



[COUNTRY: Nepal]

**PROJECT HALF YEARLY PROGRESS UPDATE**

**PERIOD COVERED: JANUARY – JUNE 2014**

<b>Project No &amp; Title:</b>	PBF/NPL/A-3 Increasing the Safety of Journalists		
<b>Recipient Organization(s)<sup>1</sup>:</b>	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)		
<b>Implementing Partners (Government, UN agencies, NGOs etc):</b>	Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Press Council Nepal, Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), Freedom Forum, Sancharika Samuha, Association of Community Radio Broadcasters(ACORAB), Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), Nepal International Media Partnership (NIMP), Jagaran Media Centre (JMC), Federation of Nepalese Indigenous Journalists (FONIJ), Media Advocacy Group (MAG), Human Rights journalists Association (HURJA), Madheshi Journalists Association (MJA), Media Accountability Foundation (MAF)		
<b>Location:</b>	Nepal-Eastern Hills and Central Terai		
<b>Total Approved Budget :<sup>2</sup></b>	USD 566,000		
<b>Preliminary data on funds committed : <sup>3</sup></b>	USD 359, 925	<b>% of funds committed / total approved budget:</b>	63.59
<b>Expenditure<sup>4</sup>:</b>	USD 211,585	<b>% of expenditure / total budget: (Delivery rate)</b>	37.38
<b>Project Approval Date:</b>	27/02/2013	<b>Possible delay in operational closure date (Number of months)</b>	Six months
<b>Project Start Date:</b>	16/03/2013		

<sup>1</sup> Please note that where there are multiple agencies, only one consolidated project report should be submitted.

<sup>2</sup> Approved budget is the amount transferred to Recipient Organisations.

<sup>3</sup> Funds committed are defined as the commitments made through legal contracts for services and works according to the financial regulations and procedures of the Recipient Organisations. Provide preliminary data only.

<sup>4</sup> Actual payments (contracts, services, works) made on commitments.

<sup>5</sup> PBF focus areas are:

*1: Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue (Priority Area 1):*

(1.1) SSR, (1.2) RoL; (1.3) DDR; (1.4) Political Dialogue;

*2: Promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Priority Area 2):*

(2.1) National reconciliation; (2.1) Democratic Governance; (2.3) Management of natural resources;

*3: Revitalise the economy and generate immediate peace dividends (Priority Area 3);*

(3.1) Short-term employment generation; (3.2) Sustainable livelihoods

*4) (Re)-establish essential administrative services (Priority Area 4)*

(4.1) Public administration; (4.2) Public service delivery (including infrastructure).

<b>Expected Operational Project Closure Date:</b>	15/03/2015		
<b>Project Outcomes:</b>	1. The NHRC, professional media associations, state agencies and civil society (including political parties) join hands to establish a nationally owned mechanism that ensures a safe environment for journalists 2. The capacity of state authorities, including security sector institutions and the courts, to better protect journalists is enhanced with the support of civil society, political parties and the public at large 3. Journalists and media houses have enhanced capacity to protect themselves		
<b>PBF Focus Area<sup>5</sup></b> (select one of the Focus Areas listed below)	Priority Area 2: Promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflicts 2.1 National Reconciliation		

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## Qualitative assessment of progress

<p><i>For each intended outcome, provide evidence of progress during the reporting period.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, for each outcome include the outputs achieved. (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>With regards to outcome 1, six consultations (five regional and one national) were organized to receive comments/suggestions on Terms of Reference of the proposed Rapid Intervention Task Force (RITF), a mechanism to investigate violence against journalists that was prepared by NHRC. The recommendations were submitted to NHRC, which also chairs the steering committee of this project. Federation Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) and Freedom Forum are working closely with NHRC with technical inputs from Nepal International Media Partnership to decide on the institutional design, creation and functioning of the monitoring mechanism. Toby Mendel, renowned FoE expert from the NIMP visited NHRC and discussed with NHRC officials about the structure and functioning of the proposed mechanism. Stakeholders reached an agreement on the framework of the RITF in a consultative manner and committed to a continued coordination to improving monitoring, documentation among various actors.</p> <p>Under the Outcome 2, six consultations, dialogues and trainings were organized at regional and district levels to discuss the role of state agencies (particularly Nepal Police and the Judiciary system) for protecting journalists and addressing the issues of impunity resulted from the decade long political conflict. A study followed by face-to face consultations were organized to understand the knowledge levels of the security sector institutions and the judiciary on national and international instruments on freedom of expression and safety of journalists. The Local level members of the executive and judiciary have a good understanding of the importance to enhance the safety of journalists and their role in this context. Prosecutors, police, government and judicial officials at local level advocate for justice and protection of free expression and for safety of journalists.</p> <p>a.) Survey Questionnaire Design, Pre-Survey and Post Survey (Jan 2014): The survey questions were designed to know about the perception level among the state agencies (prosecutors, police, government and judicial officials at local level) on the national and international instruments on FoE and journalists' rights. Some significant findings of the pre-survey were :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Knowledge of FoE issues among them was slow off the mark.</li><li>ii. Many failed to respond anything in various questions.</li><li>iii. Out of 50, only five had known about the UDHR.</li></ol>
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- iv. Only 9 had knowledge on the limitation of on freedom of opinion and expression.
- v. Among the total, only 29 had heard about the Article 19 of UDHR/ICCPR.
- vi. Only 9 had had heard about the Media Development Indicator prepared by the UNESCO.

#### B. Dialogues

Six dialogues were organized in Chitwan Birgunj, Dhanusha, Okhaldhunga , Dhankuta and in Ilam (Feb, 2014)

Major findings include:

- a. The state agencies including security body, judiciary and administrations in the respective districts are fully committed to FoE and journalists' safety. But they were in need of translating verbal commitment to action
- b. Very few cases are filed in the legal bodies on violation of journalists' rights.
- c. Police administration needs to remain aloof from the political pressure during investigation
- d. The chances of journalists' getting attacked, or threatened is high when the security body is weak and state is in transition
- e. The training, orientation and refresher on journalists' rights should be provided frequently to the security persons and judiciary so they could be aware on such issues
- f. The state agencies should treat the FoE as the major human rights to enable democratic culture

Under the Outcome 3, introductory sessions on the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of journalists and the Issue of Impunity, study on the self-protection capacity of the journalists, assessment on the capacity of media rights violation monitoring desks including inception context analysis and Do No Harm workshop etc. have increased the sensitivity of the project partners on the importance of the safety of journalists. More concrete activities are under implementation. A study conducted (April-June, 2014) reveals that the self-protection capacity of the journalist remains weak in districts and there are not specific methods they have employed to secure themselves. They lack basic knowledge and information on how to enhance their self-protection capacities in the hostile environment and face threats from political parties, youth organizations, criminal gangs and armed outfits in the Terai and eastern hills. Major findings of the study (draft) :

- a. Journalist are gradually losing the faith on police administration as the perpetrators are walking free and police administration is not effective to resolve safety problems
- b. Journalist do not believe that people involved in attacking the journalist would be booked and they

	<p>are losing faith to judiciary</p> <p>c. Journalists do not know the methods for assessing the possible threats in their profession, they conduct risk assessment but it is not scientific</p> <p>d. Journalists are living under a threat in the districts and avoiding the critical reporting to protect themselves, for example they try to avoid corruption related news.</p> <p>e. Journalists are practicing self-censorship to avoid the possible attacks and threats to them and they do not do reporting if they find risk</p> <p>f. Media houses lack any concrete and applicable policy regarding the safety of the journalists : there are not basic facilities such as jacket, helmet and other minimum security equipment while reporting on sensitive issues</p>
<p><i>Do you see evidence that the project is having a positive impact on peacebuilding? (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>Yes, the project is sufficiently having positive impact on peace building by reminding the key stakeholders of the Nepal's peace process i.e. security sector institutions responsible for addressing the cases of murders, threats, abduction, assault and other attacks upon journalists during the conflict. Additionally, the extensive discussions among district and regional level judicial structures (courts) have made them vigilant on the cases of impunity against journalists. Their efficient actions to prevent violations against journalists and timely interventions in case of attacks against journalists certainly help to increase faith of general people on the rule of law. The agreement among stakeholders to establish a nationally owned mechanism under the leadership of NHRC with Nepal Police and Ministry of Information and Communications on board is also a strong proof that the project is having positive impact on peace-building. Extensive discussions with political interest groups are also underway.</p>
<p><i>Were there catalytic effects from the project in the period reported, including additional funding commitments or unleashing/ unblocking of any peace relevant processes? (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>This project has been catalytic in reviving the proposal of establishing a nationally owned mechanism to protect free expression in Nepal. Due to the efforts of this mechanism the proposal which has been inactive for the last two years is now in a stage of being implemented with the agreement that it will be housed in the National Human Rights Commission.</p>
<p><i>If progress has been slow or inadequate, provide main reasons and what is being done to address them.</i></p>	<p>The retirement of NHRC commissioners and the government's failure to identify their successors pose a big challenge towards achieving this goal. In the absence of leadership the bureaucrat at NHRC now hesitate to take part in project activities and take responsibilities and decisions made in regards to</p>

<p><i>(1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>establishment of mechanism to protection of free expression despite continuous follow up from the project. The delay in recruiting process for the project team also affected progress of the project by four months- Project Coordinator joined on June 13, 2013, whereas the assistant was hired on August 1, 2013 only. This remains a major reason for the low achievement for all outcomes. This would also affect the accomplishment of overall activities. Project involved in frequent communications with NHRC in different level and they have received the project now but the delay from the government to appoint new commissioners again poses a threat in materializing the concept of an independent mechanism.</p>
<p><i>What are the main activities/expected results for the rest of the year? (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>The next six months will see implementations under all the three Outcomes. The major ones include establishment of nationally owned Rapid Intervention Task Force (RITF) for safety of journalists, additional hotlines for journalists to report threats or actual violation against themselves, dialogues with political interest groups and media owners including trainings on self-protection and review of the journalistic code of ethics etc.</p>
<p><i>Is there any need to adjust project strategies/ duration/budget etc.? (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>Following the recommendation made by the mid-term review of the project additional partners were identified to achieve a better gender, inclusion and regional balance. An Implementation Partners Agreement (IPA) has been established to include more sub-contracting activities, hence the budget lines (individual/expert contracts and trainings) need to be changed into subcontracting budget line as per the annual work plan. The steering committee and mid-term review also recommends for a six months no-cost extension to better achieve expected results of the project.</p>
<p><i>Are there any lessons learned from the project in the period reported? (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>One of the lessons learned have been that large stakeholders discussions need to be carried out to select implementing partners. For example, it was important to get engaged with stakeholders with extended national presence because the project will have impact beyond the selected districts via its mechanism to protect free expression. With this realization the project has now partnered with six more human rights and media advocacy groups.</p>
<p><i>What is the project budget expenditure to date (percentage of allocated project budget expended by the date of the report) – preliminary figures only? (1000 characters max.)</i></p>	<p>Since project staffs were hired very late and partners were selected without properly briefing them about the project milestone and their possible role, the financial expenditure has been delayed. However, with the involvement of national partners in the areas of their specialization and international partners under UNESCO's IPA, the project activities are now expected to expedite thus bringing the financial expenditure on track. The project budget to date expended is 37.38 percent.</p>

*Any other information that the project needs to convey to PBSO (and JSC) at this stage? (1000 characters max.)*

A no-cost extension up to six months is needed to achieve the expected results of the project. The project has already provided a heads up to the UNPFN Support Office on this issue.

**INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT:** *Using the Project Results Framework as per the approved project document- provide an update on the achievement of key indicators at both the outcome and output level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, state this and provide any explanation in the qualitative text above. (250 characters max per entry)*

	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Indicator Baseline</b>	<b>End of project Indicator Target</b>	<b>Current indicator progress</b>	<b>Reasons for Variance/ Delay (if any)</b>	<b>Adjustment of target (if any)</b>
<b>Outcome 1</b> The NHRC, professional media associations, state agencies and civil society (including political parties) join hands to establish a nationally owned mechanism that ensures a safe environment for journalists	Indicator 1.1 An independent mechanism for safety of journalists and free expression evolves to be an efficient node or umbrella for dealing with issues related to the safety of journalists and impunity, and to investigate violations of freedom of expression in a gender sensitive way .	NHRC unable to implement original concept developed in 2012 to establish a mechanism for the protection of journalists  The current concept note for the mechanisms includes protection only for journalists	The concept note elaborated to by applying recommendations of the national and regional consultations  The new revised concept note also includes human rights defenders and other key civil society actors as target groups to be protected	Concept note on functioning of the independent mechanism prepared, discussed and revised, discussions and consultations ongoing on institutional design and creation NHRC officials discussed on international experiences of the such mechanism with technical support from NIMP	The retirement of NHRC commissioners and the government's failure to identify their successors pose a big challenge towards achieving this target  Delayed as there was no endorsement letter of NHRC available at UNESCO or UNPFN	
	Indicator 1.2 Professional institutions have	No cases received and investigated or recommended	All cases received by the mechanism	Status and capacities of professional media rights violation desks		

	the capacity to enhance the safety of journalists and deal with cases of impunity	for persecution by the mechanism	50% of the registered cases be investigated by the mechanism  50% of the investigated cases recommended for persecution by the mechanism	identified and in a process to include them in the proposed mechanism		
Output 1.1 An independent mechanism for safety of journalists and free expression evolves to be an efficient node or umbrella for dealing with issues related to the safety of journalists and impunity, and to investigate violations of	Indicator 1.1.1 Ownership of all stakeholders for project implementation ensured	Scattered knowledge of stakeholders of the project strategies and activities	Stakeholders have full ownership of project and understand their role in its implementation	All stakeholders are on board with full ownership and role		
	Indicator 1.1.2 Inception context analysis (including assessment of the overall safety situation of journalists, inclusion analysis of journalists at the district and regional levels, and analysis of past and on-going actions and	No analysis of current situation available	Stakeholders have comprehensive knowledge about status quo	Inception context analysis carried out, recommendations included		

freedom of expression in a gender sensitive way .	institutions addressing this issue) and conflict analysis					
	1.1.3 Agreement reached on the best framework to be established to protect journalists and free expression	1.1.3 No consensus on how to pursue security issues	1.1.3 Agreement supported by all stakeholders involved	Stakeholders agreed on the modality of proposed mechanism		A wider discussion needed on ownership and functioning of the mechanism
	1.1.4 A set of rules for the independent mechanism defined (Terms of reference, participation, rules of procedures, funding modalities etc.)	1.1.4 Initial efforts by NHRC to establish HRDC, but no set of rules agreed upon and operationalized	1.1.4 Mechanism functioning based on a solid set of rules	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	1.1.5 Capacity building to enable members of the NHRC (central and regional offices) and	1.1.5 Members of newly HRDC has not been trained corresponding to their new role	1.1.5 Members of the HRDC have capacity to discharge their duties	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		

	HRDC to deal use the tools available					
	1.1.6 A Protocol for handling cases related to attacks on media and journalists created in cooperation between mechanism and security agencies, which is observed by the actors involved	1.1.6 No protocol available	1.1.6 Endorsed and sufficient protocol	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	1.1.7 Legal support for assisting journalists in need institutionalized	1.1.7 Incoherent legal support activities	1.1.7 Legal support program established and embedded in the mechanism	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
Output 1.2 Professional institutions have the capacity to enhance the safety of journalists and deal with cases of	Indicator Status and capacity of established media rights violation monitoring and response desks of professional organizations analyzed	1.2.1 Present desks operate in an incoherent, hence ineffective way	1.2.1 In-depth knowledge of existing desks supports the planning of more efficient desks	Task completed, identified the roles of media rights violation monitoring desks, disseminated among stakeholders		

impunity	Indicator 1.2.2 Stakeholders have knowledge about the institutional design, creation and functioning of monitoring activities	1.2.2 Current monitoring activities are inadequate and hence ineffective	1.2.2 Monitoring desks are enabled to improve their monitoring activities	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	1.2.3 Agreement reached coordination and improving monitoring documentation among the various media rights violation monitoring activities	1.2.3 Unequal quality of media rights violation monitoring activities	1.2.3 Common approach of monitoring activities documented in a written agreement	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	1.2.4 Media rights violation desks in professional organizations have greater capacity	1.2.4 Lack of competence of desk officers	1. 2.4 Desk officers have adequate skills	Task completed, identified the roles of media rights violation monitoring desks, disseminated among stakeholders		
	1.2.5 Media rights violations are monitored through a commonly shared tool	1.2.5 No such tool in place	1.2.5 Online resource for documenting cases of media rights violations	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		

	1.2.6 Rapid Intervention Task Force (RITF)	1.2.6 No sufficient emergency tools available to conduct additional impartial investigation	1.2.6 In case of incidents,, appropriate reaction to safeguard investigation	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	1.2.7 Better understanding of the reasons and consequences of self-censorship through regional consultations and a national conference	1.2.7 Widespread self-censorship as a reaction to security threats	1.2.7 Media professionals are able to minimize self-censorship recognizing it as an inappropriate mechanism to cope with security threats	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
<b>Outcome 2</b> The capacity of state authorities, including security sector institutions and the courts, to better protect journalists is enhanced with the support of civil society,	Indicator 2.1 Courts conduct impartial, speedy and effective hearings of cases of impunity of violence against journalists in project districts	30% of court cases hearing allegations of alleged acts of violence against journalists Average time to complete hearing of cases is protracted	25% increase of court cases hearing allegations of alleged acts of violence against journalists  25% reduction in time to conclude hearing of cases	Six consultations at district and regional levels organized, assessment on role of judges and courts carried out and the role identified Nearly 200 persons, including from the security bodies and judiciary, in total, participated in the dialogues thereby becoming aware on the FoE issues and making commitment		

<p>political parties and the public at large</p>				<p>that they would protect journalists' rights. . The state agencies including security body, judiciary and administrations in the respective districts are fully committed to FoE and journalists' safety. But they were in need of translating verbal commitment to action</p>		
	<p>Indicator 2.2 Police provide pro-active preventive measures to protect journalists from potential violence in project districts</p>	<p>10% district level FIRs and cases registered with police  4% of district level police investigations into alleged cases No monthly security meetings with media stakeholders No measures taken by police to prevent violence against journalists</p>	<p>25% increase of district level FIRs and cases registered with police  25% increase of district level police investigations into alleged cases  25% increase of monthly security meetings with media stakeholders  25% increase in measures taken by</p>	<p>Better understanding on national and international instruments of Freedom of Expression and issues concerning safety of journalists among police</p>		

			police to prevent violence against journalists			
Output 2.1 Security sector institutions and courts have increased capacity to enhance protection of journalists and prosecute violence against journalists in a gender sensitive and inclusive manner	Indicator 2.1.1 Training institutions of justice organs extend the scope of training to enable an increasing number of judicial officers to conduct hearings in line with legal standards	No such trainings available (based on consultations with Judiciary)	25% increase in number of judicial officers trained to conduct hearings in line with legal standards	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners) Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	Indicator 2.1.2 Security sector institutions have increased capacity through training of trainers in security training institutions	Insufficient trainings for security sector on the protection of journalists (based on pre-assessment Feb, 2014)	Training bodies of security sector institutions conduct trainings	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
Output 2.2 Key representatives of civil society	Indicator 2.2.1 Representatives of political parties/political interest groups act with respect for	Political parties may behave in contradiction to their responsibility to guarantee freedom of the	2.2.1.1 Political parties including their youth wings accept and follow public demands for non-interference in	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		

<p>including political parties/political interest groups take action to reduce the number of threats and violence, determined by public demands for freedom of the press and the progress in the peace process</p>	<p>freedom of the press and the safe conduct of journalism</p>	<p>press, thereby jeopardizing secure working environment for journalists</p>	<p>reporting and potential investigations into media right violations through perception polls and data</p>			
	<p>Indicator 2.2.2 The public determines political parties/political interest groups to enable impartial news coverage</p>	<p>Public recognition of political interference does not lead to tangible change in behaviour of involved actors</p>	<p>2.2.2 Public opinion is given influence to contribute to increased security of journalists</p>	<p>Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)</p>		
<p>2.3 The public at large is sensitized to the importance of safety of journalists for a free and independent press.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Public at large creates an atmosphere conducive to increasing the safety of journalists in peace building and the understanding of the importance of a free and safe environment for</p>	<p>2.3.1 Public in general is not aware of the issues concerning safety of the journalists</p>	<p>2.3.1 Public understands its role to contribute to enhance journalists' security</p>	<p>The project reached to 1000 persons so far with several activities focused on creating awareness about the understanding of the importance of a free and safe environment for journalists</p>		

	journalists					
<b>Outcome 3</b> Journalists and media houses have enhanced capacity to protect themselves	Indicator 3.1 Journalists implement personal safety measures	Journalists are insufficiently equipped to deal with the high number of security threats and do not systematically implement proven protection measures	Journalists utilize new capacity and utilize tools to protect themselves against threats	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	Indicator 3.2 Women journalists implement gender safety measures	No comprehensive, gender specific approach to increase the safety of women journalists, only a variety of individual training initiatives	Women journalists have access to gender-specific techniques and utilize to protect their safety)	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
	Indicator 3.3 Media houses implement appropriate means to protect their female/ male staff	No systematic implementation of security measures by media owners so far	Media owners are aware of the issue and put in place tools to contribute to increase the security of journalists	Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)		
Output 3.1 Journalists	Indicator 3.1.1 Self-protection	3.1.1 Existing self-protection	3.1.1 Overview of existing tools and	Draft report produced identifying roles and		

<p>have means at hand to enhance their personal protection</p>	<p>capacities of journalists including functioning and efficiency of 'Hotlines' maintained by press freedom protection organizations are available</p>	<p>capacities and methodologies for the individual media professional have not been reviewed regarding their efficiency and scope (Assessment, 2014)</p>	<p>lessons learned regarding efficiency, implemented</p>	<p>responsibilities of the stakeholders</p>		
	<p>Indicator 3.1.2 Additional hotlines established, where required</p>	<p>3.1.2 Existing hotlines do not have the capacity to cover all potential beneficiaries (Assessment, 2014)</p>	<p>3.1.2 A sufficient number of hotlines are in place to cover as many cases as possible</p>	<p>Activity ongoing</p>		
<p>Output 3.2 Women journalists have gender specific approaches regarding their personal safety</p>	<p>Indicator 3.2.1 Women journalists will be better equipped to increase their personal safety</p>	<p>3.2.1 No comprehensive, gender specific approach to increase the safety of women journalists, but a variety of individual training initiatives</p>	<p>3.2.1 Women journalists have access to gender-specific techniques and approaches to protect their safety</p>	<p>Activity ongoing (NIMP and National Implementation partners)</p>		

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