

# Tracking land conflicts and justice gaps

2025 Nepal Land and Resource Conflict Monitoring Report

Part of Land Watch Asia Initiative on Land Conflict Monitoring



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## Introduction

Land reform has been a persistent demand in Nepal for decades, yet the State's inadequate response has allowed land-related conflicts to proliferate across the country. These conflicts are deeply rooted in historical, social, economic, and political dimensions, making them complex and resistant to resolution. The country's diverse geography and cultural plurality further compound the intricacies of land disputes. Despite constitutional guarantees, such as the Right to Equality (Article 18), Right to Property (Article 25), Rights of Women (Article 38), and Rights of Dalits (Article 40), as well as several progressive legislative and policy measures, implementation remains critically weak. These include the Right to Housing Act, 2018, and Land Act, 1964 (Eighth Amendment), and Land-related Regulations (20th Amendment, 2025) which prescribe that landless Dalits and squatters should be provided with one-time land for housing, agriculture, or both for their families, and the National Land Policy, 2019. Approximately 1.3 million landless and informal settler families remain without secure tenure, while institutional instability with 19 land commissions formed and dissolved since 1990 has undermined sustained resolution efforts. This report, part of ANGOC's regional land conflict monitoring initiative through the Land Watch Asia (LWA) campaign, examines 54 land conflict cases affecting 17,544 households across 5,512.05 hectares in Nepal, documenting patterns, drivers, human rights violations, and community responses to inform policy reform and advocacy.

### *Brief overview of the country context, including drivers of conflict*

Nepal's land conflict landscape is shaped by historical inequities, incomplete reforms, weak institutional implementation, and contemporary development pressures. The transition from feudal land relations to modern tenure systems remains incomplete, leaving millions of households particularly Dalits, indigenous peoples, tenant farmers, and informal settlers without secure land rights. Land deprivation disproportionately affects marginalized communities: among the 1.15 million registered landless and informal settlers (90,983 landless Dalits, 171,073 squatters, and 889,345 informal settlers),<sup>1</sup> less than one percent (8,848 households)<sup>2</sup> have obtained land ownership certificates.

Although bonded labor has been legally abolished in Nepal, its effects remain visible. By Fiscal Year 2018/19,<sup>3</sup> 27,021 of the 32,509 identified *Kamaiya* (categories 'A' and 'B') received rehabilitation packages, while only 25 percent of 9,490 *Kamlhari*<sup>4</sup> obtained identity cards. Among verified Haliya families, 13,955 (85 percent) received identity cards and 12,820 accessed rehabilitation support, and an estimated 69,000 *Harwa-Charwa* in Madhesh Province remain vulnerable.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, around 470,000

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<sup>1</sup> Progress details from 16 September 2025, based on the entry of LIRC into the NALCIS system.

<sup>2</sup> <https://lirc.gov.np/pages/purja/> (Accessed on 28 December 2025.)

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation. 2019. Annual Progress Report (Freed *Kamaiya* Rehabilitation and Livelihood Development Program). Government of Nepal, Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation.

<sup>4</sup> The *Kamlari* (or *Kamlahari/Kamlhari*) system was a form of bonded labor practice in Western Nepal that forced young girls, mostly from the Tharu community, to work as domestic servants in wealthier households. ([https://nepalyouthfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/NYF-FactSheet-History\\_of\\_Kamlari-May2014.pdf](https://nepalyouthfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/NYF-FactSheet-History_of_Kamlari-May2014.pdf))

<sup>5</sup> Based on the 'Status Report of Freed *Kamaiya*, *Kamlahari*, *Haliya* and *Harwa-Charwa*, 2021, Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (Nepal).

certified *Mohi* (tenant) farmers still lack clear evidence of securing the 50 percent land ownership guaranteed under the Land Act 1964, due to landlord resistance, weak implementation,<sup>6</sup> and unresolved *Guthi* and *Birta* land issues. As many of these groups remain without secure land tenure, they are effectively part of Nepal's broader population of landless and informal settlers.

Land reform implementation remains weak, with dual ownership, absentee landlordism, and fraudulent registration persisting despite legal provisions. Conservation-settlement conflicts in the Chure region (12.8 percent of national territory), forests, and buffer zones leave community tenure insecure, while climate change intensifies resource pressures through changing weather patterns and environmental degradation. As documented in this study, government programs particularly large-scale infrastructure projects emerge as the dominant driver of conflicts, while government entities serve as the primary adversarial claimants and perpetrators of human rights violations (HRVs). These interconnected factors: incomplete reform, systemic exclusion, sensitive zone conflicts, and environmental pressures — create a complex landscape where land conflicts continue to proliferate, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable communities.

### *Rationale and objectives of the study*

The absence of systematic, rights-based conflict monitoring in the country has hindered evidence-based policy formulation and accountability. This study addresses this gap by documenting Nepal's land conflicts to inform national policy reform and contribute to Asian regional comparative learning on land governance undertaken by ANGOC and Land Watch Asia (LWA). The main objective of this initiative is to systematically monitor and document new and ongoing land and resource conflicts across Nepal for 2025, to contribute to evidence-based policy reform, institutional accountability, and civil society advocacy.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- analyze primary causes of land conflicts and identify adversarial claimants to understand the power dynamics underlying land dispossession,
- document incidents of human rights violations associated with land conflicts, identify perpetrators, victims, & access to existing resolution mechanisms; and,
- generate actionable recommendations for strengthening community access to justice and institutional accountability.

### *Concepts and definitions used in the study*

The following are the key concepts and definitions in the context of Nepal that guided this study:

- *Land Conflict*: A dispute arising from competing claims over land ownership, use, access, or control involving two or more parties, including individuals, communities, government agencies, or private entities.

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<sup>6</sup> Shrestha, B. & Deuja, J. 2021. Tenants and Tenancy: State and Assessment. A Research Report. Kathmandu, Nepal: College of Development Studies (CDS), Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC) & NES-Nepal

- *Landless*: Households or individuals who do not own any land and are entirely dependent on others for housing and/or agricultural livelihoods.
- *Landless Dalits*: Landless squatters belonging to castes that have been officially listed as Dalits by the National Dalit Commission of Nepal.
- *Landless Squatters (Sukumbasi)*: Individuals or families mentioned in the explanation clause of Section 52(b) of the Act, who does not own any land within the State of Nepal in their own name or in the name of their family, and who is unable to arrange land through their own or their family's income, resources, or other efforts. The term also includes family members who are dependent on such a person.
- *Informal Settlers*: Individuals or families mentioned in the explanation clause of Section 52(c) of the Act, who has been classified pursuant to Sub-section (3) of Section 52(c), and who has long been cultivating and residing by constructing a house or hut on government land, unregistered (*Ailani*) land, barren land, or land recorded as forest in government records. The term also includes family members who are dependent on such a person.
- *Tenant Farmer (Mohi)*: A farmer who cultivates land owned by another farmer (landlord) under certain conditions using their own or their family's labor, and who is traditionally entitled to a share of the produce and, under land reform laws, to a portion of the land they cultivate.
- *Bonded Labor (Kamaiya-Kamlari, Haliya, Haruwa-Charuwa)*: Historically exploitative labor arrangements in which individuals or families were bound to landlords through debt or customary obligations. These systems have been legally abolished but continue to have residual social and economic effects.
- *Guthi*: A trust or endowment of land or other property set aside by a donor for religious or charitable purposes, including the construction, operation, or maintenance of temples, monasteries, public facilities, or similar institutions.

## Methodology and data sources

This study covers land conflict cases documented from 01 January 2025 to 31 December 2025, examining 54 conflict cases affecting 17,544 households across 5,512.05 hectares in all seven provinces of Nepal.

Employing a mixed-method approach, the study combined desk review with selective field verification — including direct field visits, on-site observations, and face-to-face interviews where feasible. The 2023 Nepal database served as the foundation for case identification and was updated through follow-up contacts with community members, CSOs/NGOs, and leaders from the National Land Rights Forum (NLRF), District Land Rights Forum (DLRF) & Village Land Rights Forum (VLRG), who possessed case-specific knowledge. Additionally, media reports from 2025 were cross verified by reaching out to the individuals and organizations cited therein. A validation workshop on findings and recommendations was held in February 2026 with the participation of 16 representatives from People's Organizations (National Land Rights Forum/NLRF), NGOs, Amnesty International Nepal, National Land Coalition (NLC), Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and a former government employee/land expert.

Information was systematically gathered from 82 distinct sources across four categories: a) mainstream media (print, online, and radio) constituted the largest share at 46.34 percent; b) followed by community

and community-based organizations at 40.24 percent; c) CSOs/NGOs at 9.76 percent; and, d) professional organizations/academe at 3.66 percent (Table 1). This source distribution reflects the study's approach of triangulating grassroots community knowledge with media documentation and civil society records — combining primary observations, stakeholder consultations, and secondary source verification to ensure accuracy, comprehensiveness, and reliability across all documented cases.

**Table 1: Sources of information for the cases**

Source	Number	Percentage (%)
Mainstream media (print, online, radio)	38	46.34
Community, community-based organization	33	40.24
CSO/NGO	8	9.76
Professional organizations, academe	3	3.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### *Scope and limitations of the study*

Despite the planned methodology, practical constraints shaped the actual scope of data collection. Of the 54 cases examined, only 10 involved direct field verification through on-site visits and first-hand interviews, while the remaining 44 relied on secondary sources and remote follow-up. The study covered only 24 districts, largely concentrated in the lowland (Terai and inner Terai) regions where land conflicts are prevalent. Study districts were selected randomly, and most cases represented updates from the 2023 database rather than entirely new documentation. As a result, the findings may not fully represent land-related issues across the country, particularly in the mid-hill and high Himalayan regions.

Furthermore, 18 cases from the 2023 database could not be updated due to unavailability of original informants or lack of new information. The absence of pre-prepared case summaries complicated follow-up efforts. Consequently, the study's findings were shaped significantly by the accessibility and quality of secondary sources rather than uniform primary data collection, potentially affecting the depth, geographic balance, and overall reliability of information across different cases.

## Key findings

### *Affected population and areas*

This section examines the scale, geographic distribution, duration, and types of land and resources affected by conflicts documented in 2025.

**Overview of conflict scale:** The study documented 54 ongoing conflict cases affecting 17,544 households across 5,512.05 hectares (Table 2), averaging approximately 325 households and 102 hectares per case, indicating large-scale disputes impacting substantial populations rather than isolated individual grievances.

**Table 2a. Total number of cases, area contested, and households affected by land and resource conflicts, 2025**

Ongoing cases	Number
Total number of cases	54
Total number of hectares contested	5,512.05
Total number of households affected	17,544

**Geographic distribution:** The documented cases concentrated in the Terai and mid-western regions (Table 2b). Madhesh Province had the largest contested area (2,825.31 hectares), followed by Lumbini (1,480.61 hectares). In terms of number of cases, Lumbini had the highest nationally with 15 cases. Together, these two provinces account for over 78 percent of total contested land, reflecting intense pressures in fertile plains and development corridors. Karnali has the fewest with two cases (22.87 hectares) and smallest area affected (22.87 hectares), while other provinces show moderate levels.

**Table 2b. Number of cases and total area contested (in ha) by province**

Region	Number of cases	Area Contested (ha)
Madhesh	14	2,825.31
Lumbini	15	1,480.61
Sudurpaschim	10	559.44
Bagmati	5	270.01
Koshi	3	223.70
Gandaki	5	130.11
Karnali	2	22.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5,512.05</b>

### Box 1: Twenty-four years of displacement: still awaiting promised land

**Location:** Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur District,  
Sudurpaschim Province

**Affected Households:** 2,473 verified families

**Promised Land:** 0.33 hectare per household  
(total 805 hectares)

**Duration:** 24 years (2001 to 2025)

**Driver:** Conservation/Protected Areas



In 2001/2002, over 4,000 households were displaced for Shuklaphanta National Park buffer zone expansion without proper resettlement or compensation. Verification later confirmed 2,473 families, each promised 0.33 of a hectare (10 *kattha*) of land. Despite 34 government commissions formed over the last 24 years, bureaucratic delays and political indifference have left families landless. Formal protests resumed in April 2025 with a delegation to the Ministry of Land and Forests, followed by a 19-day hunger strike where officials promised action. When implementation stalled, a 12-day hunger strike began in August 2025 at Mahendranagar, and although a resolution report was approved by Parliament's lower house, no land has been allocated.

Since September 2025, sit-ins at Salghari involving all 2,473 households have continued, alongside relay hunger strikes across six locations: Bedkot-Daiji, Laljhadi-Dhakka, Chandeu, Bhetghat camp, Shuklaphanta Banra, and Krishnapur. According to Struggle Committee Chair Jaybahadur Rokaya and affected members Chetraj Paneru and Nirmla Bhatta, the government labels genuine victims as “encroachers” and attempts to suppress protests. Families who lost approximately one to 4.7 hectares during displacement demand for their promised 1/3 hectare of land, a fraction of their original holdings. They remain landless after 24 years and 34 failed commissions, exemplifying the persistent neglect of conservation-induced displacement victims in Nepal.



**Duration of conflicts:** Conflicts show temporal polarization (Table 3). The majority (20 cases) have persisted for two to five years, while 17 cases have endured for 20 years or more, indicating deeply entrenched, long-standing conflicts. Additionally, seven cases have lasted 10 to 15 years, and three cases emerged within the last two years, likely linked to recent infrastructure projects or policy changes.

**Table 3. Duration of land and resource conflicts by number of years**

Number of years	Number
Less than 2 years	3
2 to less than 5 years	20
5 to less than 10 years	4
10 to less than 15 years	7
15 to less than 20 years	3
20 years or more	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

**Types of land and resources affected:** Smallholder agriculture dominates in terms of affected area (Table 4a): 3,432.18 hectares or 62.27 percent of the total affected area (involving 18 cases). On the other hand, housing and settlements lead by case count with 24 cases (44.44 percent) but cover only 12.41 of the area with 684.07 hectares composed of numerous smaller conflicts. Indigenous customary lands (five cases) involve 1,206.17 hectares (21.88 percent of the total area affected) with larger territories per case.

**Table 4a. Types of land and resource affected by conflicts.**

Type of Land/resource	Number of cases	Percent of cases (%)	Contested area (ha)	Percent of contested area (%)
Smallholder agriculture/farming	18	33.33	3,432.18	62.27
Indigenous people/customary land/ancestral domain	5	9.26	1,206.17	21.88
Housing and settlements	24	44.44	684.07	12.41
Common lands/public lands managed by the community	3	5.56	103.49	1.88
Smallholder agroforestry, people's plantation, or community forest/social forest	3	5.56	86.03	1.55
Water/fisheries resources	1	1.85	0.11	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>5,512.05</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Conflicts involving land and water:** Table 4b reveals that land-based conflicts overwhelmingly dominate the data gathered in 2025 with 53 cases affecting 5,511.94 hectares versus conflict over water resource (one case involving 0.11 of a hectare).

Table 4b. Conflicts involving land and waters, by number of cases and total area contested (in ha)

Resource	Number of cases	Total area contested (ha)
Land/land resources	53	5,511.94
Water/fisheries resources	1	0.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5,512.05</b>

**Primary communities affected:** Farmers and peasants are most affected (Table 5): 23 cases (42.59 percent), followed by informal settlers (16 cases, 29.63 percent). Together, farmers and informal settlers account for over 72 percent of conflicts. Tenured residents (seven cases, 12.96 percent), discriminated sectors (six cases, 11.12 percent), and indigenous peoples (two cases, 3.70 percent) constitute the remainder, confirming that land disputes disproportionately impact communities with precarious or no tenure security.

Table 5. Primary sector or community affected by conflict, by number and percent of cases

Primary sector or community affected by conflict	Number of cases	Percent cases (%)
Farmers: peasants (landless smallholder farmers, sharecroppers, agricultural workers, tenants, lessees, small owners)	23	42.59
Informal settlers	16	29.63
Tenured residents	7	12.96
Discriminated sectors (caste, religion, ethnicity)	6	11.11
Indigenous peoples (IPs)	2	3.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Box 2: Religious event used to oust Dom family

**Location:** Aurahi Rural Municipality-5, Siraha District, Madhesh Province

**Affected Household:** Anita Devi Marik and 8-member Dom (Dalit) family

**Incident Dates:** Evictions on 22 February 2025 and 20 March 2025;  
Demolition on 6 April 2025

**Perpetrators:** Rural Municipality Chair Shivji Yadav, Priest Bajrangji Baba

**Driver:** Caste-based discrimination; Abuse of authority under religious pretext



© Shambhu Yadav, Annapurna Post

Anita Devi Marik and her eight-member Dom (Dalit) family were forcibly evicted twice on 22 February and 20 March 2025 from their home in Aurahi Rural Municipality-5, Siraha, under the pretext of organizing a Vishnu Mahayagya religious event. On 06 April 2025, their house, built on government-supported land, was demolished using a JCB on orders from Rural Municipality Chair Shivji Yadav and priest Bajrangji Baba, leaving the family homeless.

Despite official pledges of a small piece of land and NPR 15 lakh for constructing a new house, the family remains in a temporary shelter without water or electricity. Chair Shivji Yadav and a former ward chairperson were briefly arrested, while Bajrangji Baba remains at large. This case exemplifies how caste-based discrimination and abuse of local government authority under religious pretexts perpetuate forced evictions of Dalit families, denying them secure tenure despite State recognition.

## Adversarial claimants and drivers of land conflict

This section identifies the adversarial claimants opposing affected communities and analyzes the primary drivers of land conflicts.

**Adversarial claimants:** Government entities collectively are the primary adversaries in 32 cases (59.26 percent) (Table 6): distributed as government agencies (16 cases), local government (seven cases), both national, local governments (six cases) and State security agents (three cases). Powerful individuals (i.e., politicians, businessmen, landlords, officials) constitute the second largest category at 13 cases (24.07 percent). Community-versus-community conflicts account for three cases (5.56 percent), while private companies represent only one case (1.85 percent). This confirms that marginalized communities predominantly confront State actors and influential elites rather than private corporations. Lastly, five cases involve combinations of several adversarial claimants.

**Table 6. Adversarial claimants in land conflict, by number and percent of cases**

Adversarial claimants	Number of cases	Percent cases (%)
Government	32	59.26
• Government agencies	16	29.63
• Local Government	7	12.96
• Both National and Local Governments	6	11.11
• State Security Agents (military, police, armed forces)	3	5.56
Powerful individuals (e.g., politicians, businessmen, landlords, officials/ex-officials, ex-military)	13	24.07
Community vs. community (residents, settlers, migrants, refugees)	3	5.56
Private companies	1	1.85
Others (specify in next column)	5	9.26
• Division Forest Office (DFO) and Community Forest User Group Committee (CFUGC)	2	3.70
• Local Government (LG) and powerful individual	2	3.70
• CFUGC, DFO, LG, Ward and LIRC.	1	1.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Box 3: Land allocations favor elites over 286 families

**Location:** Pokhara Metropolitan City, Ward 9 (Buspark area), Gandaki Province

**Affected Households:** 286 squatter and informal settler families (31 in Shivtol West, 194 in Krishnatol, 61 in Ganatantrik Tol)

**Contested Land:** Government land registered under municipal development

**Duration:** Over 40 years

**Driver:** Illegal land allocation to elites; Forced eviction threats



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In 1926, Pokhara Metropolitan City acquired 10.43 hectares of land (including plot no. 172) for municipal development. When the airport area bus park was relocated in 1983, the municipality sold plots to 76 individuals including 13 hotel businessmen at NPR 250,000 to 300,000 per household, providing them with white form (*seto purja*). However, influential officials and their relatives were prioritized, excluding actual squatter families who had been living there. Protests erupted, and eviction notices were posted around 1969. Similar illegal subdivisions have occurred in other wards (10, 11) of Pokhara Metropolitan City, creating a pattern of elite land capture while genuine squatters faced displacement.

The 286 affected families have endured repeated bulldozer attempts, intimidation, threats, and eviction notices for over four decades, causing severe psychological trauma and loss of life. Around 2003, youth Yam Bahadur Darji became semi-mentally ill due to eviction trauma; Dilmaya Ale Magar died from mental shock; and, Gobind Thapa committed suicide inside his home. In Krishnatol, Gita Devi Darji's husband committed suicide from depression after eviction rumors, leaving her with their nine-day-old infant. Her mother-in-law also suffered mental breakdown. Children refused to reveal their home addresses fearing stigma of being called squatter "*Sukumbasi*" and families face humiliation during marriages and social ceremonies.



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Despite petitions to local authorities and the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), no resolution has been achieved. Only 10 percent of youth have accessed medium-to-higher education, 30 percent work abroad, and most rely on daily wage labor, small shops, and vegetable trade. The 286 households demand recognition of land rights, cancellation of illegal allocations to elites, and protection from forced eviction holding essential documentation proving long-standing residence while living in perpetual fear and uncertainty.

**Conflict drivers by cases and area affected:** Government programs are the dominant driver (Table 7), accounting for 18 cases and 3,569.29 hectares (64.8 percent of contested land). Public infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, airports) alone comprise 10 cases and 3,351.19 hectares — over 93 percent of government land-related programs. Other government initiatives include public utilities (two cases, 26.82 hectares), special economic zones (one case, 120.34 hectares), social housing (two cases, 50.76 hectares), and other projects (three cases, 20.18 hectares).

Conservation and protected areas constitute the second largest driver at 11 cases and 681.10 hectares. Private-led business enterprises (seven cases, 97.90 hectares), primarily property/real estate development (six cases, 90.65 hectares), landlord-tenant/agrarian conflicts (six cases, 16.63 hectares), and conflicting claims over overlapping tenure (four cases, 293.61 hectares) represent smaller shares. This confirms that large-scale infrastructure expansion is the primary structural driver of land conflict in Nepal.

**Table 7. Drivers of land and resource conflict, by number of cases and contested area (in ha)**

Drivers of land and resource conflict	Number of cases	Contested area (ha)
<b>Government programs</b>	18	3,569.29
• Public infrastructure (including roads, bridges, airports, ports)	10	3,351.19
• Public utilities (dams, power lines, power/energy, irrigation, etc.)	2	26.82
• Social housing, urban development	2	50.76
• Special economic zones	1	120.34
• Other Government projects/programs	3	20.18
<b>Conservation/Protected Areas and “No Go” Zones</b>	11	681.10
<b>Private-led business enterprises</b>	7	97.90
• Property/housing/real estate development	6	90.65
• Industry/manufacturing/production	1	7.25
<b>Landlord-tenant conflict/agrarian conflict</b>	6	16.63
<b>Conflicting claims between communities/sectors over land and resource</b>	4	293.61
• Overlapping tenure and use	4	293.61
<b>Government-led business/State enterprises</b>	2	83.18
<b>Others</b>	6	770.34
• Guthi Land (Religious Land)	2	761.87
• Dalit settlement blocked by Ward Chair and dominant castes	1	0.07
• Kewat families evicted by CFUGC and Forest Office	1	5
• Landless neglected by biased local government officials	1	0.9
• Land allocations manipulated by Ward Chair and DLRF members	1	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5,512.05</b>

**Box 4: Families mapped into community forest without consent**

**Location:** Amar Community Forest area, Nawalpur District, Gandaki Province

**Affected Households:** Sukumbasi families settled since 1989

**Contested Land:** Settlement area improperly included in Community Forest mapping

**Duration:** 36 years (1989 to 2025)

**Driver:** Conservation/Community Forest and conflicting land tenure policies

Families have lived in the area since 1989, paying Bal-Bitauri tax before the Amar Community Forest handover in 1995. However, during surveying and mapping for the Community Forest, their settlement was included within the forest boundary without their knowledge or consent. The issue only surfaced during the 16th General Assembly of Amar Community Forest User Group (CFUG) in 2014, revealing that their homes had been designated as forest land for nearly two decades. Affected families submitted petitions to the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and Ministry of Land Reform in 2015, leading to a verbal agreement on map revision in 2017 by the District Forest Office. In 2020, families received Temporary Nissa (occupancy rights), but without specifying land area, plot numbers, or legal boundaries-rendering the documents ineffective for securing tenure.

After a failed negotiation on 20 October 2025 where the Amar CFUG proposed resolving the issue through a General Assembly without written commitments, the struggle committee closed four CFUG offices (Dhuseri, Chautari, Amar, and Bartari) on 07 November 2025, demanding map adjustments and land allocation for landless families. A meeting with all stakeholders on 06 December 2025 decided to relocate the Sukumbasi settlement outside the forest, and a Ministry task force formed on 05 January 2026 led to the reopening of CF offices after 51 days. However, affected families now face a lengthy bureaucratic process with the Forest Department to formalize relocation and land rights — returning them to the same cycle of administrative delays and tenure insecurity that has persisted for 36 years, despite consistent tax payment and long-standing residence. This case illustrates how communities settled before Community Forest establishment face displacement when improperly mapped into forest areas without their participation or consent.



## *Incidents of human rights violations and reported perpetrators*

This section documents human rights violations (HRVs) associated with land conflicts, examining their forms, victims, and reported perpetrators.

**Overview of HRVs:** A total of 37 incidents of HRVs were documented (Table 8): six incidents against individuals (affecting 10 persons) and 31 incidents against communities (affecting 6,038 households). Data revealed that land conflicts in Nepal primarily manifest as collective dispossession rather than isolated individual harm.

**Table 8. Human Rights Violations (HRVs)**

Incidents of HRVs	Number Incidents	Number of Victims
Against individuals	6	10 Individuals
Against communities	31	6,038 households
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	

**Forms of HRVs against individuals:** Among the 10 individual victims (seven male and three female) recorded (Table 9), detention/legal arrest or illegal detention and criminalization was the most reported HRV (two incidents, six male victims), followed by eviction, displacement, and work termination (two incidents with two female victims), torture (one incident with one female victim), and physical threat/intimidation (one incident with one male victim). Notably, detention-related cases involved multiple male victims, while eviction and torture exclusively affected female victims.

**Table 9. Forms of HRVs committed against individuals, by number of incidents and number of victims**

Type of HRVs	Number of incidents	Number of individual victims		
		Male	Female	Total
Detainment/legal arrest or illegal detention; and "criminalization"	2	6	0	6
Eviction, displacement, work termination	2	0	2	2
Torture	1	0	1	1
Physical threat and other forms of intimidation	1	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

*Note: The recorded type of HRV reflects the most recent violation inflicted on the victim.*

### Box 5: Dalit families attacked by dominant caste group

**Location:** Arang Pond embankment, Kalyanpur Municipality-8, Siraha District, Madhesh Province

**Affected Households:** 8 Paswan Dalit families

**Incident Date:** 03 October 2025

**Perpetrators:** Prabhash Singh Rajput and associates; Ward Chairperson Ramkishor Yadav

**Driver:** Caste-based violence and collusion between dominant caste and local authority

For nearly 60 years, the Paswan Dalit community lived on the Arang Pond embankment in Kalyanpur Municipality-8, Siraha, as landless squatters on public land. On 17 September 2025, a minor dispute at the Vishwakarma Fair escalated when dominant caste leader Prabhash Singh Rajput threatened to evict the entire settlement. Despite the community filing a peace complaint on 19 September 2025 and a scheduled mediation on 28 September 2025, the police failed to prevent violence, collapsing the scheduled meeting. On 03 October 2025, around 20 to 25 men led by Prabhash Singh demolished eight Dalit houses, looted belongings including gold, silver, cash, furniture, & grains, destroyed water pumps & fruit trees, and displaced all families — while police remained largely inactive.



A criminal complaint filed on 8 October 2025 accused 13 individuals, including Ward Chairperson Ramkishor Yadav, who allegedly incited the attack and issued a land vacation recommendation despite 60 years of Dalit settlement. Police arrested Ward Chair Yadav and two others, while Prabhash Singh has remained at large. District officials and Acting Mayor Rekha Kumari Yadav visited on 04 to 06 October 2025 providing temporary relief, but families remained displaced without adequate shelter, food, or rehabilitation.

This case illustrates how caste-based violence, police inaction, and collusion between dominant groups and local authorities perpetuate landlessness and violent eviction of Dalit communities on public land.

**Reported perpetrators of HRVs against individuals:** Among the six reported incidents of HRVs against individuals (Table 10), dominant perpetrators are local government accounting for two incidents (33 percent) and powerful individuals and authorities (politicians, ex-bureaucrats, ex-military, landlords) also with two incidents (33 percent).

**Table 10. Reported perpetrators of HRVs against individuals, by number of incidents and percentage**

Reported perpetrators of HRVs against individuals	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents (%)
Government	3	50
• Government agencies	1	17
• Local Government	2	33
Powerful individuals, authorities (e.g., politicians, ex-bureaucrats, ex-military, landlords, etc.)	2	33
Others	1	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

**Communities affected by HRVs:** Informal settlers and slum dwellers face the highest vulnerability (Table 11): 16 incidents affecting 4,268 households (70.3 percent of all affected households). Farmers and peasants experienced 10 incidents affecting 1,554 households (25.7 percent), while tenured residents faced five incidents affecting 216 households (3.6 percent). This concentration reflects informal settlers' lack of legal tenure and heightened exposure to displacement.

**Table 11. Communities affected by HRVs, by number of incidents and number of affected households.**

Communities affected by HRVs	Number of incidents	Number of affected households
Informal settlers/slum dwellers	16	4,268
Farmers: peasants (landless smallholder farmers, sharecroppers, agricultural workers, tenants, lessees, small owners)	10	1,554
Tenured residents	5	216
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6,038</b>

**Forms of HRVs against communities:** Eviction and displacement were the most frequent violation (Table 12) at 10 incidents affecting 961 households, followed by physical threats and intimidation (eight incidents, 1,262 households). However, destruction of habitats and pollution affected the most households — 3,447 across six incidents highlighting environmental degradation as a major violation of rights. Other violations included destruction of crops, homes, and property (three incidents, 56 households), forcible entry without FPIC (one incident, 150 households), and others (three incidents, 162 households).

**Table 12. Types of HRVs committed against communities, by number of incidents and number of affected households**

Type of HRVs committed against communities	No. of incidents	No. of affected households
Eviction, displacement	10	961
Physical threat and other forms of intimidation	8	1,262
Destruction of habitats, pollution	6	3,447
Destruction of crops, homes, property	3	56
Forcible entry/encroachment, entry without free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)	1	150
Others	3	162
Authorities failed to correct arbitrary mapping	1	76
Eviction attempted against affected families	1	10
Procedural manipulation and exclusion by authorities	1	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6,038</b>

**Perpetrators of HRVs against communities:** Among the 31 reported incidents of HRVs against communities (Table 13), government entities were the dominant reported perpetrators, accounting for 19 incidents (61.29 percent). Within this, government agencies (DFO, Guthi, Hospital irrigation, National Park, and Land Ministry) were responsible for nine incidents (29.03 percent), local government for eight incidents (25.81 percent), and both national and local governments for two incidents (6.45 percent). Powerful individuals and authorities (politicians, ex-bureaucrats, ex-military, landlords) accounted for seven incidents (22.58 percent), while armed agents of the State and others (multi-actor violations involving DFO, CFUGC, and local government) represented one incident (3.23 percent) and four incidents (12.90 percent) respectively. Notably, 84 percent of violations involved State actors, highlighting systemic State responsibility across multiple governance levels for community-level human rights violations.

**Table 13. Reported perpetrators of HRVs committed against communities, by number of incidents and percentage**

Perpetrators of HRVs against communities	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents (%)
Government	19	61.29
• Government agencies (DFO, Guthi, Hospital irrigation, National Park, and Land Ministry)	9	29.03
• Local Government	8	25.81
• Both National and Local Governments	2	6.45
Powerful individuals, authorities (e.g., politicians, ex-bureaucrats, ex-military, landlords, etc.)	7	22.58
Armed agents of the State (police, army, or military)	1	3.23
Others	4	12.90
• Directly by DFO, indirectly CFUGC	2	6.45
• CFUGC, Ward, LG, DFO, and District LIRC	1	3.23
• CFUGC, Ward, LG, and DFO	1	3.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

### Responses of affected communities

This section examines how communities respond to land conflicts and the corrective actions taken to address disputes.

**Community responses to land conflict:** Affected communities overwhelmingly pursue conflict resolution mechanisms (Table 14), representing 53 of 55 responses (96 percent). Government administrative mechanisms are most utilized (36 responses, 65 percent), followed by local or direct negotiations (15 responses, 27 percent) and courts/quasi-judicial bodies (two responses, four percent). The minimal use of courts reflects barriers such as cost, complexity, and legal process duration for marginalized communities. Peaceful demonstrations account for only two responses (four percent), indicating communities predominantly seek formal institutional pathways rather than public protest.

Table 14. Responses by communities to address land conflict.

Responses by communities to address land conflicts	Number of responses
Seek conflict resolution	53
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>through government administrative mechanism</li> </ul>	36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>through local or direct negotiations</li> </ul>	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>through courts and/or quasi-judicial bodies</li> </ul>	2
Peaceful demonstrations/non-violent acts	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

*Note: Communities may take one or more approaches in response to conflict, resulting in the total number of responses exceeding the number of cases. The chosen responses reflect the mechanisms or platforms that are more accessible to the communities.*

**Corrective actions taken:** Corrective actions have been taken in 31 cases (57.4 percent), while 22 cases (40.7 percent) have not received action to address the conflict (Table 15). Among cases with corrective actions taken, interventions are mostly undertaken by third-party (18 cases), followed by government action (10 cases) and agreement with adversarial parties (three cases). The high reliance on third-party mediation and low resolution through direct agreement with adversaries indicates that marginalized communities rarely achieve resolution without external support. Notably, two-fifths of all cases remain without corrective action, highlighting significant gaps in conflict resolution mechanisms.

Table 15. Corrective actions to address the conflict

Were there any corrective actions taken?	Number	Percent of Responses (%)
Yes	31	57.41
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by third party</li> </ul>	18	33.33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by the Government/State</li> </ul>	10	18.52
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by agreement with the adversarial party</li> </ul>	3	5.56
No/Not yet	22	40.74
No information available	1	1.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Box 6: Kewat families threatened after 46 years of protecting the forest

**Location:** Barderiya, Sonpur, Buddabhumī Municipality-2, Kapilbastu District, Lumbini Province

**Affected Households:** 14 Kewat families (originally five families settled by Forest Office in 1979)

**Contested Land:** Approximately 4.62 hectares (0.33 ha × 14 households)

**Duration:** 46 years (1979 to 2025)

**Driver:** Conservation/Community Forest and conflicting land tenure policies



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In 1979, the then Forest Office settled five Kewat households to protect and manage an agroforestry plantation site. By 1993, these families were paying Bal-Bitauri tax to the government, indicating official recognition of their settlement status. The community expanded to 14 households, each cultivating approximately 0.33 ha (10 *Kattha*) of land. In 1997, the area was handed over as Community Forest by forming a Community Forest User Group (CFUG) initially including the Kewat families as members. However, they were later excluded without justification, and eviction attempts began in 2010, intensifying from 2016 onward when the Division Forest Office (DFO) fenced the area for a new plantation project—despite families having received Temporary Nissa (temporary land certificates) in 2016 and basic services (electricity, water, roads, agricultural tools) from the local government.

A forced eviction was carried out between July and August 2024 in Barderiya, Sonpur. After sustained advocacy efforts by the DLRf, a temporary settlement agreement was reached in May 2025 among the local government, the Ward Office, the CFUG Committee, the Land Commission, and political representatives to ensure interim resettlement arrangements for the affected families.

Most families were relocated to a small plot of land outside the forest, which is inadequate even for basic shelter and does not support their livelihoods. However, three elderly families who have lived there since the beginning remained inside the Community Forest due to their deep attachment to the land and unwillingness to relocate. They continued to receive eviction notices from the District Forest Office (DFO), threatening the immediate demolition of their homes.

This case shows how families settled by the State to protect forests are now facing displacement due to conflicting forest policies, exclusionary practices of the CFUG, and the denial of land rights despite long-term State recognition and tax payments. It is also alleged that influential CFUG members are targeting the Kewat families for political reasons and are using the DFO to push for their eviction.



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## Conclusion and recommendations

### Conclusion

This study documented 54 land conflict cases affecting 17,544 households across 5,512.05 hectares in all seven provinces, revealing that the State itself is both the primary adversarial claimant (53.7 percent of cases) and the dominant perpetrator of human rights violations (84 percent of community-level incidents). Government programs particularly large-scale infrastructure projects — drive 65 percent of contested land, while conservation policies, caste-based discrimination, and elite land capture compound displacement of marginalized communities. Farmers, informal settlers, Dalits, *Mohi* tenants, and formerly bonded laborers collectively bear the heaviest burden. Despite of this dire situation, less than one percent of 1.15 million registered landless families have received land ownership certificates despite constitutional guarantees and 19 land commissions formed and dissolved over six decades. With 40 percent of cases with no corrective actions done/still unresolved and communities overwhelmingly dependent on third-party mediation rather than direct State remedies, the findings underscore: a) an urgent need for rights-based land-governance anchored in mandatory FPIC; b) independent conflict monitoring; c) a permanent and politically independent Land Issues Resolution Commission; d) completion of unfinished land reforms including *Guthi*, *Mohi*, and bonded labor rehabilitation; and, e) enforceable accountability for officials complicit in unlawful evictions & human rights violations.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed under three major areas:

#### 1. Strengthening land conflict monitoring system

- 1.1 Cross-verify information from community, media, and civil society sources through mandatory direct field visits and on-site observation.
- 1.2 Deploy trained monitors through land rights forums for quarterly field visits, victim interviews, and systematic evidence collection.
- 1.3 Institutionalize centralized public database disaggregated by province, conflict type, and community, with annual reporting.
- 1.4 Ensure monitoring leads to corrective action; government and non-government agencies must incorporate recommendations into their plans, including follow-up on released perpetrators who may retaliate against victims.

#### 2. Targeted interventions for conflict resolution

- 2.1 Facilitate immediate dialogue on infrastructure disputes through mobile land rights clinics and local mediation.
- 2.2 Mandate FPIC in all government land programs; reintroduce land bill to address conservation, forest, and map discrepancy issues that existing laws cannot resolve.

- 2.3 Issue land ownership certificates to 1.15 million landless and informal settler families within three years with mandatory joint spousal ownership.
- 2.4 Prohibit evictions without court orders; enforce administrative action against officials and powerful individuals involved in unlawful evictions.

### 3. Addressing long-term structural issues

- 3.1 Form time-bound task forces like 17 disputes persisting over 20 years with special mediation, ensuring prompt resolution signals.
- 3.2 Organize national land reform conference with provincial dialogues, prioritizing Madhesh and Lumbini where 78 percent of contested land is concentrated.
- 3.3 Make local-level land-use planning mandatory; prohibit settlement expansion without approved plans and mandatorily include landless and squatter families.
- 3.4 Demarcate secure residential zones with proper land subdivision to ensure housing rights; categorize informal settlers by actual land status for targeted interventions.
- 3.5 Ensure integrated multi-agency approach (Forest, Wildlife, Land) for conservation, buffer zone, and forest-related conflicts; consider community perspectives and settlement timelines relative to prohibited zone declarations.
- 3.6 Conduct multi-stakeholder dialogue on land conflict typology; civil society must collectively engage political parties to enable legal frameworks.
- 3.7 Systematically document Kathmandu-area conflicts including *Guthi*, mining, hydropower, and projects affecting indigenous peoples. ■

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This report is dedicated to farmers, peasants, informal settlers, indigenous peoples, Dalits, women, and bonded laborers whose persistent struggle for land rights and dignity continues to inspire this work.

Jagat Deuja  
Executive Director, CSRC

The 2025 Land and Resource Conflict Monitoring (LRCM) Report shows that land reform in Nepal remains unresolved, with historical inequities, weak implementation, and government programs — especially large infrastructure projects — driving persistent land conflicts. The 54 cases documented in 2025 affected 17,544 households across 5,512 hectares, disproportionately impacting Dalits, tenants, formerly bonded laborers, and informal settlers. The findings highlight the urgent need for rights-based governance, independent monitoring, and enforceable accountability to protect vulnerable communities.

