

## DACSA Statement on Nepal Social Media Ban and Protest Casualties

The Digital Accountability Collective South Asia (DACSA) strongly condemns the recent events in Nepal, where longstanding corruption, lack of transparency, and unaccountable governance have fueled widespread public frustration. These structural failures ignited mass protests demanding a future free from corruption. Tragically, at least 19 people lost their lives and over 100 others were injured, most of them students, during these peaceful demonstrations.

The government's sudden decision to block 26 major social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, under the pretext of combating misinformation and online fraud, acted as a flashpoint for these protests. While the ban itself sparked immediate outrage, the demonstrations reflected deeper societal grievances over corruption, impunity, and systemic injustice. Restricting digital access in such a sweeping manner not only silences voices but also undermines democratic participation and exacerbates mistrust in public institutions.

The tragic loss of lives and the violent response to peaceful protestors highlight the urgent need for governments in South Asia to prioritize human rights over authoritarian control in digital governance.

As a regional collective committed to digital equity and accountability, DACSA calls on the Government of Nepal to ensure transparency, restore public trust, and refrain from further measures that restrict freedom of expression and access to information. We also urge technology platforms to engage meaningfully with civil society and local communities in Nepal to safeguard user rights during moments of crisis. Furthermore, we ask the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and other international bodies to launch an urgent investigation into this deeply disturbing turn of events and hold accountable those responsible for unleashing such an act of violence against Nepal's citizens.

In South Asia, where millions rely on digital platforms for communication, livelihood, and activism, the costs of such repressive actions are intolerably high. DACSA stands in solidarity with the people of Nepal and reaffirms its commitment to advocating for rights-respecting digital governance across the region.

### About DACSA:

The Digital Accountability Collective South Asia (DACSA) is a regional coalition formed by Digitally Right (Bangladesh), Digital Rights Foundation (Pakistan), Digital Rights Nepal and Hashtag Generation (Sri Lanka). United by a shared commitment to digital equity, platform accountability, and human rights. DACSA works to challenge harmful tech practices, amplify civil society voices and push for inclusive, rights-based digital governance across the region.