “weapons designed or intended for use on individuals or groups of individuals and which, in the course of expected or reasonably foreseen use, have a lower risk of causing death or serious injury than firearms. Less-lethal ammunition may be fired from conventional firearms.”

After protesters breached barricades near New Baneshwor, law enforcement officials used less lethal weapons – water cannon, tear gas and kinetic impact projectiles – in an effort to reassert control over the protest that witnessed anger and tension due to protesters finding themselves restrained by unjustified barricading. However, the police, instead of taking a careful approach, decided to enforce the restriction through the use of less-lethal weapons. The following sub-sections assess the deployment of each less lethal weapon in turn against international human rights law and standards on the use of force.

6.1 WATER CANNON

The analysis by Amnesty International's Evidence Lab shows that on 8 September, following the breaching of barricades by a small section of protesters, Nepal Police deployed a water cannon despite the fact that the broader demonstration remained peaceful. After the barricades were breached, witnesses interviewed by Amnesty International reported – and videos show that – the Nepal Police deployed the only water cannon truck present at the scene.⁶³ The vehicle had been stationed a few meters away near Baneshwor Chowk in a service lane.⁶⁴ As the crowd advanced through both the middle and side lanes, the water cannon moved forward, projecting jets of water at demonstrators.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Article 7, No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.

⁶² Article 19, 1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.;

Article 21, The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (order public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

⁶³ Interview with “Bibek Rai”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025 and media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC7Cs1BV_k4;

<https://x.com/setopati/status/1964946176551059591>; AP, “Police open fire on protests of Nepal's social media policy, killing at least 17”, 8 September 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/nepal-protest-social-media-ban-1ac9efd7d2f28783cc9f2be60edfa1da>;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Zhg9nkWUYE>

⁶⁴ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

⁶⁵ Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025.

Protesters and journalists consistently noted that the police appeared to be inadequately prepared and unable to effectively contain the rising tension, and quickly started resorting to force, including the use of the water cannon truck.⁶⁶ A photojournalist told Amnesty International:

“It’s questionable whether the police intentionally let people pass or simply couldn’t stop them...In past protests, [police] would have had more preparation. That day, they seemed under-prepared.”⁶⁷

Nepal’s Local Administration Act requires the presence of widespread violence or a clear demonstration of the “possibility of disturbing peace by taking violent and destructive tendency”- and such violence to have gone “beyond the control of the police” before authorizing the use of water cannon.⁶⁸ The Act permits the use of water cannon “as per necessity, based on the situation, to maintain peace and order,” and allows it to be deployed on an “assembly, procession or crowd”.⁶⁹ It does not require law enforcement authorities to ensure exit routes or safe avenues of dispersal before use, creating conditions for misuse and excessive force during protests in violation of international standards such as the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement.⁷⁰ The Guidance specifies that water cannon in high-pressure mode should be employed only in situations of widespread violence against persons that cannot be contained by targeting violent individuals.⁷¹ They may only be used for the legitimate objective of dispersing a crowd, under conditions where people can safely disperse, and only after a clear warning has been issued with sufficient time for compliance.⁷² International human rights standards require that the use of water cannon be carefully controlled, including distance and jet power, to avoid excessive impact, and must never target the head.⁷³

Contrary to these requirements under both international human rights law and Nepal’s domestic legislation, Amnesty International’s Crisis Evidence Lab verified five videos and one picture showing water jets at high pressure being directed at individual protesters from a short distance.⁷⁴ In some cases, jets were fired at individuals trapped against roadside railings, a practice that carries a high risk of serious injury and contravenes the prescriptions of the UN Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement.

⁶⁶ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025; Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025; Interview with “Prashant Lama”, 20 September 2025.

⁶⁷ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

⁶⁸ Section 6(1)A, Local Administration Act, 2028.

⁶⁹ Section 6(1)A, Local Administration Act, 2028.

⁷⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, para. 7.7, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/LLW_Guidance.pdf; Amnesty International, *Use of Force: Guidelines for Implementation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*, August 2015, <https://policehumanrightsresources.org/use-of-force-guidelines-for-implementation-of-the-un-basic-principles-on-the-use-of-force-and-firearms-by-law-enforcement-officials>

⁷¹ OHCHR, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), para. 7.7.2; Amnesty International, “Water Cannons: What are they and how can they be used lawfully,” <https://www.amnesty.nl/content/uploads/2024/03/Water-cannon-1.pdf?x58675>

⁷² OHCHR, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), paras. 7.7.3 and 7.7.4;

⁷³ UNODC/OHCHR, Resource book on the use and force and firearms in law enforcement, p. 90.; Amnesty International, “Water Cannons: What are they and how can they be used lawfully.” (previously cited).

⁷⁴ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC7Cs1BV_k4; <https://x.com/setopati/status/1964946176551059591>; AP, “Police open fire on protests of Nepal’s social media policy, killing at least 17”, (previously cited); <https://x.com/setopati/status/1964941063610683893>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZhg9nkwUYE>



Photograph shows a water cannon being used on protesters, clearly appearing to be walking peacefully. Photo: Subaas Shrestha/ NurPhoto/Getty Images

UNICEF's guidance on policing assemblies involving children stresses that the use of such weapons against children must be avoided, as they are more vulnerable to physical injury and psychological trauma.⁷⁵ While the majority of participants in the 8 September protests were young people between the ages of 18 and 30, Amnesty International interviews confirmed the presence of children, including some in school uniforms, among the crowd.⁷⁶ The presence of children, however, did not deter the police from using the water cannon recklessly.

Its deployment in a manner contrary to international standards placed protesters, including children, at unnecessary risk of serious injury, in violation of human rights norms governing the use of less lethal weapons.

6.2 TEAR GAS

The aim of using chemical irritants dispersed at a distance, such as tear gas, should be to disperse violent groups and force them to refrain from violence and only in cases of widespread violence that

⁷⁵ UNICEF, *Free and Safe to Protest: Policing Assemblies Involving Children*, August 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/reports/free-and-safe-protest>, p. 32.

⁷⁶ Interview with "Aarati Gurung", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Prakriti Rai", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Anish Shrestha", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Niraj Gurung", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Rojan Tamang", 17 September 2025; CNN, "A social media ban, corruption and 'Nepo Kids.' What we know about the deadly protests that ousted Nepal's leader", 10 September, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/09/09/asia/nepal-protests-social-media-ban-explainer-intl-hnk>; NDTV World, "'School Students Shot, Women Raped': Nepal Influencers' Claim On Protest", 9 September 2025, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/nepal-gen-z-protest-news-school-students-shot-women-raped-nepal-influencers-claim-on-protest-9243507>

cannot be addressed through dealing with violent individuals alone.⁷⁷ In such circumstances, they should be fired at a high angle⁷⁸ and only in circumstances where people can disperse easily.

On 8 September, following the breaching of barricades by a small section of protesters, Nepal Police began deploying tear gas despite the fact that the broader demonstration remained peaceful.⁷⁹ According to a police report, 6,279 tear gas shells were used, including 3,096 in the Kathmandu Valley.⁸⁰ The majority of protesters interviewed by Amnesty International reported that tear gas grenades were fired from the rooftops of nearby buildings or aimed directly at the crowd.⁸¹ This constitutes an extremely dangerous practice with risks of hitting the protesters before they explode.

Even in cases where the tear gas was fired from the ground, eyewitnesses reported that their use was inconsistent with international human rights law and standards. Prajwal Khadka, a photojournalist who was present at the protest, speaking to Amnesty International, said:

“From what I saw and photographed, much of the tear gas was fired into the air, and [the canisters] were falling on the protesters. But some of the tear gas was also directly fired at the protesters.”⁸²

Amnesty International Evidence Lab verified eight pictures of protesters climbing the parliament's fences and three pictures showing police firing from 37/38mm less-lethal launchers from the parliament's lawn, though the images do not show unlawful use of these weapons.⁸³ Videos show protesters throwing rocks, sticks and tear gas canisters back at the police, while officers retreat towards the parliament's gate.⁸⁴ Some protesters appeared to try to stop the confrontation and put themselves between the crowd and the police.⁸⁵ The images indicate that officers were not adequately equipped or prepared to deal with the situation: one video, verified by Amnesty International and shot a few hundred meters from the parliament, shows protesters dismantling police barricades while outnumbered law enforcement officers passively watch the situation unfold.⁸⁶ In their response to Amnesty International, Nepal Police stated that the erection of a barricade on that day was in accordance with local laws, as the area surrounding the Parliament building had been declared a restricted zone on 12 August 2025 for a period of two months on the order of the District Administration Office, Kathmandu in accordance with Section 6(3)(a) of the Local Administration Act, 2028.⁸⁷ It further states that the order prohibited activities such as “hunger strikes, sit-ins, blockades,

⁷⁷ HRC, SR on Assembly, Crisis Protests, A/HRC/50/42, para. 42; OSCE-ODIHR, HR Handbook on Policing Assemblies, p. 79; Amnesty International – The Netherlands, Use of Force: Guidelines for the Implementation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, August 2015, https://policehumanrightsresources.org/content/uploads/2015/01/ainl_guidelines_use_of_force_0.pdf?x96812, Guideline 7h) and section 7.2.3. OHCHR, Resource Book on the Use of Force and Firearms in Law Enforcement, 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/resource-book-use-force-and-firearms-lawohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/UseOfForceAndFirearms.pdf>, p. 88.

⁷⁸ European Court of Human Rights, Abdullah Yaşa and others v. Turkey, Judgment, 16 July 2013, paras. 42–49.

⁷⁹ Interview with “Bibek Rai”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025; Interview with “Ganesh Adhikari”, 19 September 2025.

⁸⁰ Kathmandu Post, “2,642 rounds of live ammunition fired over two days of Gen-Z protests: Police”, 26 September 2025, <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2025/09/26/police-records-reveal-excessive-force-in-gen-z-crackdown>

⁸¹ Interview with “Bibek Rai”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025; Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

⁸² Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

⁸³ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://nepalkhabar.com/society/249561-2025-9-8-13-54-57>

⁸⁴ Video published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://x.com/ANI/status/1964972809861603575>

⁸⁵ Video published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://x.com/ANI/status/1964982703121731945>

⁸⁶ Video published on social media on 10 September 2025 and later deleted, on file with Amnesty International.

⁸⁷ Response on file with Amnesty International

encirclement, rallies, demonstrations, or other protest programs.”⁸⁸ In their response, Nepal Police alleged that “some individuals placed school and college students in the front line and began throwing water bottles at the police from behind, provoking the crowd and inciting them to break through the barricade and move towards the restricted zone”. They mentioned that “protesters forcibly pushing against security personnel” as well as some individuals “throwing stones and bricks”. While some individuals may have resorted to violence, it is important to note that simply dismantling a barricade does not constitute violence, even if the Nepal Police consider this as being unlawful. The use of police barricades contributed to escalating tensions, as it generated unnecessary public frustration at a time when the protest remained peaceful. Given the scale of the gathering, it was unrealistic to expect that a limited number of officers could effectively prevent such a large crowd from moving forward. Moreover, reliance on force to stop individuals from dismantling a barricade – particularly when they were not acting violently – raises serious concerns regarding the principles of necessity and proportionality under international human rights standards.

In line with the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, the police should have facilitated the march, including allowing protesters to proceed toward Parliament, while simultaneously establishing an appropriate and well-planned police cordon around the parliamentary grounds to prevent unlawful entry without obstructing the peaceful exercise of the right to protest. Amnesty International also spoke with doctors and healthcare staff at Civil Service Hospital, which is about 100m from the parliament and was the first port of immediate care for injured and wounded protesters. Two doctors said that the police also deployed tear gas in and around the hospital premises.⁸⁹ Speaking to Amnesty International, a doctor who had attended to injured and wounded protesters on 8 September said:

“The first cases that came in were of minor injuries. Gradually, just after noon and for about the first hour, tear gas was everywhere – the entire hospital premises were filled with it. Mostly, police were positioned at the side of the parliament. I saw about 7-8 officers – one firing a gun, another a tear-gas launcher with a large nozzle. Many canisters landed on our premises, bouncing off neighbouring buildings. It became impossible to stay there. Everyone was running because the gas burned the eyes. Police tried to come into the emergency section of the hospital and attempted to fire tear gas directly. We tried to stop them and blocked the mesh gates.”⁹⁰

In their response, Nepal Police state that the security personnel did not fire tear gas directly into the hospital premises.⁹¹ However, Amnesty International’s Crisis Evidence Lab verified five pictures published by the media showing police officers in the hospital grounds, one video of tear gas cannisters on hospital premises emitting thick smoke, appearing to have been deployed moments earlier, and two pictures showing medical workers with probable signs of tear gas exposure.⁹² In a video livestreamed on her Facebook page, Dr Toshima Karki, a Nepali surgeon and Member of Parliament who was treating the injured at Civil Service Hospital, criticized the police for firing gunshots and tear gas inside the hospital premises.⁹³

According to international human rights law, devices that have wide area effects and a high potential for harm, such as tear gas, may only be used in situations of widespread violence for the purpose of dispersing a crowd, and only when other less lethal means have failed to contain the violence. They may only be used when people have the opportunity to disperse and not when they are in a confined space or where roads or other routes of escape are blocked.⁹⁴ Contextual factors must always be considered before deciding to deploy indiscriminate chemical

⁸⁸ Response on file with Amnesty International

⁸⁹ Interview with “Dr. Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Bishnu Shreshtha”, 17 September 2025.

⁹⁰ Interview with “Dr. Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025.

⁹¹ Response on file with Amnesty International

⁹² Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://www.setopati.com/politics/368713>; Online Khabar, “Police arrests inside Civil Hospital – Workers say bullets and tear gas were used”, 8 September 2025, <https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2025/09/1759611/police-arrests-inside-civil-hospital-health-workers-say-bullets-and-tear-gas-were-used> (Nepali only).

⁹³ Video published on social media on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://www.facebook.com/Ootsheekafyu/videos/818241017404087>

⁹⁴ OHCHR, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), paras. 7.3.3 and 7.3.7.

irritants. These include: geographical nature of the deployment site, temperature, wind and weather patterns, and the existence of hospitals, schools or dense, uninvolved populations in the vicinity.⁹⁵

People must be audibly warned that these means will be used, and they must be allowed sufficient time to disperse.⁹⁶ Once they start dispersing, the use of tear gas must stop.

The same provision of the Local Administration Act that authorizes the use of water cannon also governs the use of tear gas.⁹⁷ Accordingly, the legal gaps and inconsistencies identified in relation to water cannon – including the absence of safeguards such as ensuring exit routes or safe avenues of dispersal – apply equally to the use of tear gas, rendering both inconsistent with international human rights law and standards.⁹⁸

The Nepal security forces' use of tear gas within and around hospital premises, coupled with attempts to chase protesters seeking refuge inside and obstruct medical personnel from treating patients, constituted a flagrant violation of international human rights law. Such actions appear punitive in nature rather than aimed at any legitimate objective.

6.3 KINETIC IMPACT PROJECTILES

Kinetic Impact Projectiles (KIPs) include plastic and rubber bullets, as well as other forms of impact munitions such as bean bags, foam rounds, and large or small rubber balls and are typically fired from a launching weapon.⁹⁹ Their use must be strictly limited to situations of violent disorder posing a risk of harm to persons.

Extreme caution is required when KIPs are used to target violent individuals in dynamic and densely populated protest environments, where the risk of hitting bystanders is high.¹⁰⁰ Unless absolutely impossible, clear warnings must be issued prior to firing, allowing sufficient time for compliance.¹⁰¹ Nepal's Local Administration Act contains no specific provisions regulating the use of KIPs such as rubber bullets, nor does it establish any procedural safeguards governing their deployment.¹⁰² The Act also fails to distinguish KIPs from live firearms, treating both under the same category of force, thereby creating significant risks of excessive and reckless use in crowd-control situations.¹⁰³ The UN Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement makes clear that KIPs should only be used when violence is imminent against law enforcement or other protesters and must never be aimed at the head, upper body, or groin.¹⁰⁴ Witness accounts reviewed by Amnesty International indicate that these safeguards were not observed on 8 September.

Evidence gathered by Amnesty International showed that, following the deployment of tear gas and water cannon, as protesters scaled the entry building of the parliament, Nepal Police began firing rubber bullets recklessly into the crowd¹⁰⁵ and without any warning.¹⁰⁶ In their response, Nepal Police stated that they "exercised maximum restraint and used shotgun rubber slugs cartridge with the aim

⁹⁵ Amnesty International, Chemical Irritants in Law Enforcement, p. 11, <https://www.amnesty.nl/content/uploads/2021/07/Amnesty-position-paper-chemical-irritants.pdf>

⁹⁶ Amnesty International, *Use of Force: Guidelines for Implementation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials* (previously cited), Guideline No. 7: The overall approach to policing of assemblies should be guided by the concept of facilitation of the assembly and should not from the outset be shaped by the anticipation of violence and use of force.

⁹⁷ Section 6(1)A, Local Administration Act, 2028

⁹⁸ Refer to pg. 14

⁹⁹ Amnesty International, *Kinetic Impact Projectiles In Law Enforcement*, <https://www.amnesty.nl/content/uploads/2023/03/Amnesty-position-paper-kinetic-impact-projectiles.pdf?x664440HCHR>, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), par. 7.5; Amnesty International, "My Eye Exploded": The Global Abuse of Kinetic Impact Projectiles (Index: ACT 30/6384/2023), 14 March 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act30/6384/2023/en>

¹⁰⁰ Amnesty International, "My Eye Exploded": The Global Abuse of Kinetic Impact Projectiles, (previously cited), p. 39.

¹⁰¹ Amnesty International, "My Eye Exploded" (previously cited) p. 39.

¹⁰² The Local Administration Act, 2028, <https://daodadeldhura.moha.gov.np/en/post/local-administration-act-2028-1>

¹⁰³ The Local Administration Act, 2028, (previously cited).

¹⁰⁴ OHCHR, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), par. 7.5.4.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Rajan Rana", 18 September 2025

¹⁰⁶ Interview with "Mohan Sharma", 20 September 2025; Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025

of minimizing harm while trying to control the crowd”¹⁰⁷ Evidence gathered by Amnesty International clearly contradicts this statement. A protester who was hit by eight rubber bullets and stayed in the hospital for five days told Amnesty International that they did not expect to be shot at and that police had never warned them of any kind of firing, be it with KIPs, rubber bullets or live ammunition. He said:

“We went to raise our voice – not to be killed. The scale of the violence was unprecedented in this country’s history. Either the state is weak in security or shockingly cruel; in either case, the state bears responsibility for failing to protect its people.”¹⁰⁸

Speaking to Amnesty International, Mohan Sharma, a journalist who was shot by the police, said:

“There was no clear ‘we will fire’ warning. There were loudspeakers and mics, but crowd control was insufficient. The ratio of police to protesters was very low – perhaps 5% police to the rest protesters.”¹⁰⁹

The response of the Nepal Police stressing that they were “informing protesters about the curfew order through loudspeakers – and warning that force would be used in accordance with the law if the curfew was violated” is consistent with this testimony and indicates that no clear warning about imminent shooting was given.

Bibek Rai, one of the protest organizers, echoed Sharma’s statement and said:

“There were warning shots fired into the air, but there wasn’t enough pause for people to process and withdraw.”

Under the UN Basic Principles, warning shots already constitute the use of a firearm which merits a warning before the warning shot.¹¹⁰ Moreover, warning shots are inherently risky because their trajectory and ricochet cannot be controlled, creating a serious danger to bystanders. Therefore, police must give due consideration to these risks and how to mitigate them.

Amnesty International also spoke with two doctors, one of whom was a neurosurgeon who treated the wounded protesters on 8 September.¹¹¹ He confirmed that rubber bullets were removed from patients’ skulls, where they had lodged in bone or soft tissue, and emphasized that these rounds are never supposed to be fired at the head since they could cause life-threatening or even fatal injuries.¹¹² Further, KIPs must never be fired recklessly into a crowd, and should instead target specific violent individuals posing an imminent risk of harm to others.

Doctors at Civil Service Hospital reported that injuries received at the hospital from tear gas exposure were followed by those caused by rubber bullets.¹¹³ In their response, Nepal Police alleged that Nepal Police did not possess rubber-coated metal bullets. However, Amnesty International also documented the use of rubber-coated metal bullets by the security forces during the protest. The doctors warned Amnesty International about the serious harm caused by such projectiles and emphasized the severe consequences of their reckless use. One doctor explained:

¹⁰⁷ Response on file with Amnesty International

¹⁰⁸ Interview with “Prashant Lama”, 20 September 2025.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with “Mohan Sharma”, 20 September 2025.

¹¹⁰ Basic Principle No. 10.

¹¹¹ Interview with “Dr Madan Rai”, 18 September 2025; Interview with “Dr. Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025.

¹¹² Interview with “Dr Madan Rai”, 18 September 2025.

¹¹³ Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Bishnu Shreshtha”, 17 September 2025.

“Rubber bullets can penetrate and cause major trauma if they strike a vulnerable area. We observed several injuries in the subclavian region [area below the collarbone] that appeared to have been caused by rubber bullets containing small metal components. In some cases, we found rounds lodged in muscle tissue, and where muscle was thinner, the damage was significantly worse. While metal bullets are undoubtedly more lethal, rubber bullets are far from benign.”¹¹⁴

Despite having a power of impact that can cause serious injury or death, rubber-coated metal bullets are classed as a less lethal weapon.¹¹⁵ Given the power of their impact, rubber-coated metal bullets are particularly dangerous and should not be used.¹¹⁶ The UN Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons also requires that before using KIPs, law enforcement officials should give special consideration to individuals at higher risk of serious injury, including children, older persons, and pregnant women, and states that particular care must be taken when such groups are present.¹¹⁷

Sanjay Maharjan, a healthcare worker at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, told Amnesty International that the youngest patient they treated that day was a 14-year-old boy who had been struck in the leg by a rubber bullet.¹¹⁸ He was eventually discharged after treatment. The presence of children among those injured underscores the reckless nature of the force used by the police and the failure to comply with international standards on the use of KIPs.

A 22-year-old protester told Amnesty International that he was shot by police on 8 September, sustaining three wounds across his chest and severe bruising to his ribs. He recounted:

“Once the barricade was breached, [the police] fired a couple of shots, maybe from 30 feet, and people got angry; some began throwing stones. There were lots of students, including school-going children. Many in the crowd kept saying, ‘Don’t throw stones, just chant slogans.’ Some who did throw were even stopped or scolded by others. But a few at the back kept throwing. I was right out front by the parliament. [The police] fired from very close range, which hit me even though I hadn’t thrown a single stone.”¹¹⁹

Amnesty International also interviewed Prajwal Khadka, a journalist who was struck by rubber bullets while covering the protest. He recounted:

“I was near the gate; I had two holes [in my body] – two rubber bullets hit me. There were three wounds in total – two complete and one partial. My friends carried me to Civil Hospital, where I received basic first aid. They bandaged me to stop the bleeding and took me for an X-ray, which showed bullets. I needed further treatment, possibly surgery, so I decided to transfer to Patan Hospital, as that area usually doesn’t have protests.”¹²⁰

Khadka’s account, together with the testimonies of injured protesters, journalists, and healthcare workers, demonstrates that Nepal Police deployed KIPs recklessly and without adherence to international human rights norms governing the use of less-lethal weapons. KIPs were fired into crowds, striking individuals who were not engaged in violence, including clearly identifiable members of the press performing their professional duties. The use of such projectiles in crowded protest settings, without distinction between peaceful protesters, bystanders and journalists and violent protesters, constitutes a violation of the principles of necessity and proportionality under international human rights law. The actions of the Nepal Police not only violated these principles but also endangered peaceful protesters, journalists, children and other bystanders.

¹¹⁴ Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025.

¹¹⁵ Amnesty International, *Trigger-Happy: Israel’s use of excessive force in The West Bank*, (Index: MDE 15/002/2014), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/002/2014/en>

¹¹⁶ OHCHR, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), par. 7.5.8.

¹¹⁷ OHCHR, Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, (previously cited), paras 2.7 and 7.4.6.

¹¹⁸ Interview with “Sanjay Maharjan”, 18 September 2025.

¹¹⁹ Interview with “Rojan Tamang”, 17 September 2025.

¹²⁰ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

7. UNLAWFUL USE OF FIREARMS BY SECURITY FORCES

A firearm is a weapon that, by nature of its ammunition, is designed to kill. Firearms should not be used during an assembly or even when an assembly turns violent unless in response to a clearly identified individualized imminent threat of death or serious injury while ensuring not to endanger uninvolving bystanders or others who do not pose such a threat, and only when no other, less lethal means are available or are likely to be effective.¹²¹

These protections are not adequately included in Nepal's Local Administration Act, 2028 which authorizes security personnel to use firearms as a last resort when maintaining peace is impossible. The Act does not require that firearms should only be used in response to an imminent threat of death or serious injury and allows the police to use them on a group in addition to an individual, posing serious risks of unlawful use. Although it states that the protesters should be first warned that bullets may be fired if they do not comply with orders and that ammunition should only be aimed below the knees after warning, the provisions of the Act nevertheless fall far below international human rights law and standards on the use of firearms.¹²²

In their response, Nepal Police stated that the security personnel only fired blank rounds which is a "type of ammunition that, when fired produces the sound and muzzle flash of a gunshot but does not fire a projectile" to protect "critical infrastructure".¹²³ However, Amnesty International found evidence of use of live ammunition that is discussed below. Damage to property, including important structures, is not serious (and thus, cannot be 'violent') unless its effects are severe. There is therefore no justification for the use of lethal force.

Amnesty International found evidence of the use of lethal force by police in circumstances that did not involve an imminent threat of death or serious injury, resulting in arbitrary deprivations of life.

7.1 RECKLESS AND LETHAL FORCE

As tensions escalated near the parliament compound, eyewitnesses described scenes of confusion and panic as police opened fire in multiple directions.¹²⁴ Bibek Rai, a protest organizer who was present, told Amnesty International that he had expected water cannon or tear gas – not live ammunition.¹²⁵ He recalled that he witnessed a school-age boy being fatally shot in the head and several others being injured. According to him, "[the situation] looked completely haphazard, with firing happening from several sides at once."¹²⁶

¹²¹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, 7 September 1990.

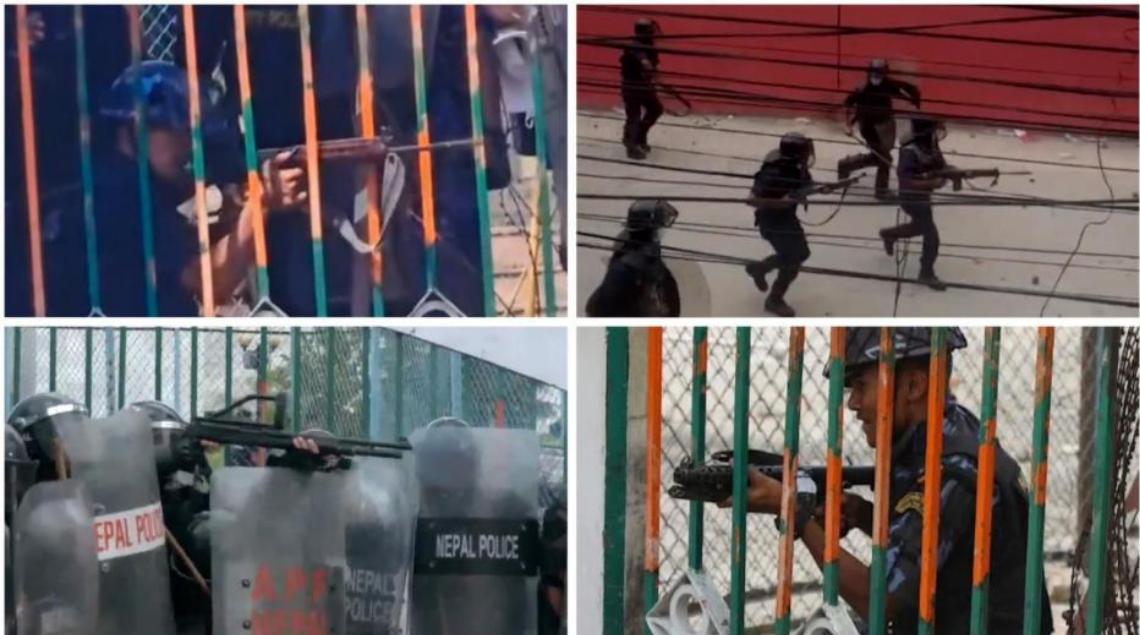
¹²² Section 6 (a) and (b) and Section 6A (4), Local Administration Act, 2028, <https://daodadeldhura.moha.gov.np/en/post/local-administration-act-2028-1>

¹²³ Response on file with Amnesty International

¹²⁴ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Anish Shreshtha", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Niraj Gurung", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Sandeep Pant", 18 September 2025; Interview with "Ganesh Adhikari", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Aarati Gurung", 19 September 2025; Interview with "Prashant Lama", 20 September 2025.

¹²⁵ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025.

¹²⁶ Interview with "Bibek Rai", 17 September 2025.



Videos showed Nepali police officers equipped with rifles (top images), shotguns (top right and bottom left) and a submachine gun (lower right) in and around the parliament on 8 September 2025. © Amnesty International

Amnesty International's Evidence Lab verified seven videos and three pictures showing officers firing lethal weapons from inside the parliament or in its surroundings, such as FN FAL rifles¹²⁷ which have no legitimate use in policing protests. Drone footage shows an officer firing an FN FAL at protesters who had climbed the parliament's main entrance.¹²⁸ Another video shows a protester being shot at head level with a shotgun after throwing a rock towards the parliament gate.¹²⁹ The protester is seen later, heavily bleeding from the head. While Amnesty International is not in a position to assess what the shotgun was loaded with, shots at head level, even with less-lethal rounds, are a violation of international human rights standards on the use of force and firearms.

Amnesty International also interviewed independent protest observers who are long-standing members of Amnesty International and have observed and monitored numerous demonstrations in Nepal. Based on their experience, they described the police response on 8 September as resembling a "war-like situation."¹³⁰ They also said they were uncertain where the gunfire was coming from, noting that the police seemed to lose control of the situation entirely.¹³¹ Anish Shreshtha, an observer, stated:

"The decision to use firearms was incomprehensible and if the police had relied on batons or tear gas effectively, they could have controlled the violence. But the moment they used guns, everything spiralled. It made the situation far worse."¹³²

¹²⁷ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1271897934238574>

https://x.com/Online_khabar/status/1965055376124268861

¹²⁸ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International, https://x.com/Online_khabar/status/1965055376124268861

¹²⁹ Media published on 8 September 2025, on file with Amnesty International <https://x.com/SGnepal/status/1967633976652337259>

¹³⁰ Interview with "Aarati Gurung", 20 September 2025.

¹³¹ Interview with "Anish Shreshtha", 17 September 2025; Interview with "Aarati Gurung", 20 September 2025.

¹³² Interview with "Anish Shreshtha", 17 September 2025.

Prajwal Khadka, a photojournalist who was documenting the protest, told Amnesty International that by the time the crowd reached Baneshwor Chowk, the police appeared primarily concerned with defending themselves. “Some officers were reportedly beaten by protesters,” he said.¹³³ “I saw railings and metal barriers damaged, and people hitting police shields and equipment. Then suddenly, the firing began wildly – from inside the parliament compound, from outside, and from armed units near the main gate. It was impossible to tell where each shot was coming from amid the chaos.”¹³⁴ Videos analysed by Amnesty International’s Crisis Evidence Lab indicate that police officers fired from within the premises of the Parliament building. This does not exclude the possibility that firing may also have occurred from outside the Parliament or other nearby locations; however, no publicly available video evidence confirming such incidents was identified during the verification process.

In fact, other witnesses reiterated this sense of chaos, describing the gunfire as reckless and uncoordinated.¹³⁵ Many said it was nearly impossible to understand where the bullets were coming from, making it extremely difficult to disperse or find shelter.¹³⁶

The scale of attacks on protesters is evident from the testimony of Dr Keshav Adhikari at the National Trauma Centre, who said:

“In mass-casualty disasters, the usual pattern is that there are relatively fewer severe cases and more milder to moderate cases, with only some deaths. We plan for that. Typically, we might expect 10-20% to be severe. But this time it was reversed – there were far more severely injured patients, perhaps 50-60%.”¹³⁷

His testimony resonates with that of other protesters who were completely taken by surprise and shocked at the rapid escalation of force unwarranted by the situation on the ground.

According to media reports, the preliminary report prepared by the Nepal Police on the protests showed that there were 13,182 instances of firing across the country over 8-9 September with 2,642 live rounds, 1,884 rubber bullets, 2,377 instances of warning shots and 6,279 gas canisters being used.¹³⁸ It further said that most of the firing took place in Kathmandu, where 1,329 live bullets, 1,420 rubber bullets, 1,046 warning shots and 3,096 gas shells were fired. Lethal weapons included SLR, INSAS and pistols.¹³⁹

Amnesty International also spoke with doctors at Civil Service Hospital who confirmed that they started receiving gunshot injuries between 12:30pm and 1pm on 8 September.¹⁴⁰ Civil Service Hospital treated approximately 250 patients on 8 September and 200 on the following day. Its staff estimated a total of 460 injured over the two days, with at least six deaths.¹⁴¹ One doctor recounted observing metal projectiles on X-rays.¹⁴² At Everest Hospital, staff treated more than 120 patients on 8 September, with three confirmed fatalities from gunshot wounds.¹⁴³ Narayan Thapa, a member of the healthcare staff, described removing metal projectiles from patients’ bodies, inserting chest tubes for penetrating wounds and witnessing deaths attributable to gunshot wounds.¹⁴⁴ At the National Trauma Centre, doctors received between 65 and 75 patients within the span of a few hours on 8

¹³³ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

¹³⁴ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025.

¹³⁵ Interview with “Prajwal Khadka”, 19 September 2025; Interview with “Ganesh Adhikari”, 19 September 2025.

¹³⁶ Interview with “Bibek Rai”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Anish Shreshtha”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Niraj Gurung”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Sandeep Pant”, 18 September 2025; Interview with “Ganesh Adhikari”, 19 September 2025; Interview with “Aarati Gurung”, 19 September 2025; Interview with “Prashant Lama”, 20 September 2025.

¹³⁷ Interview with “Dr Keshav Adhikari”, 18 September 2025.

¹³⁸ MSN, “2,642 rounds of live ammunition fired over two days of Gen-Z protests: Police”, 26 September 2025, <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/asia/nepal/2642-rounds-of-live-ammunition-fired-over-two-days-of-gen-z-protests-police/ar-AA1NnMtm?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

¹³⁹ MSN, “2,642 rounds of live ammunition fired over two days of Gen-Z protests: Police”, (previously cited).

¹⁴⁰ Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Dr Bishnu Shreshtha”, 17 September 2025.

¹⁴¹ Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Dr Bishnu Shreshtha”, 17 September 2025.

¹⁴² Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Dr Bishnu Shreshtha”, 17 September 2025.

¹⁴³ Interview with “Narayan Thapa”, 17 September 2025.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with “Narayan Thapa”, 17 September 2025.

September.¹⁴⁵ Among them, eight died shortly after arrival, including four with penetrating brain injuries where CT scans showed metallic densities. Others suffered devastating chest wounds.¹⁴⁶

7.2 HEAD, NECK AND CHEST WOUNDS

Evidence gathered by Amnesty International also showed that most of the injuries inflicted on the protesters were above the abdomen including head, neck and chest injuries.¹⁴⁷ Media reports, citing findings from the Forensic Department of Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, state that all individuals killed on 8 and 9 September were shot above the waist, including 19 struck in the chest, 10 in the head, four in the abdomen, and two in the neck.¹⁴⁸ A similar observation was made by Ramesh Karki, a doctor at the Civil Service Hospital:

“Some had gunshot wounds to the head and chest, others had life-threatening injuries to the abdomen or major blood vessels. Many bled heavily and stopping that blood loss was the most difficult part. Around 2pm, the emergency ward was in its worst state – blood everywhere, patients collapsing, doctors and nurses working nonstop. It felt like a butcher’s house.”¹⁴⁹

This was also echoed by the doctors at the National Trauma Centre, one of whom told Amnesty International:

“We predominantly saw traumatic bullet injuries. There were also blunt force injuries, including fractures of the arms and legs, but the main pattern was of gunshot wounds. Three patients were brought dead and four more collapsed in the [Emergency Room] and died there. One patient was intubated and taken toward the [Intensive Care Unit] but died shortly after. In total, five died after arriving here. Within two hours, all five operating tables were running disaster cases.”¹⁵⁰

Dr Madan Rai who also practices at the National Trauma Centre, added:

“Nepal has had large protests before, particularly in 2005-2006. This time, the immediate pattern included multiple head and chest gunshot wounds consistent with live rounds, that suggests force escalated too quickly. Dispersal tactics can include use of water cannons or tear gas. Even where the use of KIPs against individuals becomes necessary, head and chest shots must be avoided. It seems the response was overly aggressive from the start and what should be a last resort (live fire) appeared to be used early.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Interview with “Dr Keshav Adhikari”, “Dr Madan Rai”, “Dr Deepak Gurung”, 18 September 2025.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with “Dr Keshav Adhikari”, “Dr Madan Rai”, “Dr Deepak Gurung”, 18 September 2025.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with “Narayan Thapa”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Dr Bishnu Shreshta”, 17 September 2025; Interview with “Dr Deepak Gurung”, 18 September 2025.

¹⁴⁸ Kantipur, “Post-mortem confirmed that 39 people were killed by bullets, all of whom were hit in the waist”, 11 October 2025, <https://ekantipur.com/news/2025/10/28/postmortems-confirmed-that-all-39-people-killed-by-guns-were-shot-in-the-waist-03-11.html>

¹⁴⁹ Interview with “Dr Ramesh Karki”, 17 September 2025.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with “Dr Keshav Adhikari”, 18 September 2025.

¹⁵¹ Interview with “Dr Madan Rai”, 18 September 2025.

7.3 ADMISSION OF POLICE FAILINGS

Amnesty International also spoke with Krishna Raj Thapa, a senior police official in the Nepal Police. Even though Thapa was not involved in policing the said protests, he drew from his extensive policing experience. Thapa blamed the lack of political intelligence and an inadequate assessment of the security situation by the Nepal Police.¹⁵² He said:

“My sense is that the police assumed a peaceful protest and were ready with a barricade-and-hold arrangement. After the barricade fell and crowds flowed in, water cannon was used. But when stone pelting started and people were rushing to the parliament gates – the Special Task Force arrangement was activated.”¹⁵³

Nepal’s Essential Commodities Protection Act, 1955 grants authority to the head constable of police or the sergeant of the army or any other officer in charge to use firearms if a person, accused of damaging or attempting to damage any “vital installation” including the Parliament, tries to abscond during the arrest. In such a case if the accused dies during an attempt to arrest, the concerned police personnel will not be held guilty.¹⁵⁴ The authorities have used this provision while handling protests and demonstrations in the past, resulting in deaths, with no cases instituted against any official due to immunity granted under the legislation.¹⁵⁵

Thapa confirmed that the security forces stationed in and around the parliament were overwhelmed by the crowd and acted out of panic instead of legal necessity. He said:

“There’s an Armed Police Force (APF) unit stationed [at the parliament], plus Nepal Police (NP) for [Members of Parliament] entry checks; APF is backup. In barricaded areas, both Nepal Police and APF were present, though the numbers looked a bit low to me. When the crowd charged, APF or NP may have panicked and used whatever was available inside.”¹⁵⁶

Amnesty International also spoke with Dilli Raj Bista, a retired senior Nepal Police official, who acknowledged and admitted serious lapses by the Nepal Police in policing the protests, which led to the deaths of 19 people.¹⁵⁷ Speaking to Amnesty International in an individual capacity, he said:

“Since 1992, Nepal Police have participated in UN peacekeeping missions, where the primary mandate is to protect civilians. In training – basic, advanced and specialized – officers are repeatedly taught that protecting life is the top priority, and the principles of using force are mandatory. Despite being a UN member state and incorporating international human rights standards in its constitution and law, the police used lethal force.”¹⁵⁸

The use of live ammunition against protesters, including children and journalists, constituted an unnecessary and disproportionate use of force and was therefore unlawful. The deployment of lethal weapons in situations that posed no imminent threat to life, the absence of warnings prior to the use of force, and the pattern of gunshot wounds to the head and chest all indicate extrajudicial and arbitrary killings. These actions contravene Nepal’s obligations under the ICCPR and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, both of which require that lethal force be used only against persons posing an imminent threat of death or serious injury, and only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

¹⁵² Interview with “Krishna Bahadur Thapa”, Nepal Police, 19 September 2025.

¹⁵³ Interview with “Krishna Bahadur Thapa”, Nepal Police, 19 September 2025.

¹⁵⁴ Section 6 of the Essential Commodities Protection Act 1955

¹⁵⁵ International Commission for Jurists, *National Security Laws and Human Rights Implications*, August 2009, <https://www.icj.org/resource/national-security-laws-and-human-rights-implications-in-nepal>, p. 48.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with “Krishna Bahadur Thapa”, Nepal Police, 19 September 2025.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with “Dilli Raj Bista”, 18 September 2025.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with “Dilli Raj Bista”, 18 September 2025.

8. CONCLUSION

Dispersal of an assembly must be an exceptional measure that is resorted to when there is a pressing need and when all other means have failed to achieve a legitimate objective. For example, where an imminent threat of serious and widespread violence cannot be addressed by less intrusive measures such as targeted arrests, authorities may disperse the assembly. In addition, the use of force should be avoided, and if it is unavoidable, it must be restricted to the minimum extent necessary to achieve a legitimate objective. The entire chain of events leading to the 19 deaths began with the unjustified police barricade erected to halt the march. When a large crowd attempted to move past the barrier by dismantling it, the police used this as grounds to deploy less-lethal weapons against individuals who, at that moment, were not acting violently.

The testimonies from hospitals, journalists and protesters on the events of 8 September reveal a clear pattern of use of unnecessary and excessive force, including unlawful killings through the use of live ammunition and serious injuries resulting from the use of both lethal and less lethal force.

Under international law, and specifically Article 6 of the ICCPR, the right to life is non-derogable. The UN Basic Principles permit the use of firearms in self-defence or defence of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury, and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve this objective. The Basic Principles further state that the intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made as a last resort, when strictly unavoidable to protect life. The rapid escalation of force over a short period of time without adequately considering international human rights law principles of necessity and proportionality and the consistent use of live ammunition against protesters, including children, in circumstances where they did not pose an imminent threat of death or serious injury cannot meet this threshold. Medical testimonies also recognize the excessive use of force and state that many of the victims had gunshot wounds, indicating that law enforcement officials resorted to the use of firearms in situations where non-violent or less lethal means would have been sufficient.

Even where police used less lethal weapons, their deployment was reckless and unlawful. Doctors in multiple hospitals reported that the vast majority of injuries were to the head, neck and chest. The misuse of tear gas was equally dangerous. Tear gas canisters were reported to have been fired directly at individuals. Tear gas drifted into hospital wards, and in at least one case, the police nearly fired a tear gas canister into the emergency room of Civil Service hospital but backed off after severe warnings from doctors who were treating the injured. International standards prohibit such practices, recognizing the high risk of permanent injury or death from use at close range or in enclosed spaces.

The UN Basic Principles require that force be used proportionately and that weapons be employed in ways that minimize harm. The repeated striking of protesters with KIPs and the firing of tear gas into hospitals fall far outside those limits, amounting to excessive and unlawful force.

This represents a serious failure of Nepal's policing system and a profound disregard for human life. The deliberate or reckless use of live ammunition, rubber bullets, water cannon and tear gas against largely peaceful demonstrators cannot be justified under any circumstance. These acts not only violated international law but also Nepal's own constitutional guarantees of life, dignity, and peaceful assembly. Unless those responsible are held to account through independent investigation and prosecution, and unless Nepal urgently reforms its policing practices, the impunity that enabled these killings will persist, putting future assemblies and lives at risk.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

TO NEPALI AUTHORITIES

1. Fulfil recommendations 159.78, 159.81 and 159.82, from France, Iceland and Latvia, during the 3rd cycle, 37th session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Nepal in 2021, that were supported by the Government of Nepal, to stop infringing on the rights to peaceful assembly and end excessive use of force on demonstrators.

TO NEPAL POLICE AND ARMED FORCES

1. Immediately and publicly reveal the results of the investigations into the killing of protesters on 8 September 2025 and promptly conclude any pending investigations.
2. Ensure that laws and regulations regarding the policing of assemblies respect the obligations of Nepal under the ICCPR and comply with the related international human rights law and standards, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.
3. Review the general approach towards assemblies and ensure that police facilitate peaceful protests by removing blanket bans on holding an assembly within sight and sound of the intended target such as the federal Parliament, and refrain from any measures or tactics that can only escalate a situation.
4. Refrain from authorizing and using firearms for protest policing purposes under the Local Administration Act, which currently permits firing at groups of people without requiring an imminent threat of death or serious injury to a specific individual. Amend domestic laws and operational directives to explicitly prohibit the use of firearms to police or to disperse assemblies and to ensure that any use of firearms is strictly limited to responding to an imminent threat to life or of serious injury, followed by ensuring strict compliance in practice.
5. Ensure tear gas is used only where there is actual widespread violence that cannot be addressed by targeting specific individuals, rather than on the basis of a mere possibility of disturbance or perceived “violent or destructive tendency.” Further, prohibit the use of tear gas in confined spaces and ensure that both the law and policing practice comply with international human rights standards on the management of assemblies.
6. Prohibit the use of kinetic impact projectiles (KIPs) (including rubber bullets and similar crowd-control ammunition) to disperse peaceful assemblies. Ensure that any use of KIPs is strictly limited to targeting individual persons engaged in serious violence against others, and only when less harmful means are insufficient to address an imminent threat.
7. Cease and prohibit the use of rubber-coated metal bullets, which carry an excessive risk of causing serious injury or even death.
8. Ensure water cannons are used only under strictly defined circumstances – when lawful, necessary, and proportionate to address actual widespread serious violence that cannot be controlled through less harmful means – and never in confined spaces where people cannot disperse. Require prior warnings before use and prohibit targeting individuals at short range or aiming at the head or upper body.
9. Ensure any regulations established in relation to the use of lethal and less lethal weapons by law enforcement officials are published and made accessible to the public.
10. Establish a compensation fund for victims of unnecessary and excessive use of police force with clear guidelines for how compensation will be apportioned. Review all the cases of deaths and injuries to ensure that victims and families of those killed have received adequate

compensation. In addition, ensure full and effective reparation to victims, including access to adequate medical care and rehabilitation.

11. Fully cooperate with the newly established Judicial Inquiry Commission, undertaking investigations into crimes and human rights violations committed against protesters by law enforcement officials.

TO PARLIAMENT OF NEPAL

1. Amend domestic laws and operational directives including but not limited to the Local Administration Act 2028 to explicitly prohibit the use of firearms to disperse assemblies and to ensure that any use of firearms is strictly limited to responding to an imminent threat to life or of serious injury, followed by ensuring strict compliance in practice.
2. Amend domestic laws and operational directives including but not limited to the Local Administration Act to prohibit the use of wide-area chemical irritants (“tear gas”) against an entire assembly, procession, or crowd based solely on an assumed or collective source of violence, as currently permitted under Nepali law. Ensure that regulations are established providing clear instructions on when and how tear gas should be used, restricting their use only to cases of widespread violence.
3. Amend the Local Administration Act to explicitly regulate the use of kinetic impact projectiles (KIP), as current legislation does not specifically recognize or provide safeguards for KIPs referring only ambiguously to “firing bullets” despite their deployment by police for crowd control. Such regulations should specifically prohibit the use of KIPs to disperse assemblies, or the firing of KIPs into crowds.
4. Amend the Local Administration Act to explicitly regulate the use of water cannon, including adding safeguards currently missing in Nepali legislation such as ensuring adequate dispersal and escape routes before deployment.

TO THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION

1. Ensure that prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigations are carried out into the numerous allegations of unlawful use of force, including those involving the misuse of firearms, tear gas, water cannon and kinetic impact projectiles, by law enforcement officials against protesters on 8 and 9 September 2025 and submit their findings, including evidence of criminal responsibility to Nepali authorities, for appropriate action in line with international human rights law and standards.
2. Publish the findings in a timely manner through a medium widely accessible to the public.

TO ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE OF NEPAL

1. Ensure that all allegations of killing, assault and injury as a result of unlawful and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials in the context of protests are thoroughly and impartially investigated and those responsible – whether senior or junior officers – are brought to justice in fair trials.
2. Ensure that prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigations are carried out into the numerous allegations of unlawful use of force, including those involving the misuse of firearms, tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets, by law enforcement officials against protesters on 8 and 9 September 2025, and submit their findings, including evidence of criminal responsibility to Nepali authorities, for appropriate action in line with international human rights law and standards.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING GOVERNMENTS ENGAGED IN BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH NEPAL

1. Use all bilateral, multilateral, and regional platforms at their disposal to urge Nepal authorities to protect and facilitate the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.
2. Ensure that any bilateral law enforcement cooperation mechanisms or sales of less lethal weaponry do not directly or indirectly contribute to human rights violations against protesters. In this regard, ensure that clear legal controls are established regulating any trade with Nepal in law enforcement equipment that may be used to commit torture or other ill-treatment.
3. Urgently review cooperation with the Nepal government, including the provision of training, law enforcement equipment and other security assistance to Nepali law enforcement officials, until officers responsible for unlawful use of force are thoroughly investigated and, where appropriate, brought to justice, and robust accountability mechanisms are in place. Further, demand that Nepali authorities ensure victims obtain prompt reparation from the state, including restitution, fair and adequate financial compensation and appropriate medical care and rehabilitation.

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