

Journalist's murder prompted by personal dispute, according to police

After an eight-day-long investigation, the police found Yuvraj Giri guilty of the murder of journalist Yadav Poudel.

It was previously thought that Poudel's reporting may have been the reason for the murder. However, according to the police investigation, the reason for the murder is not related to press freedom, but the result of a personal dispute between Giri and Poudel.

Giri, the former chairman of a hoteliers' association in Jhapa district, was reportedly planning to publish a paper entitled "Ujyalo Purva" as of the Nepali New Year (3 April 2012). Poudel would have acted as the paper's editor.

During a press conference on 10 April 2012, Superintendent of Police Tarini Prasad Lamsal, the chief of the District Police Office, said, "Our investigation has revealed that Giri is the guilty party." According to the police report, Giri pushed the journalist from the third story rooftop of Hotel Purvanchal, at Sekuwa Corner in Birtamod, Jhapa. It does not appear that the murder was premeditated.

However, SP Lamsal added that the police would have further information to divulge about the murder after the arrest of an individual named Madan Rai. He was outside the hotel during the incident and reportedly spoke to Giri from the street before leaving the hotel. It is not clear if Rai was involved in the killing. He is currently absconding and sought by the police.

Poudel, a reporter with the "Rajdhani" national daily and Avenues Television from Jhapa, a district in the southern plain in eastern Nepal, was killed on the night of 3 April.

Freedom Forum is continuing to urge the police to thoroughly investigate the case and bring to book the guilty parties.