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Preliminary results of Nepal's parliamentary elections of 2017 (with some comparisons to the CA elections of November 2013)

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Parties	Pratinidhi Sabha 2017				Comparison to 2013						
	FPTP seats	per cent	PR votes	per cent (preliminary)	PR seats (preliminary)	seats total	per cent of total seats	per cent of PR votes 2013	difference in 2017	per cent of total seats 2013	difference in 2017
CPN-UML	80	48.48	3173494	33.25	41	121	44.00	23.66	9.59	30.43	13.57
CPN-MC	36	21.82	1303721	13.66	17	53	19.27	15.21	-1.55	13.91	5.36
NC	23	13.94	3128389	32.78	40	63	22.91	25.55	7.23	34.09	-11.18
RJPN	11	6.67	472254	4.95	6	17	6.18	new			6.18
SSF-N	10	6.06	470201	4.93	6	16	5.82	new			5.82
Nayan Shakti	1	0.61	81837	0.86	0	1	0.36	new			0.36
RPP	1	0.61	196782	2.06	0	1	0.36	6.66	-4.60	4.17	-3.81
NMKP	1	0.61	56141	0.59	0	1	0.36	0.71	-0.12	0.70	-0.34
Rastriya Janamorcha	1	0.61	62133	0.65	0	1	0.36	0.98	-0.33	0.62	-0.26
Independents	1	0.61			0	1	0.36			0.35	
40 other parties	0	0.00	599792	6.28	0	0	0.00				
Total	165	100.00	9544744	100.00	110	275	100.00				

This is a very first and short evaluation undertaken immediately after the completion of the PR vote counting. The number of PR seats won by the parties as mentioned above has not been officially announced, yet.

At this moment a few comments may be allowed. A detailed evaluation of the elections will follow later and it will be published on the [Nepal Observer](#) website.

On the first view, the CPN-UML (in alliance with the CPN-MC) seems to be the big winner of these elections and the NC the great loser. This is true if we only take the number of seats won and compare them with the data of 2013. But the public support of the parties is only reflected by the number of PR votes. Here, the CPN-UML has won as well but it is only shortly ahead of the NC. This is a simple reversal of the 2013 elections where the NC was shortly ahead of the CPN-UML. In 2017, both parties have got greater support from their voters than they had got in 2013.

The CPN-MC, on the other side, may have won more FPTP seats than in 2013, but its public support has once again gone down slightly.

The reason for the overwhelming success of the Left Alliance lies in its disciplined campaign for the FPTP seats. There was no competition between CPN-UML and CPN-MC in the constituencies but the parties instead asked their supporters to vote for the respective common candidate. The NC had no chance against this procedure since there was no strong partner left to form an alliance. The RPPs with their outdated stand for monarchy and Hindu state proved to be a bad partner. The elections have once again proved that the voters more and more see them as dispensable parties. Not even all RPP parties together would have been able to win a single PR seat.

Despite their generally overwhelming success, the Left Alliance parties have missed a two thirds majority, if the figures mentioned in the table above are confirmed by the EC. Such majority would have allowed them to undertake constitutional changes without participating other parties. With respect to democracy, the result must be seen as positive.

Rastriya Janata Party Nepal (RJPN) and Samyukta Samajbadi Forum-Nepal (SSF-N), the two ethnic or regional parties from the Tarai, concentrated their election campaign more or less on Province 2 where they partly formed an alliance as well. In reflection of the results of the local elections, they became the strongest force there. Both parties did not exist in 2013, but a number of Tarai parties that competed in the 2013 elections have joined in these two new parties in recent years. A comparison to 2013 remains difficult.

The election result of 2017 has been strongly influenced by the introduction of a three per cent threshold for winning PR seats. This has led many small parties to unify in the run-up to the 2017 elections. But they, nevertheless, did not have any chance. Altogether 49 parties took part in the elections of which 40 did not win a single seat. Four parties have won just one seat and are thus participated in parliament where they will hardly be able to play any role. We should see this trend as strengthening of democracy and a stabilisation of Nepal's politics.

Generally, the number of independent candidates has gone down as well, but further evaluations are necessary. Only one independent could win a seat but he has been elected under special circumstances. In fact, he had been a victim of the Left Alliance. Though he had been the strong candidate of the CPN-MC in Humla, his ticket was denied because the Humla constituency ticket had been given to the UML within the alliance. So, he contested as independent and it is to be expected that he will join the parliamentary group of CPN-MC soon.

Another tragic figure has been Baburam Bhattarai. In the beginning, he and his Nayan Shakti Nepal had been part of the left alliance. But the CPN-UML and especially his old party CPN-MC denied him the ticket for his traditional constituency in Gorkha. So, he cooperated with the NC there and was successful in winning this seat against the vice chairman of the CPN-MC, Narayan Kaji Shrestha. Baburam's problem is that this remained the only seat his party could win. Nayan Shakti Nepal can already be called a failure and obviously has no future. We will have to wait if and how this will change Baburam Bhattarai's stand in future.

The reduction of FPTP seats from 240 to 165 and the disciplined and successful cooperation of the Left Alliance parties has resulted in the defeat of numerous leading politicians, especially from the NC. This can be seen as a positive development as many of them must be seen as responsible for failures in development of democracy and federalism. On the other side have many politicians with similarly bad reputation been elected with Left Alliance tickets. Within the NC, discussions on a rejuvenation of the party leadership have already started, but old leaders still cling to their party positions.

Especially negative has been the participation of women as candidates. Only 6 female FPTP candidates have been elected into parliament (3 from CPN-MC, 2 from CPN-UML and 1 from Rastriya Janamorcha, none from the NC). This is even worse than under the failed 1990 political system and it proves the deep-rooted patriarchal thinking of Nepal's male political elite. Article 86 of the constitution prescribes that at least one third of the MPs from each party have to be women and that this number, if necessary, has to be reached by nominating the respective number of women from the PR lists of the parties. In other words, most of the 110 MPs that have to be nominated from the PR lists must be women (at least 85).

Related to the elected Provincial Assemblies, the situation is similar. Only 18 of the 330 directly elected MPs of the 7 Provincial Assemblies are women. There is a clear constitutional regulation on how many women have to be sent by these Assemblies into the National Assembly (NA), the second chamber of Nepal's parliament. Each Provincial Assembly has to send 8 representatives to the NA, at least 3 of them women. Besides, the President has to nominate 3 additional persons of which one has to be a woman. In other words, these prescriptions guarantee that even more than one third of the NA representatives will be women.

For the moment, I do not want to comment on the ongoing discussion if the PR MPs can be nominated before the NA has been formed. The dispute may have to do with the question if the respective parties really shall nominate more than the indispensably necessary number of women. Article 86 of the constitution only demands that the number of women in both Houses of Parliament has to be at least one third. But the quarrel may also simply have a political background: A new government cannot be elected as long as the new House of Representatives is not complete. Until then, the government of Sher Bahadur Deuba can stay in office.