Message from FNJ President Dr. Mahendra Bista on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day - 3 May 2015

Today, journalists from all over the world are celebrating World Press Freedom Day (WPFD) - 3 May 2015. But Nepali Journalists are in grief caused by the earthquake on April 25 which took more than 6,500 lives including journalist Suman Bomjan. Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) has withdrawn all official programs to actively involving in rescue and relief works.

More than 6,500 had lost their lives and thousands are injured till now. Millions of houses were collapsed. Most of the heritage sites, including Bhimsen Tower, were devastated.

FNJ has been collecting information on journalists and media that have been affected by the earthquake and coordinating for rescue and relief work. FNJ Central Committee Member Madhav Dulal has lost his father. Lots of journalists are injured. Most of the media organisations are completely destroyed and closed. Only a few media organisations are operating through temporary camps. FNJ appreciates the role and responsibilities fulfilled by media organisations and journalists. FNJ also appeals the media and journalists to be accountable on human sensitivity.

FNJ appreciates the International community for their support. FNJ shows deep concern on sovereignty, journalists' ethics and human sensitiveness. FNJ regrets the rumours broadcasted by some Indian media and requests the government and International media to pay attention in this regard.

Nepali media is facing various challenges and is failed to enjoy Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression, and professional and physical safety of journalists. FNJ Media Monitoring Unit has recorded 46 press freedom violations this year (1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015). Discussion on policy, structural, legal and professional issues are priorities of FNJ on WPDF 2015. Likewise, every year on May 3, Press Freedom Fighters were honoured. Due to the massive earthquake, FNJ has withdrawn all these official programs.

On the occasion of WPFD 2015, I would like to pay tribute to those who had lost their lives in the earthquake and heartfelt condolence to those grieving the loss of their relatives. FNJ appeals that journalists, media organisations, Freedom of Expression activists and all citizens to face the current situation protecting Press Freedom and rebuild nation with determination.

Dr. Mahendra Bista
President
3 May 2015