

NEPAL: FLOOD RELIEF

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The disaster

As the monsoon rains ease in many parts of the Kingdom, the full extent of the damage caused by the uncommonly heavy rains and the resulting flash and drainage floods is becoming increasingly apparent. It is also now clear that many of those previously listed as missing were in fact killed by the floodwaters. Although structural damage was widespread, the most serious occurred in the districts of Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Rupandehi, Saptari, Siraha, Udayapur, Bardiya, Bhojpur, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, and Bajhang.

The following figures are based on information collected by the Nepal Red Cross, the Home Ministry, and by the UNDP-Disaster Management Secretariat, Kathmandu:

	<i>July 30, 1996</i>	<i>August 15, 1996</i>	<i>August 24, 1996</i>
Deaths	92	149	219
Missing (presumed dead)	126	113	69
Injured	21	48	63
Houses damaged	5,145	8,745	9,407
Livestock lost	142	611	611
Cropland affected		estimated 6,000 hectares	estimated 6,000 hectares
Displaced	est. 7,700 individuals	est. 13,650 individuals	est. 13,650 individuals
Total affected	est. 85,900 individuals	est. 137,600 individuals	est. 172,960 individuals

- Many dams and bridges have been damaged or destroyed in the districts of Taplejung, Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Siraha, Sindhupalchowk, Lalitpur, Dhading, Gorkha, Gulmi, Rupandehi and Mustang, seriously obstructing access to some areas.
- Most of the damaged houses are in Sunsari, Saptari, Udayapur, Morang, Jhapa, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, and Siraha Districts.
- Most of the displaced persons are in Udayapur, Nawalparasi, Bardiya, Morang, and Siraha Districts.

- The situation has been made worse by a large number of landslides of varying intensity caused by flash floods in hill districts in Taplejung, Panchthar and Ilam in Eastern Nepal.
- In Sindhupalchowk, Bhojpur and Dolakha alone, the death toll has risen to 139, accounting for over 60% of all deaths caused by the floods.
- The damage to rice crops has not been assessed completely, but it seems inevitable that the coming harvest in the affected areas will be severely reduced, thus increasing the vulnerability of the population.

Government action

The Government is continuing its search and rescue operations, plus flood control to prevent any further deterioration of the situation. Immediately endangered communities have been evacuated, and relief items from many local and national sources are being distributed. These efforts are being supported by local communities themselves, the police force and army personnel. Basic food distributions are taking place, *inter alia*, in Morang, Bhojpur and Nawalparasi. The Government has reportedly released some NRs 5.9 million from the central level to 24 districts and issued in internal appeal. A number of private, political, religious, and social organisations and individuals have come to the rescue by collecting essential materials all over the country.

Red Cross action

All District RC Chapters in the affected areas have continued their assessments, identifying the most vulnerable groups and basic immediate relief response. In addition, two teams from National Headquarters visited the eight worst affected districts to assist with damage assessments. In some of the districts, an increased prevalence of water-borne diseases and fever was reported. The development of the situation is being continuously monitored through regular reports and updates provided by the National Society's country-wide network of district chapters, local units and trained volunteers.

Based on initially established needs, the International Federation made available CHF 235,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The immediate release of DREF funding enabled the Nepal Red Cross to move ahead with the procurement of relief items and establish a steady flow of goods to the regional and district warehouses, from where items are distributed to beneficiaries.

Currently

- 3,000 pieces tarpaulin for temporary shelter,
- 4,000 sets of cooking utensils
- 6,000 blankets, and
- 6,000 sets of clothing

are being procured.

To date, the Nepal Red Cross has made available, from its own relief stocks and through procured items, relief material of the value of NRs 7,255,828 (over CHF 157,500) and is currently assisting approximately 4,000 families (estimated 24,000 individuals). Basic food items (e.g. beaten rice)

have been made available for distribution. The first 730 tarpaulins have been distributed for temporary shelter, as well as other relief items such as clothing, blankets, and cooking utensils (individually or as Family Packages).

Simultaneously, the following organisations have pledged or already provided assistance in support of the relief operation:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Contribution</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Royal Danish Embassy <i>Kathmandu / NEPAL</i>	Cash contribution NRs 2,500,000	Facilitated immediate procurement of essential items as listed above.
Embassy of the Republic of France, Kathmandu / <i>NEPAL</i>	In-Kind contribution NRs 500,000	Provided 730 urgently needed tarpaulins for distribution as temporary shelter.
Japanese Red Cross Society	Cash contribution Yen 2,210,000 (NRs 1,160,000)	Contribution to be channelled through the Federation Secretariat in Geneva.
British Embassy (ODA) <i>Kathmandu / NEPAL</i>	Cash contribution £ 50,000 = NRs 4,387,500	Will provide for urgent procurement of above mentioned relief items.
Embassy of the Republic of Italy, <i>Kathmandu / NEPAL (through DHA)</i>	Cash contribution (yet to be specified)	The pledge would enable NRCS to complete procurement of currently needed items.
Danish Red Cross Society	In-Kind contribution (yet to be specified)	The in-kind pledge will provide NRCS with essential re-stocking material
T O T A L	approx. value NRs 8,547,500	CHF 192,000

This very positive response has made it possible to offset a large part of the amount initially provided from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, thereby helping to keep this Fund operational.

Conclusion

The International Federation would like to express its sincere gratitude to all those institutions whose generous and timely support has enabled the National Society to fulfil its humanitarian role through its extensive infrastructure and volunteer network.

Damage in the districts is continuously being assessed and the current relief operation adjusted accordingly. However, this year's monsoon season is not yet over, and it is essential for the Nepal Red Cross to maintain an adequate stock of relief items in anticipation of future emergencies. We therefore urge potential donors to consider additional contributions directly to the National Society for this purpose.

Information on further developments will continue to be provided. The institutions listed above will receive specific narrative and financial reports in due course.

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