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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Nepal: Earthquake

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

Following the earthquake in the eastern region of Nepal on 18 September, a total of CHF436,179 has been allocated from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) to conduct rapid assessments and deliver immediate assistance to some 3,500 families in 12 affected districts, including support for volunteer mobilization and transport costs to enable relief teams and goods to reach people affected in very remote areas.



A collapsed building in Dhankuta district. **Photo:** Nepal Red Cross Society.

The Netherlands Red Cross and government, the Canadian government and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) have replenished the DREF for this allocation.

The major donors and partners of DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and government, Danish Red Cross and government, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Irish and the Italian governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg government, the Monaco Red Cross and government, the Netherlands Red Cross and government, the Norwegian Red Cross and government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the national society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions. Details of the contributions to the DREF can be found on www.ifrc.org/dref.



Nepal Red Cross Society relief distribution in Terhathum district. **Photo:** Nepal Red Cross Society.

Summary

In the first month since the 18 September earthquake, NRCS has been scaling up relief distributions of non-food items to displaced families. Assessment teams have also been deployed to collect more detailed information about the current and longer term needs of those affected. These tasks are slow and challenging, with volunteers having to traverse difficult terrain by tractor, by mule or on foot to reach the most remote communities, who were also the closest to the epicentre.

To date, more than 14,600 families have been affected across 18 districts, with 6,343 families unable to return to their homes, many of whom are sleeping nearby in self-made shelters using tarpaulins and blankets distributed by NRCS. With sporadic rains and winter approaching, there are concerns that living conditions may deteriorate further, particularly in mountainous regions where

goods and services are not readily available. A total of 4,141 non-food item (NFI) packages have already been distributed by NRCS, with more in the pipeline. This figure includes sets from NRCS own stocks as well as those provided by other agencies.

A joint monitoring visit from NRCS headquarters and IFRC country office to six of the most affected districts confirmed that, given the needs and the approaching winter, additional distributions of blankets and tarpaulins are likely to be needed, until damaged homes can be repaired or rebuilt. A number of longer term needs have also been identified and NRCS is exploring options for potential support in the months to come.

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The situation

In the first weeks following the earthquake, NRCS personnel, including the district disaster response team (DDRT) and national disaster response team (NDRT) members, have been heavily engaged in conducting rapid assessments and distributing relief to those affected across 18 districts. This task has been made all the more challenging by the remote and dispersed nature of the affected households, which in some cases take several days to reach on foot, as well as the occurrence of landslides and heavy rainfall which has restricted access.

Nevertheless, continuous assessment reports received from the district chapters indicate that a total of seven people were killed and 72 injured, with structural damage sustained in over 14, 667 houses, of which 6,343 have been fully damaged. Approximately 6,343 families (around 38,058 people) have been displaced with many more frightened to return to their damaged homes. Government reports also indicate that many schools, hospitals, health posts and other public buildings have sustained heavy damage.

The table below shows the breakdown of the numbers and locations of people affected (as at 20 October 2011):

SN	Districts	People			Families		Houses destroyed	
		Dead	Missing	Injured	Displaced	Affected	Fully	Partially
1	Ilam	0	0	10	1,680	2,147	1,680	467
2	Taplejung	0	0	11	1,290	2,470	1,290	1,180
3	Sankhuwasava	1	0	22	807	3,197	807	2,390
4	Panchthar	0	0	3	1,089	2,221	1,089	1,132
5	Dhankuta	0	0	6	238	557	238	319
6	Khotang	0	0	0	115	335	115	220

7	Terhathum	0	0	1	530	2,095	530	1,565
8	Sindhupalchowk	0	0	0	81	138	81	57
9	Ramechhap	0	0	3	97	434	97	337
10	Bhojpur	0	0	7	291	387	291	96
11	Dolakha	0	0	0	47	207	47	160
12	Solukhumbu	0	0	2	41	360	41	319
13	Kathmandu	3	0	0	16	26	16	10
14	Lalitpur	0	0	1	9	47	9	38
15	Bhaktapur	0	0	3	12	42	12	30
16	Jhapa	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Sunsari	2	0	3	0	0	0	0
18	Udayapur	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
	Total	7	0	72	6,343	14,667	6,343	8,324

During the second week of October, two teams from headquarters comprising NRCS senior staff, disaster management director, finance director and IFRC country representative undertook monitoring visits to the ongoing relief operation in Ilam, Panchthar, Taplejung, Dhankuta, Terhathum and Bhojpur districts.



The damaged house of Man Bahadur Sinchouri and his wife in Ilam district. "We do not have extra land to build on and this land is not safe, as there are many cracks. That is why we are staying alongside the road. We received non-food relief item support the day after the incident and it has greatly helped us with shelter. Since winter is approaching, this is not a long term solution. We need to build a new house but we do not have resources," Sinchouri says. **Photo:** Nepal Red Cross Society.

approaching winter, their shelter conditions will further deteriorate. Moreover, it was noted in some instances that tarpaulins donated to NRCS for distribution do not meet the standards agreed by the shelter cluster and are already showing signs of tearing and leakage. As a result, several NRCS district chapters have been distributing additional tarps and blankets from their stock, but even this may not be adequate for the winter months ahead.

An even more pressing concern are some 370 families in Taplejung district, who have been identified as displaced but have not received any shelter or relief supplies due to their remote locations and lack of access. At the time of writing, the NRCS district chapter had just mobilized teams of volunteers and mules to carry relief items to the mid-way point in the hope the materials could be collected and distributed by sub-chapter teams. If this effort is unsuccessful, alternative means such as airlift may need to be considered.

During these visits, it was noted that in spite of the heavy structural damage to houses and schools, the loss of life was surprisingly low, largely due to the timing of the earthquake, which occurred after school hours when many families were outdoors, cooking or otherwise able to escape quickly from their houses. Had this not been the case, the loss of life would have been much more significant. Also, it was found that items such as clothing, food and cooking sets have not been in high demand because families managed to retrieve these items from their damaged homes.

Nevertheless, the situation for many families remains difficult, particularly in areas which have remained largely inaccessible since the earthquake. A large number of people displaced are living in temporary, self-made structures covered with tarpaulin, near to their damaged homes. In many cases, it will take months to repair, demolish or reconstruct damaged homes, and some families do not have sufficient resources or technical knowledge to undertake this task. Thus, there is a concern that with the intermittent but heavy rainfall and the

Coordination and partnerships

The Government of Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) is designated to lead the response and recovery efforts and has organized several meetings at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and convened a meeting of the Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee (CNDRC), joined by NRCS, which is a standing member. District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRC) have also been convening meetings regularly in the affected district headquarters to ensure effective and coordinated response activities. NRCS district chapters are represented in the DDRCs and have been feeding back information from needs assessments as well as identifying areas where there may be gaps in assistance needed.

The Government of Nepal, through its district offices, has been providing some small financial contributions for the families of those killed by the earthquake and for those whose homes have been damaged. On 25 September, the government's CNDRC principally agreed to a "Programme on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Infrastructures Damaged by Earthquake" which outlines a number of key steps for the recovery process, to be implemented primarily by the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works. These steps include:

- Damage and needs assessment (DANA) to identify structural damage and affected families.
- Feasibility study for reconstruction, including multi-hazard assessment, site selection and categorisation of buildings according to damage.
- Design of low cost, earthquake-resistant housing models.
- Undertaking reconstruction works of housing as well as schools, health posts and other infrastructure.
- Monitoring and supervision.
- Advocacy and awareness.

The MoHA is developing guidelines for the whole recovery process however the results of the DANA are not expected to be available until early November. Meanwhile, the NRCS district chapters have also been undertaking more detailed assessments, in some cases jointly with the DDRC members.

The UN cluster system is also active in Nepal and the humanitarian country team (HCT) principles and operations meetings have been held. The need for improved coordination of assessments was identified as a gap area and UNOCHA compiled and circulated a list of different agency assessment plans to avoid duplication. Several clusters have held meetings and/or circulated information among cluster members to get a more complete picture of the situation and discuss ongoing needs.

IFRC is the convener of the emergency shelter and NFI cluster and has been compiling information on cluster members response activities and capacities. A shelter cluster meeting is planned for 21 October, hosted by NRCS, to discuss the current situation and identify key issues and gaps which will need to be addressed in the coming months.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Plan of Action – Assessment and relief distribution	
Outcome: 3,500 displaced families (approximately 21,000 people) who have suffered most from the earthquake will benefit from the provision of non-food items and additional shelter materials to meet their immediate needs.	
Outputs (expected results) and activities planned: Families received shelter materials and non-food items to better protect them from the elements while they are temporarily displaced, and other items to replace necessary household items lost in the earthquake.	
Activities planned	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilisation of staff and volunteers in 12 districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS district chapters immediately mobilised DDRT members and volunteers to undertake rapid assessments and commence distribution of relief. • Two NDRT assessment teams were deployed from NRCS headquarters to three districts closest to the epicentre (Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur) to support the district chapters in the assessment process and to coordinate the relief efforts. • The NDRT assessment team now has handed over the

	responsibilities to the DDRT and back to national headquarters.
• Community assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid assessments have been completed in all districts. • More detailed assessment on beneficiary needs are still ongoing.
• Beneficiary registration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed lists of beneficiaries have been received by district chapters and were reviewed during the recent monitoring visit from headquarters.
• Dispatch and transportation by NRCS to the distribution sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The detailed list of dispatched items is included in the table below.
• Distribution of relief items, especially at unit level by trained staff and volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The detailed list of distributions to beneficiaries is included in the table below.
• Monitoring and reporting of distributions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS district executive committee members have been regularly carrying out monitoring visits to affected areas. • Detailed records of goods received and distributions are verified and kept at district chapter officers.
• Procurement and storage of NFIs, as replenishment of stocks distributed, according to IFRC standard procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procurement process for 3,500 NFIs has commenced, and the specifications for all items are the same as the Nepal Shelter Cluster standards (which are also adopted by NRCS). • Procurement – tender notice issued. • Tarps from Kuala Lumpur.
• Ongoing monitoring by the national headquarters and IFRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the second week of October, two teams from headquarters comprising NRCS senior staff, disaster management director, finance director and IFRC country representative undertook monitoring visits to the ongoing relief operation in Illam, Panchthar, Taplejung, Dhankuta, Terhathum and Bhojpur districts.

Dispatch and distribution of NFIs

The following table shows current distribution in the 12 priority districts.

****Please note:** This table represents the total distributions made by district chapters to date, including items distributed on behalf of other organisations. The detailed breakdown of items by donor agency (including NRCS warehouse stock items) will be included in the next update**

No.	No of Displaced families	Relief distribution to date			Relief goods in the pipe line (dispatched from NRCS warehouses)		
		NFRI Sets	Additional Tarps	Additional Blankets	NFRI Sets	Additional Tarps	Additional Blankets
1	Illam	1,197	1,189	0	100	172	100
2	Taplejung	1,029	400	0	0	0	0
3	Sankhuwasava	321	100	0	300	0	0
4	Panchthar	995	1,582	1,262	0	0	0
5	Dhankuta	189	20	0		200	0
6	Khotang	86	100	0	0	0	0
7	Terhathum	188	171	0	250	0	0
8	Sindhupalchok	4	0	0	100	0	0
9	Ramechhap	0	0	0	100	0	0
10	Bhojpur	110	400	0	400	0	0
11	Dolakha	3	0	0	0	0	0
12	Solukhumbu	19	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	4,141	3,962	1,262	1,250	372	100

Challenges and constraints

Transport remains a major concern throughout this operation, particularly for accessing remote communities, some of which were also cut off by landslides due to the heavy monsoon rains and earthquake. This has impacted on both the time and cost of the assessment and relief distributions, with the process taking longer than expected. Particularly in remote parts of Taplejung, Illam, Bhojpur, Sankhuwasabha, and Terhathum NFIs are being carried by mules or even by hand by volunteers, including by Red Cross junior/youth circle members, a process which can take several days. The cost and timeliness of these transport methods need further review and the current DREF budget allocations may need to be adjusted accordingly.

Communications with district and sub-district chapters have also been disrupted making the collation of data a difficult and slow process. Nevertheless, the recent monitoring mission confirmed that the NRCS district chapters and volunteers have been exercising good vigilance in managing and monitoring the operation and have been effectively coordinating with local authorities and other agencies as needed.

Longer term needs

Although NRCS detailed needs assessments are ongoing and the government guidelines are not yet available, it is clear there will be a number of longer term needs to be addressed including reconstruction of homes, schools and public buildings, restoring water and sanitation facilities, supplementary food distribution and livelihood activities. Given the fact that many of the homes affected remain in high risk areas, it would also be an opportune time to consider undertaking community-based disaster risk reduction programmes as well, to ensure communities are better able to manage risks and respond to disasters in future.

NRCS is currently exploring potential areas where their support and expertise may be needed. This will be determined once there is a clearer picture emerging from the needs assessments and government plan of action.

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