

Risk Factors in Nepal Following Protests That Toppled the Government

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Nepal's protests against corruption, by Himal Subedi, image licensed under CC-BY-SA-4.0

SUMMARY OF CURRENT SITUATION

Nepal is experiencing significant political turmoil following widespread protests in September 2025, known as the “Gen Z” protests. These youth-led demonstrations were initially sparked by a government-imposed social media ban and grew into a broader movement against corruption, socio-economic inequality and poor governance. The protests resulted in violent clashes with security forces, leading to 75 confirmed deaths, over 2,000 injuries and widespread property damage, including the destruction of key government buildings. In the aftermath, the then Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli resigned and an interim government was formed, with elections scheduled for March 2026. While the social media ban has been lifted, the security situation remains fluid and further unrest is anticipated.

KEY EVENTS AND TIMELINE

September 8-13, 2025: Large-scale protests erupted, initially sparked by the government's decision to ban social media platforms. Protests intensified due to deep public dissatisfaction over issues such as corruption, governance failures and economic disparity.

- Violent clashes between protesters and security forces.
- Authorities used lethal force to disperse crowds, resulting in 75 fatalities and over 2,000 injuries nationwide.
- Arson attacks led to the destruction of several government buildings, including the parliament and presidential residence.
- Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli resigned on September 13 following pressure from both the public and political factions.

Post-September 13, 2025: An interim government led by Sushila Karki, a former chief justice, was formed to oversee the transition toward the 2026 general elections. The government lifted the social media ban in an effort to de-escalate tensions.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The interim government, which includes leaders from various political factions, is tasked with restoring stability ahead of the general elections scheduled for March 2026. Despite these efforts, the country's political landscape remains volatile. Public anger persists, particularly among the youth, who remain frustrated by the slow pace of reforms and ongoing corruption within the government. The political transition is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, with further protests anticipated in the coming months as Nepal approaches the election period.

SECURITY SITUATION

- **General Security:** The security situation in Nepal remains unstable. There is an ongoing risk of further protests and unrest, particularly in major cities like Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lalitpur. Security forces have the authority to implement curfews and other restrictions with little notice, and there is a high likelihood of further clashes between demonstrators and the police.
- **Civil Unrest:** The potential for additional violent protests remains high, especially as tensions over the handling of the political transition and calls for

reform continue. While the interim government has taken steps to restore order, such as lifting the social media ban, deep-seated dissatisfaction remains.

- **Public Safety:** Protests may disrupt daily life, especially in urban centers. There is a heightened risk of property damage, as seen in the September protests, with government buildings and infrastructure being targets for arson and vandalism.

IMPACT ON TRAVEL AND FOREIGN NATIONALS

- **Travel Advisory:** Due to the political instability and potential for civil unrest, several governments issued travel advisories recommending reconsideration of non-essential travel to Nepal. Travelers were advised to monitor local conditions closely and follow official guidelines from their respective embassies.
- **Safety Precautions:**
 - Avoid areas where protests or public gatherings are taking place.
 - Follow all instructions from local authorities, especially regarding curfews and other emergency measures.
 - Exercise caution in major cities and avoid regions where there are reports of unrest or violence.
- **Legal Considerations for Foreign Nationals:** Foreign nationals are prohibited from participating in public protests under Nepal's visa conditions. Violating these regulations can result in arrest, deportation and the revocation of entry visas. Non-citizens are advised to remain observant of local laws and refrain from involvement in any demonstrations or public unrest.

OUTLOOK AND PROJECTION

- The political transition in Nepal is expected to continue to face significant challenges. The interim government, led by Sushila Karki, will need to address both the immediate security concerns and the underlying causes of public dissatisfaction if it hopes to ensure a peaceful transition to the 2026 elections. The "Gen Z" protests highlighted the deep frustration of young people, many of whom feel excluded from the political process and have voiced concerns over corruption and lack of opportunities. This demographic is expected to play a crucial role in shaping the upcoming elections and the future direction of Nepal's political system.

- The situation remains fluid and the risk of additional unrest persists. Authorities are likely to continue imposing restrictions on movement in localities of concern.
- Foreign governments will continue to monitor developments closely and adjust travel advisories as the situation evolves. Travelers should remain vigilant and flexible, prepared for the possibility of disruptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAVELERS AND AGENCIES

- **For Foreign Nationals:**
 - Stay informed by checking travel advisories and embassy notifications regularly.
 - Avoid non-essential travel to Nepal until the security situation stabilizes.
 - Maintain situational awareness, especially in urban centers.
 - Abide by local laws, particularly regarding public protests.
- **For Humanitarian and NGO Operations:**
 - Assess the safety of staff and facilities, particularly if protests resurface.
 - Plan for potential evacuation procedures in case of high-escalation if protests resurface.
 - Coordinate with local authorities for the latest security updates.

CONCLUSION

Nepal is navigating a period of political uncertainty and unrest, with protests and civil unrest continuing to challenge the country's stability. The resignation of Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli and the establishment of an interim government have not quelled public anger, and the lead-up to the March 2026 elections will likely be fraught with tension. Travelers are advised to exercise caution, monitor security updates and avoid participation in protests, while foreign governments remain on high alert as the situation continues to unfold.

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