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PRESS STATEMENT

International Union of Journalists Expresses Serious Concern over Press Freedom in Nepal

The International Union of Journalists (IUJ) expresses its deep concern over the series of developments affecting press freedom and freedom of expression in Nepal following the formation of the current government led by Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) senior leader Balen Shah after the post-Gen Z uprising elections.

The Union is gravely concerned by actions that appear to undermine freedom of the press, freedom of expression, the rule of law, fundamental civil liberties, and the democratic values that are guaranteed under Nepal's Constitution and recognized by international human rights standards. Any measures taken by the government or by individuals or groups acting in support of the government that restrict independent journalism or intimidate media professionals are inconsistent with the principles of a democratic society.

Reports of unauthorized obstructions placed at the entrances of major media organizations, including Kantipur Media Group, Onlinekhabar, and Himalaya Television, the threats and attempted detention of senior journalist Kishore Shrestha, and policies that effectively deny government advertising to private media outlets are deeply troubling. Such actions create an environment that may discourage independent reporting and weaken media pluralism.

The International Union of Journalists respectfully calls upon the Government of Nepal to uphold the rule of law and fully respect the constitutional guarantees enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal (2015), including freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and the fundamental rights of all citizens. We further urge the current government, which has received an unprecedented mandate from the Nepali people, to reaffirm through both words and actions its commitment to democratic principles, media freedom, and internationally recognized standards on freedom of expression.

The Union is also deeply concerned by the growing climate of self-censorship among journalists and media organizations in Nepal. An environment in which journalists feel compelled to withhold or moderate reporting due to fear of intimidation, retaliation, or other forms of pressure poses a serious threat to democratic governance, transparency, and the public's right to information.

The International Union of Journalists calls upon all concerned authorities and stakeholders to ensure that journalists are able to carry out their professional responsibilities freely, safely, and without fear, in accordance with Nepal's constitutional obligations and its commitments under international human rights law.

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