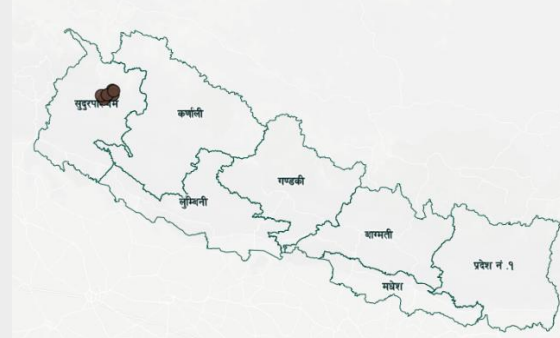


# Bajhang Earthquake



## Situation Analysis Report - 05

October 8, 2023



### Inside this report

#### 1. Coordination Meeting Between Humanitarian Agencies and the Chief District Officer

*Today, humanitarian agencies, Local Government, and the CDO convened in two meetings to address concerns surrounding relief distribution, focusing on the one-door system, equitable relief allocation, and the concept of comprehensive aid sets. The need for coordination with DDMC/DAO, relief categorization, and rebuilding efforts was stressed. Actions include DAO partnering with local governments for detailed damage databases and agencies assisting in this task. A DDMC meeting is set for October 9, 2023, at 13:00 in Bajhang's District Administration Office. Earlier, Bajhang's authorities, led by Jayaprithivi Municipality's Mayor, urged the CDO to uphold constitutional norms in relief efforts due to centralized aid concerns. Tomorrow's DDMC meeting aims to resolve these issues after examining disaster metrics. A primary challenge is the obsolete 2015 Disaster Assessment Guideline, which doesn't cater to the country's transitioned federal structure and the need for detailed disaggregated data. This outdated guideline complicates standard data collection protocols for local agencies.*

#### 2. Initial Assessment Reports from Local Governments

*At present, data is slowly being received from local governments, as they share critical information with the DDMC. However, it's important to note that the detailed assessment data, which requires thorough verification, is still pending. This process is expected to take longer than initial estimates. To date, only Masta and Talkot have submitted such initial databases to the DAO.*

#### 3. Perceived Need by NDRRMA

*In a discussion with the DPNet Team, NDRRMA's Executive Chief, Mr. Anil Pokharel, outlined critical disaster response challenges. He stressed an immediate need for 50 engineers to perform damage assessments and highlighted the urgency of providing 50,000 in financial aid to each severely affected household. Mr. Pokharel sees these areas as*

*opportunities for development partners to lend vital support, aiding NDRRMA in effectively managing the current disaster situation.*

#### **4. Why there is less human loss in Bajhang Earthquake**

*In a discussion with DPNet Team, Mr. Narayan Pandeya CDO of Bajhang District attributed the low casualties in Bajhang's 6.3 magnitude earthquake to a prior 5.3 magnitude foreshock, which allowed residents, including school children, to evacuate. This contrasts sharply with a recent 6.3 magnitude earthquake in Afghanistan with over 2000 deaths. Seismologist Mr. Chintan Timsina noted Bajhang used a weak motion sensor for recording, missing some quake characteristics. While Bajura's stronger sensor is non-operational, a team with advanced equipment has arrived in Bajhang to enhance recording capabilities.*

#### **5. Issue yet to come**

*Several critical issues demand prioritization in earthquake relief efforts. Firstly, the resumption of school activities and continued learning lacks the required urgency. It's important to establish Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) where school buildings are damaged, including addressing facilities for providing student meals. Data on vulnerable groups, like persons with disabilities, children, and pregnant or lactating mothers, is lacking, leading to difficult situations for some. The unique impact of the earthquake calls for a dual focus on school resumption and household relief. A shift in the relief approach is needed, given that the earthquake hasn't damaged grain or kitchen utensils in private households. Increased attention is required for psychosocial counseling, awareness raising, and local resource mobilization. There should be a greater emphasis on using local materials for temporary shelter construction, and mason training is crucial to address poor construction practices. Reconstruction efforts should start promptly to ensure proper shelter before the next monsoon season, with reduced focus on relief after providing temporary shelter.*

#### **6. Field Observation and Challenges**

*Jayaprithivi Municipality in Bajhang district faces significant challenges after the earthquake, with approximately 395 severely damaged houses and 2,356 partially damaged houses (based on rapid visual observation). However, a comprehensive technical assessment is still pending. The coordination and screening of affected families are challenging, with multiple parties claiming severe impact. Assigning responsibilities to local governments is recommended to avoid unnecessary engagement of all three government levels and international agencies, which could lead to increased dependency and hinder local resilience efforts.*

## **Situation Analysis and News in Details**

### **1. Coordination Meeting Between Humanitarian Agencies and the CDO**

Two informal meetings were held today between humanitarian agencies, Local Government and the CDO today to resolve issues related to the distribution of relief materials. The first meeting was held at the initiation of Member of Parliament Bhanubhakta Joshi. Mr Joshi and the agencies raised issues of difficulties and challenges due to DDMC's centralized one-door policy and instructions to bring every relief material to DAO. Issues were also discussed about yesterday's distribution, in which the basis was equal distribution to all local governments without considering actual ground needs. Suggestions were given that a Set should be distributed without breaking into pieces. For example, a kitchen set or Basic Shelter (NFRI) set should be given to a family as a single set. Morning meeting decided to hold a meeting between the CDO, humanitarian agencies and Local Government. The meeting discussed about resolving issues of relief distribution. Agencies suggested distributing relief in sets and packages without breaking into pieces. DDMC/DAO should coordinate overall district and relief distribution should focus on local governments. It was also discussed about category of damages and of type of victims to set priority to provide relief materials. CDO informed that DDMC meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October has decided to follow one door system and requested local governments to send data of earthquake damages and affected families. He also informed that so far he had received such information from 2 local governments (Masta and Durgathali). He asked humanitarian agencies about their commitments – whether it was for relief only, will work for longer or they will further continue to support reconstruction.

Local governments of Bajhang have requested CDO today to respect constitutional mandate and provisions of Local Government Operation Act in disaster management. On behalf of local governments, Mayor of Jayaprithivi Municipality handed over a request letter to the CDO. The request has been made in the context of centralized distribution of relief materials and mobilization of relief available from international agencies, I/NGOs. Humanitarian agencies informed about their commitment and status. Most of the agencies would work beyond relief and they were waiting assessment report to plan for arranging support to recovery and reconstruction as well. Agencies also updated about their current stock of relief materials available in the district and potential to add on if required. The detail of available relief materials with different agencies as of today is provided in next section.

DPNet team drew attentions of the participants that some important issues are not in priority such as reconstruction of damaged kitchen, toilets in schools as well as Temporary Learning Centers. Since schools are opening from today in some Local Governments, these are important issues to consider with priority. Similarly, data of specifically vulnerable groups in affected families is missing. This should be put in priority and data collected. CDO has noted this concern regarding database.

After in-depth discussions, some agreements were made. The DAO will lead the collation of detailed databases on earthquake damages from local governments. Humanitarian agencies will assist government in preparing and relaying this data to the DAO. The CDO plans to convene a

DDMC meeting, likely tomorrow, once the data is ready. Furthermore, the CDO has committed to addressing challenges faced by humanitarian agencies in relief distribution and will oversee the dissemination of aid through local governments, ensuring the DAO stays apprised of the specifics.

A significant challenge in data collection stems from the outdated Disaster Assessment Guideline of 2015. Since its introduction, the country transitioned to a federal structure plus new requirements like the need for comprehensive disaggregated data. This guideline, as it stands, no longer addresses current federal structure and needs effectively. The absence of an updated guideline from the government poses a dilemma for local authorities and development agencies as they struggle with determining the standard protocols for data collection.

## 2. Initial Assessment Reports from Local Governments

Now data is gradually coming from local governments. They are sharing data with DDMC such that support flow gets started and support is channelized based on the requirements. Detail assessment data with proper verification is yet to come and is likely to take much longer time than we initially thought. Only 2 Masta and Talkot have submitted such databases in DAO.

*Talkot Rural Municipality:*

Ward No	Private Houses		Public (govt) Buildings (School Building)	
	fully damaged	partially damaged	fully damaged	partially damaged
1	8	43	2	1
2	0	7	2	0
3	11	81	0	1
4	1	41	0	0
5	0	9	3	0
6	3	31	0	3
7	0	46	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>

*Masta Rural Municipality*

Impact data of Masta Rural Municipality																
Ward No	Private Houses		Government		Other	School Buildings		Drinking Water		Health Building		Temple		Community building		Others
	Complete Damage	Partial Damage	Complete Damage	Partial Damage		Complete Damage	Partial Damage	Complete Damage	Partial Damage	Complete Damage	Partial Damage	Complete Damage	Partial Damage	Complete Damage	Partial Damage	
1	53	362	3	6		1	6			2						1
2	96	174	2	7		2	5									
3	27	69	2	3			2	1	1			3				
4	112	80	6	3			4				1					1
5	30	70	1	2		1	1								1	
6	55	95	2	1	1	1	1			1						1
7	20	74	10			3				2	2	3				
RM Building			1													
	<b>393</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

## Jayaprithivi Municipality

Data of Earthquake impact in Jayaprithivi Municipality Date 16/06/2080														
Ward no	People			Animals			Private Houses		Government Buildings		School Buildings		Other damage	Remarks
	Dead	Injured	Losted	Dead	Injured	Losted	Complete Damaged	Partial Damaged	Complete Damaged	Partial Damaged	Complete Damaged	Partial Damaged		
1							51	300			1	3		
2	0						0	136			1	0		
3	0						54	250			1	3		
4	0						10	55			1	1		
5	0						30	300			1	2		
6	0						30	60			0	1		
7	0	2					30	400			0	3		Normally injured (Nitik Bohara aged 4, Aliza Bam aged 16
8	0						15	125			0	3		
9	0						60	200			0	1		
10	0	1					35	150			1	1		Normal Injured (Ramu Pariyar aged 23
11	1	3					80	380			0	4		Dead- Gummati Dhamai aged 46, Injured referred to Dhangadhi ( Salima Joshi aged 07, Pramila Joshi aged 14) Normal injured (Sarala Joshi aged 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>2356</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### 3. Perceived Need by NDRRMA

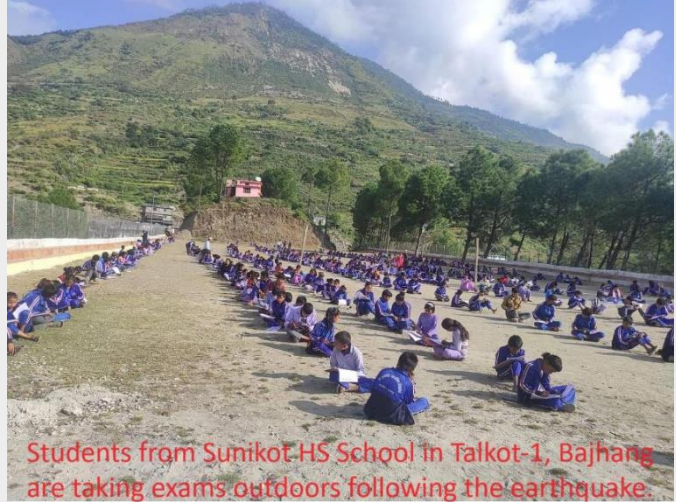
During a conversation with the DPNet Team, the Executive Chief of NDRRMA, Mr. Anil Pokharel, highlighted the challenges facing the disaster response efforts. He shared the urgent necessity for a workforce of at least 50 engineers. Their primary role would be to conduct swift visual inspections and evaluate the extent of the damages. Furthermore, he emphasized the immediate need to extend relief support. To be specific, a financial assistance of 50,000 to each severely impacted household is required. Mr. Pokharel believes that these two areas, both assessment and immediate relief, are where the development partners can significantly step in. Their support would greatly assist NDRRMA in effectively addressing the current disaster-related challenges.

### 4. Why here is Less Human Loss in Bajhang Earthquake

During a discussion with DPNet Advisor Mr. Kedar Neupane, Mr. Narayan Pandeya, the Chief District Officer of Bajhang District, provided insights on the recent 6.3 magnitude earthquake. He believes the relatively low casualty count was due to a preceding 5.3 magnitude foreshock that prompted people, including school children, to vacate buildings. The foreshock occurred 26 minutes prior, allowing enough time for evacuation before the main quake struck. Comparisons are being drawn with a similar 6.3 magnitude earthquake in Afghanistan, which tragically resulted in over 2000 fatalities. Offering a technical perspective, Mr. Chintan Timsina, a Seismologist at the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Center (NEMRC), shared with DPNet Team that the earthquake's recording in Bajhang District utilized a weak motion sensor, thus not capturing the event's full intensity. The more effective strong motion sensor in Bajura is currently non-operational. However, in a bid to improve earthquake recording, a field team led by Dr. Lok Bijaya Adhikari, Senior Divisional Seismologist, equipped with accelerometers, has now been deployed to Bajhang.

## 5. Issues Yet to Come in Priority

School resumption and continuation of teaching-learning are not coming into priority as they should be. Six school buildings are completely damaged and other 22 partially damaged. Jayprithvi Municipality has closed schools until Mangsir 4. Similarly, Masta Rural Municipality has also closed schools until Asoj 26 (this week). There is top urgency to build TLCs where building are damaged. In some schools, kitchen and other facilities for day meal to children are damaged. Humanitarian agencies should also put this in priority but they are focusing in families in traditional way. This earthquake impact is peculiar that we focus on school resumption together with household relief. Likewise, due to the earthquake-induced destruction of the school building, students from Sunikot Higher Secondary School in Talkot-1, Bajhang, Bajhang, are taking their exams in an open field.



Certain local governments are fully operational, with schools conducting regular classes and even holding exams. In contrast, some municipalities have opted to close their schools, issuing official notices to the public regarding the closures. This illustrates varying approaches and responses to the current situation across different municipalities.

### Vulnerable Group Information

– there is lack of data available about PWDs, Children, pregnant, lactating mothers, and so forth. In our observations, some persons of this group were in very difficult situations such are those reported in Situation Analysis- 03 (Sutiyan village).

मष्टा गाउँपालिका  
(Masta Rural Municipality)  
गाउँ कार्यपालिकाको कार्यालय  
(OFFICE OF THE RURAL MUNICIPAL EXECUTIVE)

प.सं. २०८०।०६।२१  
च.नं. ३०४

भारतेखोला, बझाङ्ग  
सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेश, नेपाल

मिति: २०८०/०६/२१

विषय: विद्यालयको पठनपाठन बन्द रहने सम्बन्धमा ।

श्री सम्पूर्ण सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरू,  
मष्टा गाउँपालिका, बझाङ्ग ।

उपरोक्त सम्बन्धमा मष्टा गाउँपालिका विपद् व्यवस्थापन समितिको मिति २०८०।०६।२१ गते बसेको बैठको निर्णय अनुसार मिति २०८० असोज १६ गते दिउँसो २: ४० बजे देखि पटक पटक गएको भूकम्प र यसका पराकम्पनका कारण विद्यालयका भवन तथा कक्षाकोठाहरूमा क्षति पुगेको र हाल सम्म पनि भूकम्पका पराकम्पनहरू आईरहेकोले बुझ्न भएर कक्षाकोठामा बस्न सकिने स्थिति नरहेकोले मिति २०८० साल असोज २२ गते देखि मिति २०८० साल असोज २६ गते सम्म सबै विद्यालयहरूको पठनपाठन बन्द गर्न गराउन हुन जानकारी गराइन्छ ।

साथै भूकम्पका कारण हुन गएको विद्यार्थीहरूको शैक्षिक क्षतिलाई मिन पचास विदा तथा अन्य विदाहरूमा विद्यालय सुचारु गरी पूरा गर्न हुन समेत जानकारी गरिन्छ ।

दिपक बहादुर बोहरा  
नि. प्रमुख प्रशासकीय अधिकृत  
म. गा. वि. प्र. कार्यालय, बझाङ्ग



Need versus supply – The Earthquake has not damaged grain or kitchen utensils of private houses. Considering living outside the home, Tarpaulin, light/lamp, and blankets are necessary, also considering winter. However, agencies are focusing on traditional relief. If there is a food problem in an eq-affected family, it is due to food poverty not due to damage by earthquake.

Psychosocial counselling and awareness raising as well as local resource mobilization is important but there is less attention given in this regard. In today's meeting with CDO, an agency reported that they have deployed a staff from Doti here. We hope to increase efforts in this regard from all humanitarian agencies.

Less priority to use local materials: Currently more focus is given to imported materials – there is an opportunity to build temporary shelter from the materials of damaged houses or buildings. This should be in priority.

Masson Training: Most houses were damaged due to their poor construction. Mostly walls are poor; the inner wall and outer wall are not well tied up and other factors. So, factors of damages caused should be immediately assessed. One of the immediate actions to support cash for work is to train mason and engage HHs in reconstruction.

Relief or reconstruction process: We feel that the reconstruction process must start soon and be at a speed such that people are under their house roof before the next monsoon. There is not too much focus on relief once they get temporary shelter including grain storage facilities whose houses have been damaged completely.

Low cost landslide mitigation: The 6.3 magnitude earthquake, followed by numerous aftershocks, has rendered the already fragile landscape even more vulnerable to landslides. Numerous cracks have appeared across various areas. To prevent further damage and potential threats to households, infrastructure, and human lives, it is important to address these cracks promptly. Implementing 'low-cost landslide mitigation technology' can serve as an immediate and cost-effective solution to seal these cracks and safeguard the community. Investing a modest amount in such initiatives can result in significant savings in terms of both assets and lives.

## 6. Field Observation and Challenges

Jayaprithivi municipality is the worst affected in Bajhang district where About 395 houses are damaged severely where living is unsafe and 2356 houses are partially damaged. These damage data are as per rapid visual observation (RVO). However, a detail technical assessment is yet to be done in all infrastructures. Coordination and screening of affected families at different scales is looking like a challenge as everybody is claiming affected severely.



Local governments should be assigned with responsibilities and accountabilities to manage this level (moderate) of disaster but the situation looks like all 3 tiers of governments will engage unnecessarily as well as international agencies at the forefront. It ultimately increases dependency, over expectation and prevents resilience at the local level.



*This report has been prepared by DPNet in support of DCA Nepal.*