

Nepal devastated by worst earthquake in 80 years



A devastating earthquake of the magnitude 7.8 struck Nepal near Lamjung, 80 kilometers northwest of the capital Kathmandu on Saturday 25th April 2015. The series of tremors of various intensities continued till Sunday. The death toll has reportedly risen to 5489 with more than 11000 people injured. Many more are feared trapped under the rubble. Hospitals have been evacuated with patients being treated on the grounds outside. Hundreds of houses and buildings, heritage sites were demolished and some roads cracked wide open. The earthquake also triggered avalanches and 19 members of various expeditions at the Everest Basecamp lost their lives in this tragic event. Rural areas are still cut off due to a widespread destruction, and rubble and landslides due to continued rains are hampering relief and rescue efforts.

Beyond Kathmandu, in the remote high mountain districts, in villages up in the mountains, the boulders came scrambling down the slope as the tremors hit, and several villagers who were out collecting fodder for their animals, succumbed to their blows. For these high mountain reaches, the relief efforts are still miles away. Several villages have been cut off due to the landslides. The latest estimates by UN agencies suggest 70,000 homes were destroyed and 530,000 damaged due to the earthquakes and the aftershocks. Preliminary assessments in 16 districts revealed that over 84% schools were partially or fully damaged.

The economic losses are estimated to be between \$1 -10 billion, as per the US Geological Survey (USGS). The magnitude of the earthquake can be discerned from the fact that an area measuring 75 miles (120 km) long and 30 miles (50 km) wide was lifted upward by approximately 3 ft due to the earth movement, while the world's tallest peak Mount Everest subsided by about 1 inch (2.5 cm) [As per preliminary research; Leeds University].

Estimates suggest that over 8.1 million people across 39 districts are severely affected. 11 districts are severely affected. Kavrepalanchowk, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, Gorkha districts have reported high death tolls. UN OCHA estimates suggest that 3.5 million people require food aid urgently. USGS reports predict more aftershocks are expected, with 54% chance of tremors of magnitude 6+ over the next week.

Relief needs

Material support is required for:

- Medicines
- Tents, tarpaulins
- Blankets, clothes for survivors
- Water filters/purifiers
- Ready-to-eat food
- Baby food
- Hygiene kits
- Torch/batteries, candles and matchboxes, solar lamps
- Buckets and mugs

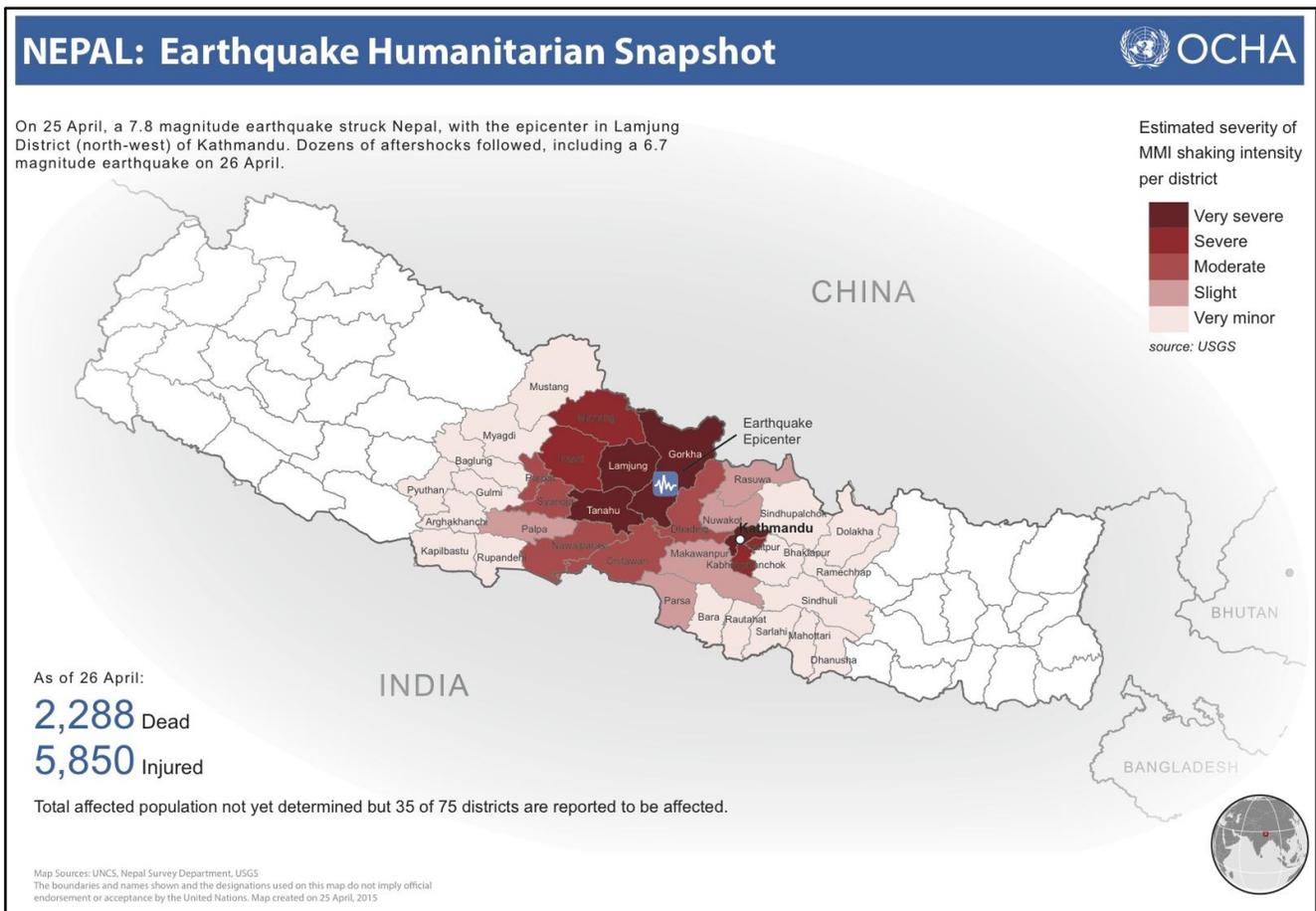
Our efforts:

Pragya UK and Pragya USA are currently working to respond to the needs of the affected people in Kathmandu and its neighbouring districts. Pragya Solutions along with local NGO partners are coordinating ground operations. **More details** at: <http://pragya.org/nepalearthquake.php>

We are currently looking at immediate relief. We would continue to work on Health and Water & Sanitation related interventions in the long term.

District-wise situation update

• **Kathmandu:** Over 1400 houses and ancient temples are reportedly destroyed in Kathmandu. UNESCO World Heritage Sites including: the Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square, Hari Shankar and Uma Maheshwar Temple, Basantpur Durbar Square, Boudhanath Stupa, Dharahara Tower have been reduced to rubble. The Tribhuvan International Airport has been opened for relief flights, after being closed for a brief period due to security reasons. People are staying at the open grounds.



Severe shortage of drinking water is being reported from the earthquake hit capital. The electricity supply, state-run drinking water supplies have been disrupted. Rains are posing further difficulties for the people displaced. Long queues are reported at Pashupati burning ghat. The Bir Hospital, Tribhuvan University Teaching

Hospitals require medical supplies urgently. They are experiencing a recent surge of patients suffering from water-borne diseases. Bir Hospital alone saw an influx of 1200 such patients since Wednesday.

The Government has designated 16 open spaces across Kathmandu as relief camps. They require food and clean water supplies. Over 338,000 people left Kathmandu, by boarding buses arranged by the government to head out to their home provinces. Slow outreach of humanitarian aid caused unrest in different parts of the city. Death toll of Kathmandu alone currently stands at 1039.

Bhaktapur town has also suffered significant damages. 65% population of Bhaktapur depended on tourism for their livelihoods. With the heritage sites demolished, the survivors would now face a grim future ahead.

- **Lamjung district:** Being the epicentre of the quake, a very high amount of losses is reported from Lamjung district. More than 90% of buildings have been fallen down with a death toll of 400. Authorities are struggling to provide facilities for cremation of bodies. Lack of electricity, shortage of med-consumables in hospitals are hampering the treatment of patients.

- **Gorkha district:** Following the heavy damage, the district requires HR support for search and rescue. People are still feared to be trapped. In Barpak village alone, close to 1200 houses were destroyed, with a death toll of above 100. People are stranded in remote villages and rescue support is yet to reach. The villages that are located to the north of Gorkha town were among the worst hit, recording some of the highest death tolls in the rural areas. The district has suffered heavy damages to physical infrastructures, with 90% schools and 80% health facilities being rendered unusable. High altitude villages such as Simjung, have had all houses destroyed. The rescued villagers have taken refuge in Gorkha Bazaar hospital. The medical officers are struggling to cater to the high number of patients. 72 hours following the initial earthquake, the hospital had no electricity, which has now been restored.



- **Dhading district:** People are forced to live in open with no access to medical care. Food, water, and tents are reported as urgent needs. The hospital is struggling to cater to the long trail of patients coming in. The district, 80 km away from Kathmandu, has not seen any organised relief effort so far. Along with houses, crops have also been ruined. In the district Patle, Khalte, Deurali, Paharechhap, Devasthan, Lyaldanda, Gairigaun, Dandagaun villages are among the most affected and require relief support urgently.

- **Rasuwa district:** The smallest district in the Bagmati zone, about 120 km north of Kathmandu, has witnessed a significant loss of lives. Most of the buildings have been destroyed. 17 army personnel and 60 people were believed to be trapped under rubble in Trishuli hydropower tunnel.

- **Sindhupalchowk district:** The buildings and walls of several historic buildings have been collapsed. The majority of people have been forced to spend their night outside houses. Dhulikhel Hospital and Scheer Memorial Hospital are attending to the victims. Threat of landslides still loom large in this region. Death toll in the district has climbed as high as 1376, one of the highest in the region.

- **Dolakha district:** The district in Janakpur zone north of Kathmandu has also witnessed heavy destruction. Buildings have been destroyed, severely affecting the BPL families in the region.
- **Kavre district:** Hospital, roads and buildings have been destroyed in this district, 25 km away from Kathmandu. Over 100,000 people are reportedly homeless. Threats of landslides and continued rain have created an atmosphere of deep fear and panic.

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