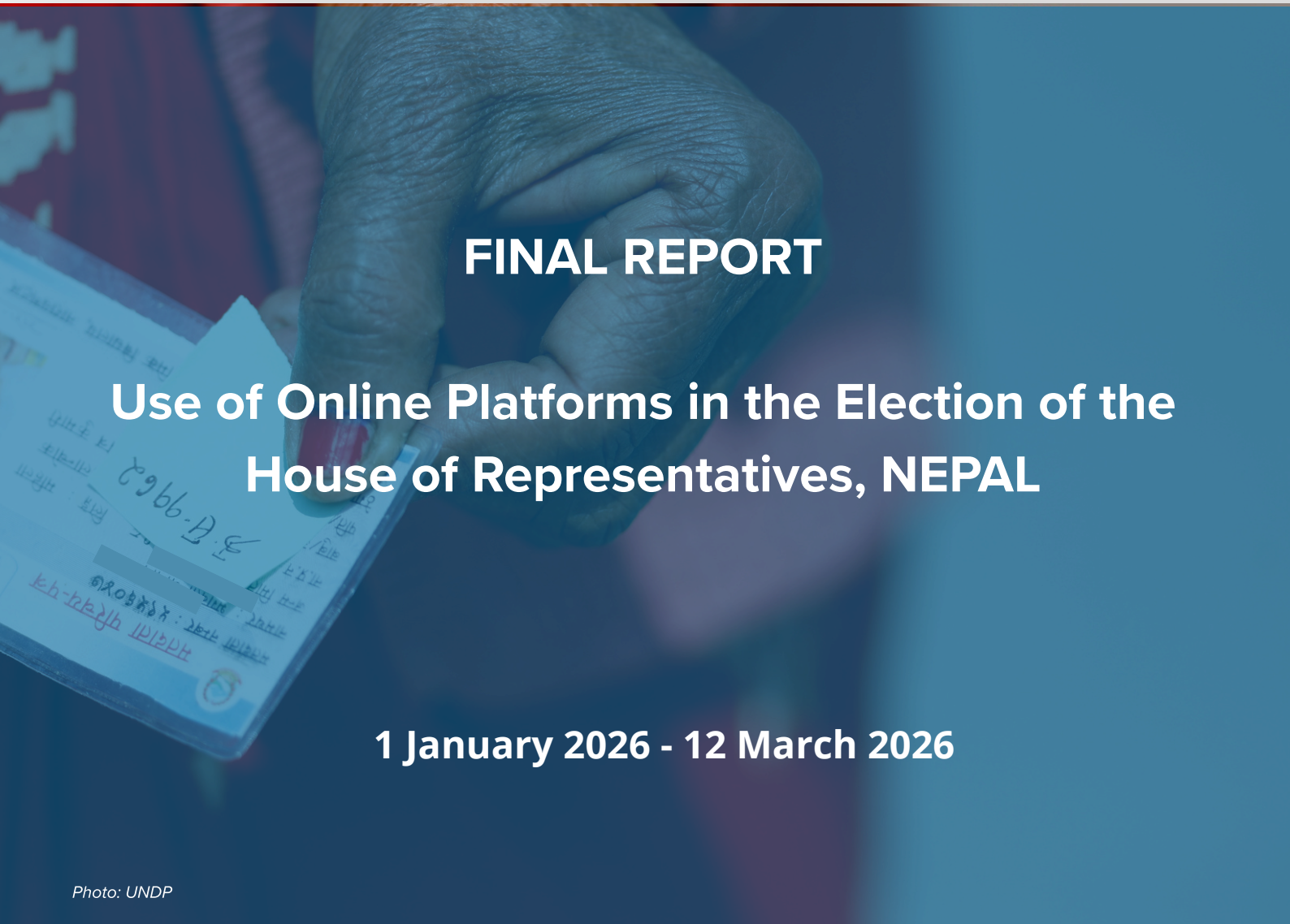
EMONITOR+



FINAL REPORT

Use of Online Platforms in the Election of the House of Representatives, NEPAL

1 January 2026 - 12 March 2026

Photo: UNDP

173,030 Posts (English & Nepali) processed using AI | **417** Posts analyzed by human monitors | **388** Posts were related to the violation of Election Code of Conduct

OVERVIEW

Nepal held the election of 275 members of the House of Representatives (HoR) (Lower House) on 5 March 2026. The peaceful and uncontested election marked an important milestone in normalizing democracy following the Gen Z protests of September 2025. The 8-9 September protest had culminated in the formation of an interim government, which was tasked with organizing the election.

The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) submitted its report on the election to the President of Nepal on March 19. There were a total of 18,903,689 voters on the roll, of which 11,168,032 (59.6%) voted in the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) contest to elect representatives from 165 constituencies. Sixty-five political parties contested the FPTP election. Similarly, 11,280,617 votes were cast to elect 110 candidates from 63 political parties under the proportional representation system.

There were 3,406 candidates – 388 women, 3017 men, and one from the "other" category – in the FPTP ballot. Similarly, 1,772 women and 1,363 men contested in the election under the proportional representation system, where citizens vote for political parties and candidates proposed by political parties before the election. The elected included 179 males and 96 females. In terms of social groups, the newly elected Lower House has 49.09% Khas-Arya representatives, 21.09% Indigenous Nationalities, 3.27% Tharu, 6.18% Dalits, 16.73% Madhesis, and 3.34% Muslims (ECN, 2026). The election was monitored by 164 representatives from 22 diplomatic agencies, three international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and 35 Nepali NGOs.

United Nations (UN) assistance for the election began on 13 November 2025, when it received a request from the Ministry of Finance seeking support to strengthen the credibility and integrity of the election. In response, a UN Needs Assessment Mission was organized from 6 to 11 December 2025. This Mission assessed the electoral and political environment and identified priority areas for potential UN electoral assistance.

Against this backdrop, UNDP, in collaboration with UN Women, undertook a series of engagements aimed at providing timely, coordinated, and targeted support to the ECN across a range of strategic areas, one of which was monitoring the use of social media, particularly misuse, to influence election outcomes.

This report focuses on the monitoring of social media from January 1 to March 12, 2026.

Polling officers escorting ballot boxes from a voting centre to a collection point in Kathmandu Valley. (Photo: UNDP)

METHODOLOGY

UNDP deployed its proprietary **eMonitor+**, a suite of digital tools that leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to collect information from online sources, analyze it, and produce trend reports to support the promotion of information integrity. eMonitor+ facilitates analysis of data scraped by AI and information uploaded by human monitors. The platform has been successfully deployed in more than 35 countries to monitor social media trends and ensure information integrity.

The platform can be designed for multiple uses, including social media listening and collaborative fact-checking and analysis. eMonitor+ integrates data from various sources, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and news websites, as well as data collected by human monitors, to produce trend reports that inform strategic communication.

In Nepal eMonitor+ was deployed to monitor election-related posts online, particularly on social media platforms mostly used in Nepal, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube. The content analysis focused on the volume of misinformation and disinformation, hate speech, political polarization, institutional trust, and online/digital violence against women. For this, eMonitor+ was used to scrape data from social media to identify platforms with high-risk posts. This data was used for analysis to understand trends in hate speech, disinformation, violations of the Election Code of Conduct (ECoC), and public trust in institutions important for organizing the election, including the ECN.

Before rolling out the platform, UNDP organized a training for potential digital media monitors. The training (January 21-24, 2026) aimed to ensure a common understanding of the platform among digital media monitors, including the methodology and terminologies used in the analysis templates. The training included sessions for hands-on monitoring and production of mock reports.

Several ECN officials and others involved in monitoring social media content attended the training. As elections approached, the monitoring team at the ECN opted to monitor social media outside of eMonitor+, stating that it would be more efficient for the monitors to assess the posts to address emerging concerns rapidly. To support the ECN, UNDP Nepal assigned a separate monitoring team to analyze data using eMonitor+ and prepare trend reports. These trend reports were forwarded to the ECN with strategic communication advice as required.

The social media monitoring process began with adapting the standard methodology and indicators to the Nepal context, in close consultation with the ECN. This included finalizing a comprehensive set of keywords for systematically scraping election-related content across social media platforms. From January 17 to March 12, 2026, UNDP digital media monitors analyzed posts collected through AI scraping as well as those manually added to the platform by the monitoring team. The monitors reviewed all content to ensure accuracy in data entry and proper classification. The monitors identified high-risk content that appeared on their social media pages and uploaded it to eMonitor+ for analysis. Aided by platform algorithms, such posts appeared fairly frequently on their platforms. Generally, much of the TikTok content was collected for analysis using this method of algorithm-aided snowballing.

A senior citizen being assisted to cast his vote. (Photo: UNDP)

The eMonitor+ platform automatically processed and analyzed 173,030 posts during the monitoring period. This report includes analysis by eMonitor+ of 144,072 posts in terms of hate speech and identity-related violence. Analysis for other parameters, such as disinformation and election manipulation, and institutional trust was undertaken by human monitors, given their nuanced understanding of the context and the institutional environment. The human monitors collected and entered 487 posts for analysis. Four monitors cross-checked all 487 entries in the database as part of the data-cleaning process. The final clean sample of 417 posts was used for analysis to derive inferences on the trends in the use and misuse of social media and digital platforms to influence election outcomes. Most of the manually collected high-risk posts were sourced from TikTok and Facebook (Reels).

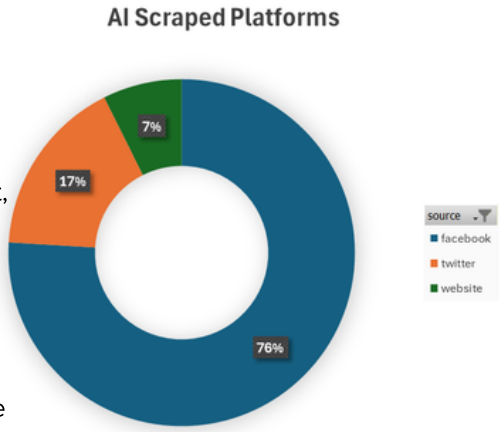
The indicators used in monitoring include platforms where the posts appeared, Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, news websites, and blogs. The engagements in terms of likes, shares, and comments were also recorded. The monitors also noted the format of the content – text, image, video, and audio – and captured the links to the posts and screenshots. Also recorded were the sources of the posts, the targets, and the types of emotions conveyed. The monitors marked hate speech, hostile discourse, extreme narratives, and identity-based violence, and the identity targeted in the post. The tactic of the GBV, the intensity of speech, and the region of origin of the post were also recorded. Similarly, the monitors identified disinformation and the targeted electoral components (candidates, political parties, ECN, etc.), the motive behind the content, and the use of AI to produce manipulative content. The monitors also noted the sentiment expressed in relation to the election. Institutional trust and election manipulation were measured by identifying the institution mentioned/ targeted, the tactic of information dysfunction, and the nature and tone of discourse, among others. The Election Code of Conduct (ECoC) was another indicator used in monitoring.

The eMonitor+ platform was adapted to Nepal's election by preparing a set of keywords for scraping content using AI. The keywords were prepared in Nepali (Devnagari script & Romanized) and English. The list had 274 keywords. Similarly, AI was also used to monitor 5,067 news websites, as well as some YouTube channels and Instagram pages with high engagement, for election-related content.

A section of this document reports on the findings related to hate speech analyzed by the eMonitor+ platform. The remainder of the document discusses the findings based on the analysis.

(Photo: UNDP)

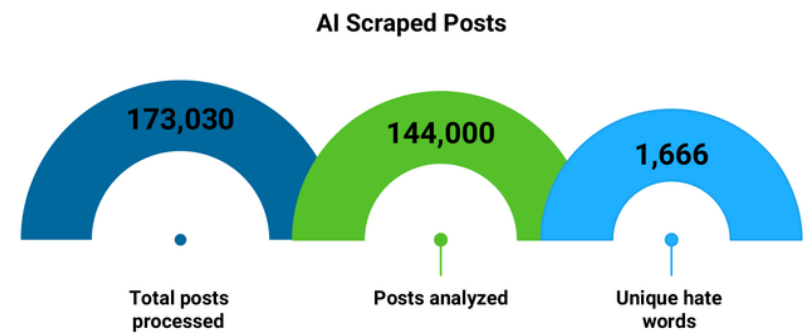
ANALYSIS OF AI SCRAPED POSTS



The eMonitor+ platform automatically processed and analyzed 173,030 posts during the monitoring period. This report includes analysis by eMonitor+ of about 144,000 posts, due to issues related to extracting data for analysis. This sample was used to isolate hate speech and identity-related violence. AI was not used to analyze other parameters, such as disinformation, institutional trust, and Election Code of Conduct violations, as these require a nuanced understanding of the context.

The hate speech captured by the word cloud below is based on 1,666 unique words from a total of 2,240 problematic words identified by AI with no human intervention. The words in the word cloud below, however, do not include hate expressed in comments to the social media posts of various candidates.

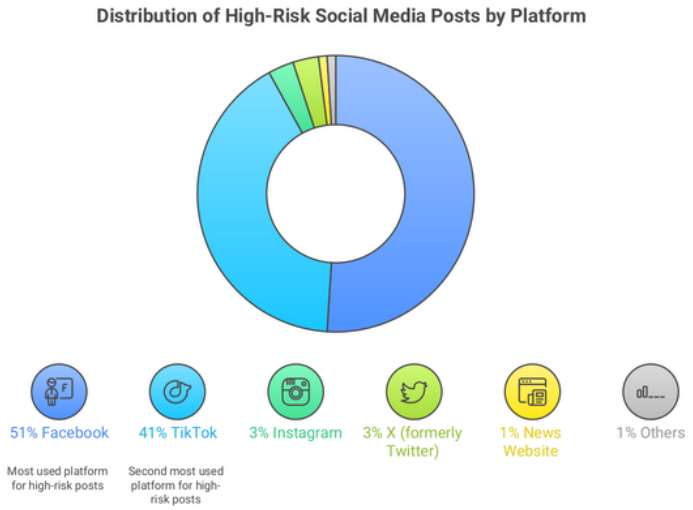
Facebook was the source of most of the online hate speech that was analyzed (76%), followed by Twitter (17%) and news websites (mainly, online news portals or sites imitating online news portals). TikTok was the source of a large proportion of problematic posts on social media (See: Page 6), which were not captured by AI.



MANUAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Facebook and TikTok were the sources of over 90% posts identified by monitors as high-risk, in terms of their ability to influence election information integrity. These were posts flagged for either or all of the following: hate speech, disinformation and electoral manipulation, violation of the ECoC, and posts intended to erode trust in institutions, including the ECN.

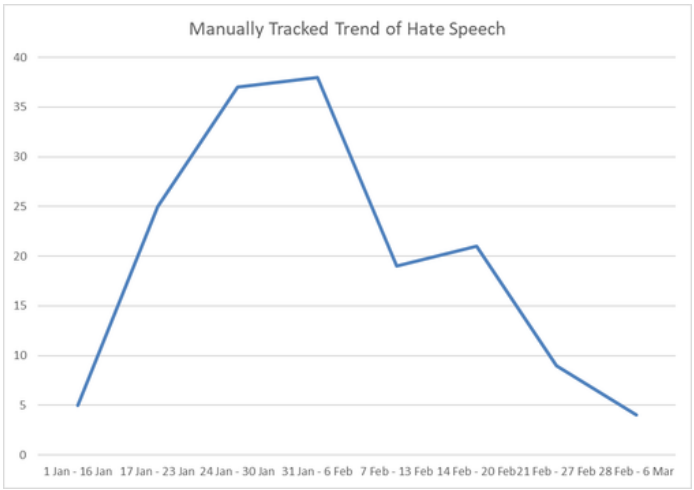
There were 417 such posts, most of which were shared on Facebook (51%) and TikTok (41%), two of the most used platforms in Nepal. Two platforms, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram, had 3% of such posts, and news websites had 1% of the high-risk posts. A few high-risk posts were also found on YouTube and blogs. Generally, most of the problematic posts were targeted towards male candidates, some applied to both candidates, and fewer posts were targeted at women candidates. The targeting of women was lower because there were more male candidates than female candidates in the contest.



AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Audience engagement was highest on TikTok, with cumulative likes exceeding 2.6 million, over 400,000 shares, and more than 131,000 comments. This was followed by Facebook (over 2 million likes and more than 170,000 shares). Since most of the posts analyzed by the monitors fell into the high-risk category, the potential for harm was also high. The combined total likes for seven platforms (including blogs) monitored were over 4.8 million. These findings relate only to data analyzed by the monitors. Therefore, the actual audience engagement with such content online could be higher, depending on the number of followers or reach of those creating such content.

There was an increase in the volume of hate speech from January 16 to February 5, and again between February 2 and February 20. The first increase could reflect the posts made by political actors before 19 January, when the Election Code of Conduct (ECoC) took effect. The second spurt occurred before the two-week campaigning period began on 15 February. Again, this could indicate the focus on online campaigning before the door-to-door campaigns. Another factor explaining the increase was the change in the keywords used to track hate speech online, which took place in the week of Februrary 14.



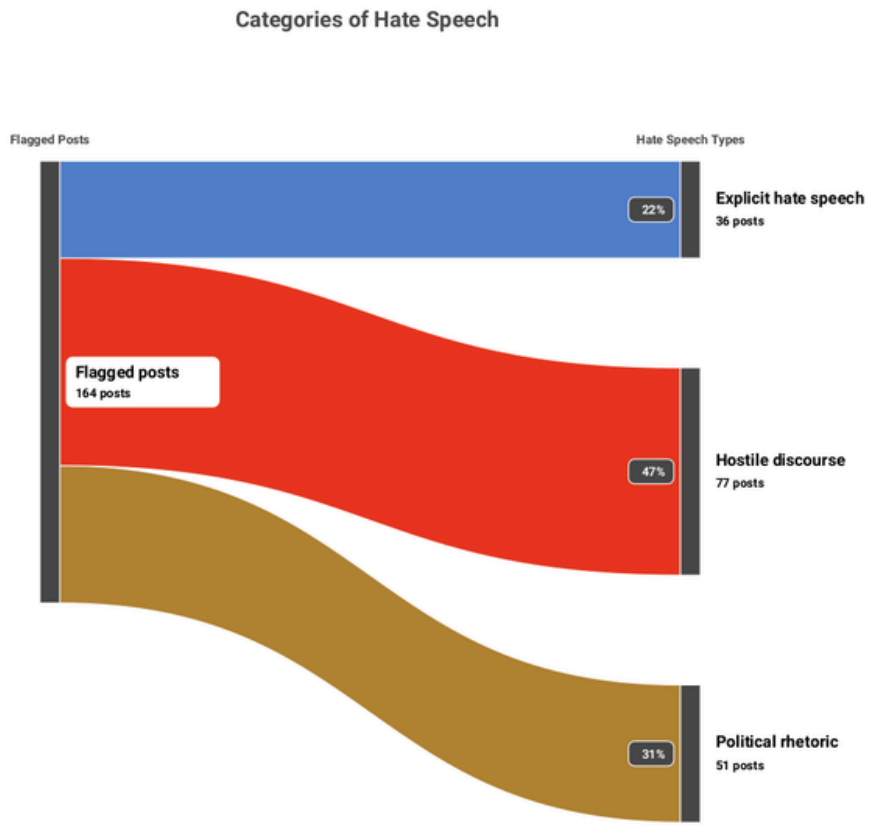
HATE SPEECH AND IDENTITY-BASED VIOLENCE

The monitors found 164 of the flagged posts had hate speech, including hostile discourse (47%), political rhetoric, and extreme narratives (31%). Twenty-two percent of the posts had explicit hate speech or content that attacked, demeaned, or incited hatred against individuals or groups for their ethnicity, religion, gender, or other identity markers. The findings confirmed that the electoral environment online was highly polarized, and the antagonistic and radicalized messaging posed risks to social harmony and trust in the electoral process.

Hate speech was expressed variously; in one instance, a high-profile candidate who lost in the election was depicted as a woman, which was hate speech against women in general. In another instance, a video of a political party rally was manipulated, with audio from an unrelated source, calling party supporters “sheep” and their children “lambs”, suggesting they were less than human because they supported the party in question. The posts also used homophobic slurs and narratives to demean both an individual and a broader social community.

One social media post circulating on Facebook had a political figure dressed as a woman mockingly labeled with derogatory terms implying a non-heteronormative sexual orientation, and suggesting that lack of electoral support was associated with his new “gay” sexual identity. This framing not only sought to ridicule the individual but also weaponized sexual orientation as an insult, thereby reinforcing stigma against the LGBTIQ+ community. The post exemplifies how homophobia is used as a tactic in political discourse to create a hostile online environment for candidates of sexual orientations not considered to be “normal”.

Another instance reflected the use of political rhetoric and extreme narratives for targeting a political party. In a social media post, supporters of a party were dehumanized and referred to with derogatory and vulgar language, portraying them as less human and unworthy of dignity. Direct threats and abusive expressions were also delivered through private messages. This constituted verbal harassment, where the use of profanity and demeaning language was employed to spread hateful speech and intensify hostility toward the targeted political group.



Generally, much of the hate speech in the data was directed towards men, while some of the statements also applied to both men and women. The reason for this was the high number of male candidates compared to women for example, 3017 males and 388 females in the FPTP contest. Another reason for more hate speech against men in data could be related to some of the high-profile contests, which were between male candidates. Around six percent of the posts were directed at female candidates.

The monitors reviewed the Facebook pages of 51 women candidates (13.1% of female candidates) to understand the prevalence of gender and identity-based violence against female candidates and the toxicity of speech. Some candidates had very low online activity and a few, mostly positive, comments. However, some others had very high engagement (One candidate's post had over 40K likes and over 1.8K comments, for example), and such posts/ Reels also had many hateful and sexually-charged comments. The remarks ranged from misogyny to dehumanizing (name-calling with reference to animals) comments and vulgarity to extreme vulgarity. Comments on character and appearance were common, and some of these were very insulting. The monitors also found several instances of caste-referenced hate speech, particularly against Dalit candidates. The word cloud below exemplifies the types of hate expressed in the comments sections of a small sample of posts that were reviewed. Seemingly fake accounts made such posts; some accounts repeatedly made similar posts.

A post that used the female identity to mock a male politician who had lost the election.

Examples of posts made in the comments section of a female candidate's Facebook account. The harassment was reported by the media.

DISINFORMATION AND ELECTORAL MANIPULATION

More than half of all content flagged as high-risk by the monitors attempted to spread disinformation or was content intended to manipulate the elections. About half of such content had been generated using AI. The motive of almost 40% of disinformation was either to discredit the elections or the candidate in question, and that of roughly the same proportion of the posts was unclear. Other disinformative posts sought to either suppress voters, discredit the election and the Election Commission, or polarize society.

Almost 54% of the disinformation was spread using AI-altered or generated audio, video, and texts. Most used were AI-altered or generated videos, followed by AI-altered/ manipulated images, and manipulated or AI-generated audio.

The high number of manipulated videos in the sample suggests they were the preferred tool for mocking and ridiculing candidates and spreading false narratives. Such content was also widely shared online. While audio and text-based AI content was less frequent, such content attempted to impersonate the voices of candidates/ party leaders, which was a reason to worry. The AI-fabricated false statements were also of concern.

Disinformation was expressed in various forms. The tactics used to mislead voters, discredit candidates, and undermine public confidence in the electoral process also varied. The examples below illustrate the nature and scope of disinformative posts identified during monitoring.

One post circulating on social media made misleading claims, accusing a high-profile candidate of mobilizing Rs. 120 million to influence the election outcome in a specific constituency, and that seven individuals, including foreign nationals, had been arrested in connection with the scheme. The post also insinuated that the activity was orchestrated under the directive of a senior political figure and called on the government to intervene. The content was assessed as disinformation to discredit the candidate and the party in question. The tactic employed was "misleading connections", wherein unrelated or unverified events are presented together to suggest a coordinated and corrupt electoral conspiracy, without credible evidence to substantiate any of the claims. The adjoining photograph is another example of disinformation that was circulated on election day.

A disinformative video of a training exercise that had circulated on election day.

In another instance, an AI-generated video was identified and flagged as high-risk disinformation. This highly circulated Facebook video had manipulated both the visuals and audio in a manner that made the output appear authentic. The motive behind the content was to discredit the candidate or political party. AI-generated media used to spread false narratives is difficult for ordinary users to identify as fabricated. Such content, therefore, was likely to mislead voters and distort public perception ahead of the elections, particularly when widely shared.

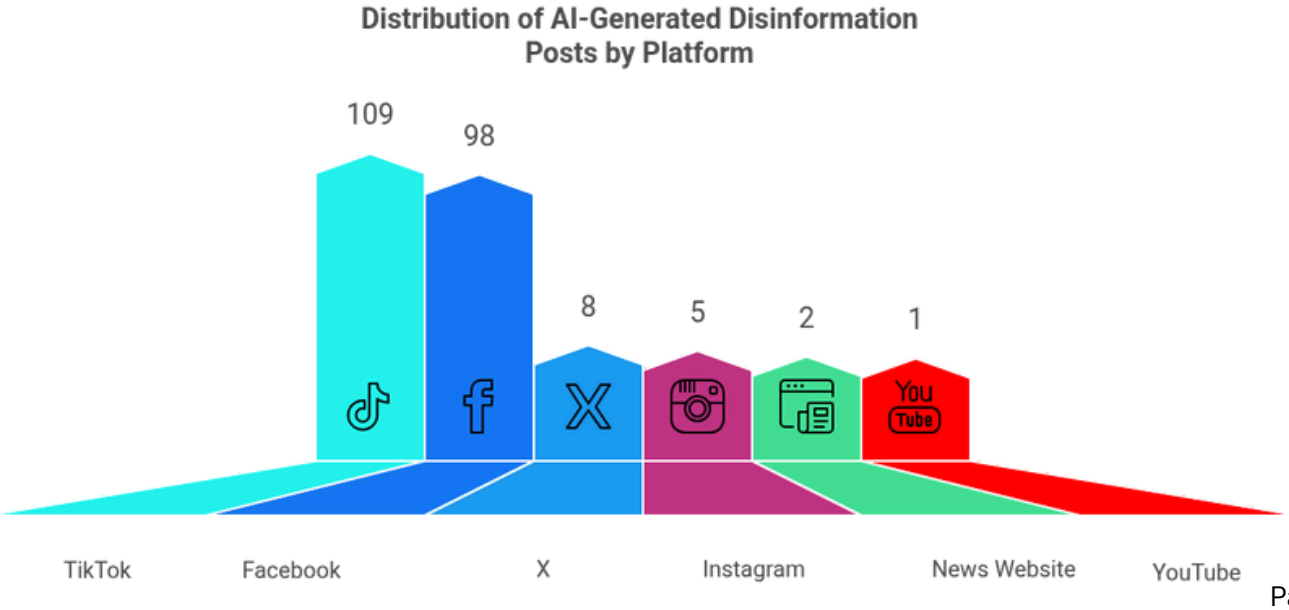
There was another post that had used fabricated narratives to try to polarize society. The post discussed a scenario suggesting that the former king could be installed as President, and had named political figures allegedly orchestrating the arrangement behind the scenes. The content, which referenced electoral processes without directly mentioning the ECN, was disinformation that sought to exploit the political fault lines and sow distrust among the public. The sentiment expressed toward the election was neutral. However, the framing appeared intended to provoke suspicion and deepen societal divisions by invoking contentious questions around the monarchy, governance, and elite political manipulation.

The combination of AI-generated media, misleading narratives, and fabricated content created a complex information environment in which voters were exposed to a sustained stream of false or distorted content. The deliberate targeting of candidates, institutions, and political identities through such tactics posed significant risks to informed participation and public trust in the integrity of the election.

The monitors identified 120 posts that used AI-generated or manipulated content, all of which were intended to disinform voters and influence the electoral environment. Altered or AI-generated videos remained the dominant format, accounting for 86% (103) of the total 120 posts analyzed. AI-altered or generated images accounted for 12% of such posts.

The high prevalence of manipulated videos indicates their effectiveness in disinforming. It was the preferred tool for ridiculing candidates and spreading false narratives. While audio and text-based AI content were less frequent, they were used to impersonate voices and fabricate statements, which can also cause harm.

AI-generated disinformation.



The tactics employed in posts with hate speech (161 posts) included insults (53 posts), intended to ridicule candidates using demeaning language and imagery as tools of online political aggression. Disinformation or humiliation campaigns were the tactic employed by the second-largest proportion of such posts (40), underscoring the deliberate and organized nature of efforts to damage reputations through the coordinated spread of false or degrading content. Verbal harassment was observed in 24 posts, while derogatory language featured in 13. Generally, hostility characterized a significant portion of the flagged content.

More concerning were the 10 posts that contained explicit threats of violence, which represented a direct and tangible risk to the safety of those targeted, and to the broader electoral environment. Posts employing stereotypes numbered five, while misogynistic content appeared in four posts, reflecting the gendered dimension of online violence. Three posts were identified as justifying violence, and two implied threats of legal action against some candidates.

There was one post where the tactic used was sexual harassment, and another one had resorted to slut-shaming. The presence of such tactics in the data is significant because both slut-shaming and sexual harassment represent invasive and gendered forms of online violence.

Analysis of Hate Speech	No. of Posts
Insults	53
Disinformation or humiliation campaigns	40
Verbal harassment	24
Derogatory language	13
Threats of violence	10
Stereotypes	5
Misogyny	4
Justifying violence	3
Legal intimidation	2
Sexual harassment	1
Slut-shaming	1
Other	5
Grand Total	**161**

Taken together, the data present a troubling picture of the tactics used to intimidate, silence, and demean electoral actors during the election. The prevalence of insults and humiliation campaigns alongside more severe tactics such as threats of violence suggests that the online violence observed was more than happenstance, with significant implications for the safety, dignity, and participation of all involved in the electoral process.

In one instance, a post targeting a female candidate used deeply personal and sexually demeaning language to attack her character and private life, framing her personal relationships as disqualifying factors for political participation. The content questioned her morality by invoking derogatory references to her personal life, while simultaneously dismissing her political legitimacy. The post had a pejorative term commonly used to demean women, reinforcing gendered stigma, and undermining her identity as a candidate by focusing on personal conduct rather than her political platform. The nature of the content was explicitly designed to humiliate and delegitimize, exemplifying how slut-shaming operates as a targeted instrument of online violence against women in political life. Such violence has the dual effect of damaging individual reputation and discouraging broader female participation in public life.

TikTok and Facebook were by far the most prominent channels used for spreading election-related disinformation, accounting for 207 of the 223 posts identified as disinformative. The posts with disinformation were identified from 417 that had been flagged as high-risk by the monitors. A high number of posts on TikTok (109) were found to contain disinformation. Disinformation was also found in 98 Facebook posts that were analyzed. Four monitors had identified 417 high-risk social media posts for analysis from their personal social media accounts.

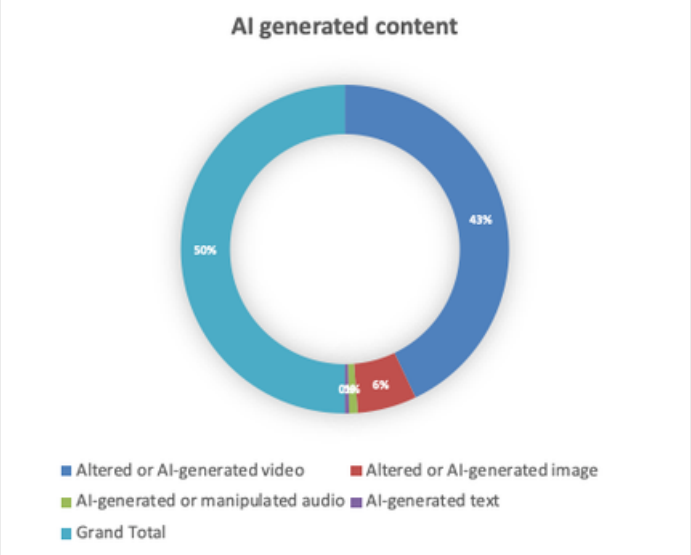
Both Facebook and TikTok are widely used in Nepal, which makes the high amount of disinformation on the platforms a matter of concern. The wide reach and high user engagement observed in the case of some analyzed posts are also suggestive of the potential impact such content can have on both public opinion and voting behavior.

In contrast, X (formerly Twitter) had eight posts with disinformation, and Instagram had five. Two posts on news websites had disinformation, and there was one disinformative post on YouTube. Often, posts on one platform were also promoted using other platforms. This suggests that the volume of such posts online could be higher than indicated by data.

What is noteworthy is the appearance of disinformation also on news websites, as such sites (of media outlets) are associated with greater implicit authority and credibility. In other words, audiences are more likely to believe disinformation appearing on media-run sites as factual reporting.

High disinformation on short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Facebook is consistent with the broader finding that manipulated and AI-generated videos were the most prevalent format for spreading disinformation during the electoral period. Audiences generally prefer audio-visual content, which, combined with algorithmic amplification and sharing, can become viral. This is what makes the high volume of disinformation detected more alarming.

Potential Disinformation Motives	No. of posts
Discredit candidate/party	89
Suppress voters	16
Discredit elections	9
Other	8
Polarize society	5
Discrediting the Election Commisssion	3
Unclear	93
Grand Total	**223**



Disinformation posts	Number of posts
TikTok	109
Facebook	98
X	8
Instagram	5
News Website	2
YouTube	1
Grand Total	**223**

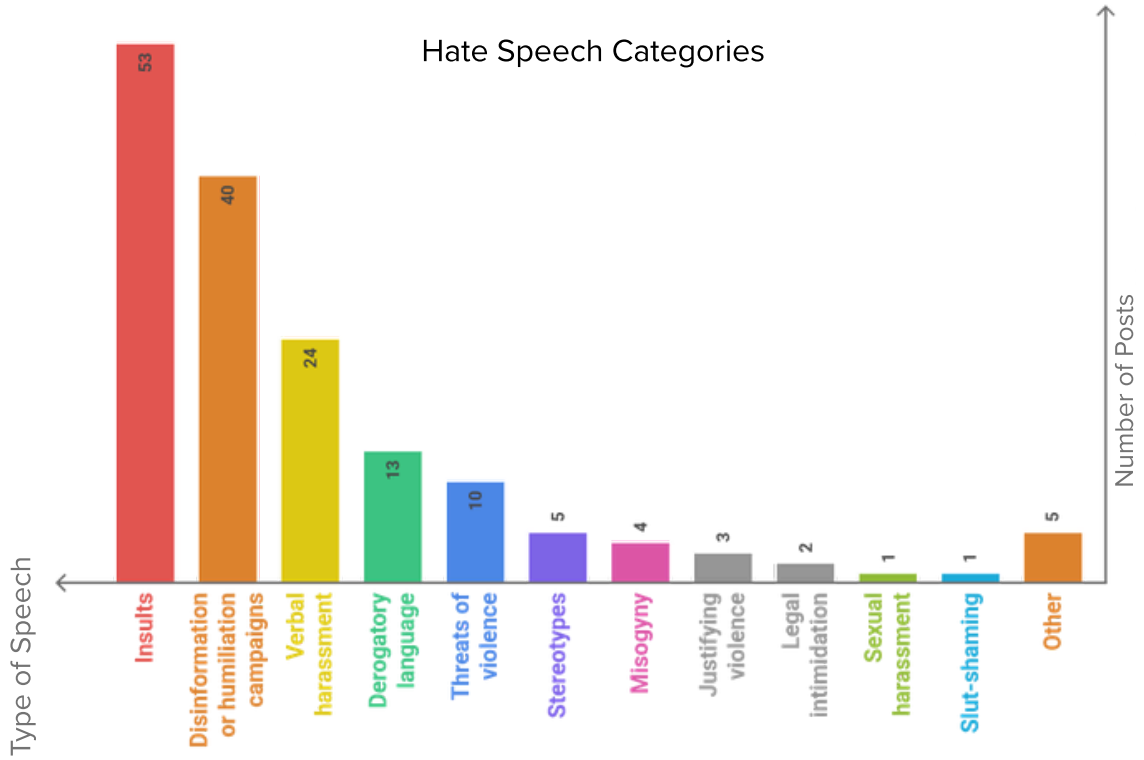
INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

Of the 417 posts, 34 were identified as containing content directly linked to a specific institution. Most of such content appeared on Facebook, accounting for 26 of the 34 posts. The presence of such posts distinguished the platform from TikTok, which had comparatively fewer institution-targeted content.

TikTok, X, and news websites each accounted for a small number of the remaining posts. The targeting of institutions through disinformation carries implications that extend beyond short-term reputational harm. When bodies such as the ECN are targeted in false or misleading narratives, the damage can extend to public trust in the overall electoral process. There were three disinformative posts, where the motive was to discredit the ECN.

The 34 posts referred to specific institutions: most of them (15) referred either to the Government or a specific minister, and 14 were references to the ECN.

In one instance, a post alleged financial misconduct at the ECN in connection with a high-profile candidacy, framing the institution as complicit in corrupt electoral dealings. Another post announced a boycott campaign against the elections, positioning the ECN as a body unworthy of support by participating in the election. Another post made direct allegations of electoral fraud, claiming that ballot boxes were being stored in military and police barracks under government direction, with the explicit suggestion that the state security apparatus was being used to manipulate the election outcome. This post was assessed as an incitement, reflecting its potential to provoke public unrest and deepen mistrust in institutions.



CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Violated Subsectoins	No of Violations
(j) No false, misleading, or hate-based information shall be disseminated or caused to be disseminated through social media.	128
(m) No information or material published or broadcast for any purpose shall be manipulated, altered, or distorted using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or otherwise, and then posted, reposted, shared, commented on, live-streamed, tagged, or mentioned on social media with the intent to influence elections.	95
(l) No person shall, with or without the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), influence elections by spreading disinformation, defamation, false information, hate speech, or misleading comments through social media.	59
(d) Whether using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or otherwise, it shall be prohibited to post, share, cause to be posted/shared, or react to any message, information, or campaign materials in favour of or against any political party or candidate through social media, online platforms, print media, or any other medium.	28
(b) No act shall be carried out in a manner that obstructs election management, voter education programs, or other activities conducted by the Commission, nor shall election-related materials or information be damaged, altered, or manipulated in any way.	10
(n) No undesirable allegations shall be made that adversely affect the credibility of elections or the reputation of the Commission, Commissioners, or employees.	9
(o) No character assassination, personal allegations, defamation, or production, publication, or dissemination of such materials in any form shall be carried out or caused to be carried out.	8
(f) No election campaigning shall be carried out or caused to be carried out in a manner that hurts the sentiments of senior citizens, women, sexual and gender minorities, or persons with disabilities, or that damages character or dignity.	6
(q) No opinions, campaigns, electronic materials, or social media activities such as posting, reposting, sharing, commenting, live-streaming, tagging, or mentioning shall be carried out in a manner that obstructs or adversely affects elections.	5
Others	40
Total	**388**

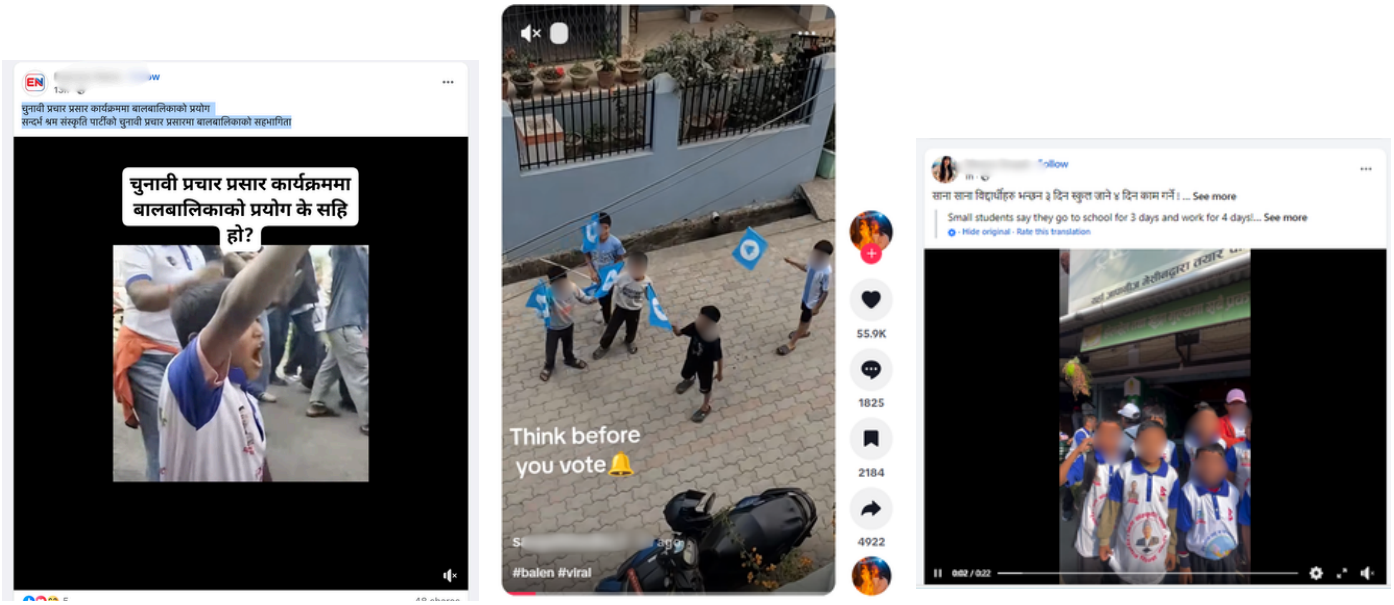
CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

There were 388 violations of the ECoC in social media posts, and most of these came under Section 4: Code of Conduct to be observed by all (Subsections “a” to “u”). The next highest number of violations (33) related to Section 17 – the code to be observed from 48 hours before the election – and 11 violations were related to the use of vehicles (Section 14). The most-violated code (126) under Section 4 was the one relating to the prohibition on disseminating false, misleading, or hate-based information through social media (Subsection “j”).

Together, the violations reflect the scale at which unlawful content was circulated online during the monitoring period. There were 95 violations of the provision prohibiting the manipulation or distortion of content using AI to influence elections (Subsection m). Another 56 posts violated the provision prohibiting the influencing of elections through disinformation, defamation, hate speech, or misleading commentary on social media. The high number of violations in the three categories is indicative of a pattern of conduct that could not have been incidental but deliberate, where the political actors seem to have systematically used digital platforms to try to circumvent legal boundaries.

Among other recorded violations, 28 posts breached the prohibition on posting or sharing partisan campaign materials through any medium, nine made undesirable allegations to cast aspersions on the credibility of the ECN or its personnel, and eight posts constituted character assassination or defamation. Six posts violated the provision designed to protect the dignity of women, senior citizens, sexual and gender minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Provisions relating to the obstruction of election management activities, conduct adversely affecting elections, improper vote-seeking, and actions undermining the fairness and impartiality of the electoral process each recorded between four and five violations. While smaller in number, these breaches are also significant as they reflect attempts to interfere with the administration of the election.



Photos and videos of children waving political party flags and participating in rallies had appeared online despite the ECoC’s prohibition on using children in election campaigning.

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Online discourse during the House of Representatives Election 2082 B.S. (2026) reflected a deeply polarized information environment where civil political debate and engagement coexisted with highly partisan, disinformative, and hateful speech to undermine opponents. The information was spread on various social media platforms, with the intention of influencing electoral outcomes.

In addition to hate speech, monitors also flagged hostile discourse and those with extreme political narratives. There were also indications of patterns, for example, where such speech was associated with unique fake accounts, suggesting organized or deliberate attempts to question the integrity of the electoral process and candidates in the fray.

The ECoC had a blanket prohibition on the use of AI-generated and manipulated content, which, however, was not enough to keep such content out of circulation. Instead, the volume of such content was high and concentrated on certain platforms, primarily TikTok and Facebook, two social media platforms with high reach in Nepal. In 2024, Facebook was used by 75% (N = 2740) and TikTok by 52% (N = 1555) of those surveyed in December 2024. (Sharecast Initiative, 2024). This finding on AI misuse is not influenced by positive ways in which AI was also used (e.g., for voter education), because such content was excluded during data entry.

Identity-based violence, including gender-based attacks and the dehumanization of political actors, added to the hostility of the online environment, with disproportionate consequences for women and marginalized groups. Although the most severe forms of online conduct – including explicit threats of violence, shut shaming, and disinformation targeted against institutions organizing the elections – were recorded in smaller numbers, their presence in the discourse demands continued vigilance to ensure that such content does not overshadow civil democratic debates and contests integral to democratic governance.

Keeping track of online content was a challenge during the 2026 elections. The election support project at UNDP monitored the online information environment to understand trends for providing strategic communication advice to the ECN. The findings suggest that monitoring information integrity during elections in Nepal is likely to become more challenging with increased sophistication in the use of digital tools and synthetic media to mislead voters and discredit candidates and institutions.

The findings, therefore, underscore the need to establish robust media and information monitoring systems to produce evidence for ensuring both user and platform accountability. Evidence-backed enforcement of the ECoC is also important for safeguarding democratic norms. Monitoring is essential for ensuring that misuse of social media does not undermine future elections. While AI-enabled tools can assist in monitoring online content, there will also be a need for human monitors to check, analyze, and interpret data for enhancing communication by the Election Management Body.

References:

Election Commission Nepal. (2026). Press Statement (On the Submission of Results of the House of Representatives Election). 19 March 2026.
Sharecast Initiative. (2024). NMS_Booklet (Nepal Media Survey Booklet). Lalitpur

Annex: Questions used for analyzing social media content

ANNEX 1: eMonitor+ Nepal

Monitoring Questionnaire & Electoral Code of Conduct

This annex presents the standard eMonitor+ Nepal questionnaire used for social media and online content monitoring. In Nepal the Electoral Code of Conduct provisions were also included but are not included below.

PART A: eMonitor+ Nepal Questionnaire

The questionnaire was structured in four thematic sections: (A) Post Information and Content Analysis, (B) Hate Speech and Identity-Based Violence, (C) Disinformation and Electoral Manipulation, and (D) Institutional Trust. Each section contained standardized indicators with predefined response options to enable consistent and comparative monitoring across platforms and time periods. In Nepal, the Election Code of Conduct was added as an indicator.

Post Information & Content Analysis

Indicator	Options
Platform	1. Facebook 2. X (Twitter) 3. Instagram 4. TikTok 5. YouTube 6. News Website 7. Blog 8. WhatsApp 9. Viber 10. LinkedIn
Format	1. Text 2. Image 3. Video 4. Audio 5. Mixed
Engagement Metrics	1. Number of likes 2. Shares 3. Comments 4. Estimated reach / engagement rate (if available)
Type of Author/Source	1. Individual 2. Political party 3. Media outlet 4. CSO 5. Anonymous / Fake profile 6. Other 7. Officer in Executive Branch 8. Officer in Legislative Branch 9. Officer in Judicial Branch 10. EMB or Electoral Authority 11. Media personality 12. Thought Leader (Academia, Private Sector, etc.) 13. UN Agency or international community 14. Security forces (Police, military)
Type of Target	1. Individual 2. Political party 3. Media outlet 4. CSO 5. EMB or Electoral Authority 6. Media personality 7. Thought Leader (Academia, Private Sector, etc.) 8. UN Agency or international community 9. Security forces (Police, military) 10. Other 11. Government 12. Voters
Gender of Target	1. Man 2. Woman 3. Men & Women 4. Cannot be determined
Topic of Content	1. Politics 2. Elections 3. Government 4. Justice/Legal 5. Security 6. Economy 7. Business 8. Religion 9. Culture 10. Education 11. Health 12. Environment 13. Technology 14. Social Issues 15. Refugees/Migration 16. Human Rights 17. Corruption 18. Other
Linked to Event?	Yes / No. If Yes, select: 1. Elections 2. Reforms 3. Crisis 4. Political Cases 5. Other (specify)
Emotions Conveyed	1. Happy 2. Sad 3. Angry 4. Fearful 5. Disgusted 6. Confused 7. Surprised 8. Mockery/Ridicule 9. Sarcastic/Ironic 10. None
Call to Boycott Elections	Yes / No

Hate Speech & Identity-Based Violence (including Gender)

Indicator	Options
Hate Speech / Hostile Discourse	1. Hate Speech 2. Hostile Discourse 3. Political Rhetoric / Extreme Narratives 4. None (If None, skip to next section)
Identity Targeted	1. Political 2. Ethnic 3. Linguistic 4. Pressure Groups 5. Religious 6. Gender (→ triggers Q12) 7. Refugee 8. Disability 9. Socioeconomic 10. LGBTQI+ 11. Migrant 12. Other
Type of Gender-Based Violence / Tactic (if Q11 = Gender)	1. Doxing 2. Sexual harassment 3. Verbal harassment 4. Non-consensual imagery 5. Disinformation or humiliation campaigns 6. Homophobia 7. Misogyny 8. Marginalisation / Shaming 9. Slut-shaming 10. Legal intimidation 11. Insults 12. Threats of violence 13. Stereotypes 14. Derogatory language 15. Justifying violence 16. Other
Words Used (open text)	Free text entry
Region of Account	7 Provinces / Kathmandu Valley / Not Clear
Intensity of Speech	1. Disagreement 2. Negative action 3. Negative characterization 4. Demonizing / Dehumanizing 5. Violence incitement 6. Death threat

Institutional Trust

Indicator	Options
Linked to an Institution?	Yes / No (If No, end section)
Institution Mentioned	1. Elections Commission of Nepal 2. Parliament 3. Government or Specific Minister 4. Courts 5. Local and Provincial authorities 6. Police/Security 7. Army 8. CSO 9. Media outlet 10. UN agency 11. Other
Sentiment towards Institution	Positive / Neutral / Negative
Nature of Discourse	1. Trust-building 2. Constructive criticism 3. Erosion of legitimacy 4. Discrediting 5. Call for civic disengagement 6. Call for anti-democratic mobilisation 7. Critical 8. Incitement 9. Discrediting

Disinformation & Electoral Manipulation

Indicator	Options
Flag as Disinformation?	Yes / No (If No, skip to next section)
Linked to Electoral Process / ECN?	Yes / No. If Yes: 1. ECN 2. Results 3. Candidate 4. Political party 5. Voting process 6. Other 7. Party Registration
Motive Behind Content	1. Discredit elections 2. Discrediting the Election Commission 3. Discredit candidate/party 4. Suppress voters 5. Polarize society 6. Influence policy debates 7. Other
Sentiment towards Electoral Process	Positive / Neutral / Negative
Specific Institution Mentioned?	Yes / No. If Yes: 1. Parliament 2. Prime Minister 3. Government or specific minister 4. Courts 5. Local and provincial authorities 6. Police/Security 7. CSO 8. Media outlet 9. UN agency 10. International Community 11. Other
Tactic of Information Dysfunction	1. Fabricated 2. Manipulated media 3. Misleading connection 4. Imposter content 5. Propaganda 6. Malignant Satire / Parody
AI-Generated or Manipulated Media?	Yes / No / Unclear. If Yes: 1. Altered or AI-generated image 2. Altered or AI-generated video 3. AI-generated or manipulated audio 4. AI-generated text 5. Other
Source of Content	1. Domestic actor 2. Foreign actor 3. Unknown

Photo: UNDP

EMONITOR+

FINAL REPORT

Use of Online Platforms in the Election of the House of Representatives, NEPAL

1 January 2026 - 12 March 2026