

Bajhang Earthquake



Situation Analysis Report - 07

October 10, 2023



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1. Status of Relief Distribution

During the DDMC meeting on October 9, 2023, it was decided to modify the one-door policy for relief distribution, engaging NGOs, INGOs, and the Red Cross at the local level to expedite the process. Relief distribution is the primary response effort, providing shelter items and, in some cases, food items. Notably, some local governments are yet to provide lists of affected individuals. Save the Children assisted 427 individuals from 78 families in Bajhang, with ongoing efforts targeting 122 more families. They've assembled a team of 122 trained members and prepositioned 10,000 kits across five locations. The Bajhang District Police Office organized a coordination meeting on October 10, emphasizing security arrangements during relief distribution and encouraging police involvement.

2. Scenario After Earthquake Damages

Bal Bikash Secondary School in Golai, Bajhang, with an enrollment of 290 students up to the 12th grade, urgently seeks support as a significant part of its infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, and the kitchen, was damaged during the earthquake. Currently closed with approval from Jayaprithvi Municipality, the school administration appeals for assistance in constructing Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) to resume educational activities. Meanwhile, 70-year-old helpless Ms. Jalu Auji, faces dire circumstances after her house was severely damaged by the earthquake. She has not received any aid and continues to live in her damaged home. Additionally, despite eight health institutions being completely devastated and 34 others partially damaged, healthcare services remain uninterrupted, as these facilities resiliently operate from makeshift offices to ensure ongoing community access to essential medical care.

3. Heartbreaking Loss of a family member in Israel brings more sorrow to the Earthquake affected family

Bajhang earthquake causing widespread destruction. Mr. Dhanlal Nepali, a resident of Jayaprithvi Municipality Ward No. 11 in Bhopur, Bajhang, suffered the consequences as his mud masonry house, like many others in the area, sustained severe damage, leaving the Nepali family without shelter. Mr. Ganesh Kumar Nepali, who had recently gone to Israel for education, worried about his family's safety following the earthquake. Tragically, on October 7, 2023, news of an

attack by Hamas in Israel and the subsequent danger to Nepali nationals heightened concerns. Mr. Vikas, Mr. Dhanlal's elder son, made desperate attempts to contact Ganesh, but to no avail. When Ganesh's name appeared on a list reporting casualties from the attack, Mr. Vikas was devastated. Despite their own challenges, Mr. Dhanlal's family is now struggling with the loss of their home and their brother, Ganesh, and they are appealing to the government to assist in bringing Ganesh's body home for proper final rites. The DPNet team visited Mr. Dhanlal's house to offer their condolences to the grieving family and to know their situation.

4. Initial Damage Assessment Completed by Local Government

The initial damage assessment regarding earthquake damage has been completed by all 12 local governments in Bajhang. The data, totaling 2445 fully damaged houses and 5995 partially damaged houses, along with 102 completely damaged government buildings and 134 partially damaged government buildings, was reported during the recent DDMC meeting and collected by the DPNet team. However, it's important to emphasize that this data requires thorough verification, and a comprehensive assessment may take more time than originally anticipated.

5. Expansion of Seismometer Network Enhances Earthquake Monitoring in Bajhang

The Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and the Department of Mines and Geology are collaborating to install seismometers in Bajhang. With a central foundation in Chainpur, new placements in Khaulabazar, Daulichaur, and upcoming in Jayaprithvi Municipality will enhance earthquake detection accuracy and speed. Previously, a solitary seismometer in Bayana had a limited 4-5 km detection radius. Now, with 42 stations nationwide, improved network ensures prompt and precise earthquake readings.

6. Challenges and Recommendations in Relief, Response and Reconstruction

The reported damage data appears exaggerated, often categorizing partial damage as full damage, necessitating independent field verification before recovery or reconstruction efforts. The actual need for temporary shelter appears lower than reported, with many individuals using makeshift or cracked houses instead of tarpaulins and shelter materials. There's no inherent food requirement as the earthquake did not damage grain supplies, making some food aid provision potentially misaligned with local needs. The impending winter season highlights the urgent need for warm clothing, blankets, and mattresses, particularly for economically disadvantaged communities. Additionally, the government's limited financial investment in relief efforts calls for collaboration on permanent structures like classrooms and health posts, while government representatives' reliance on NGOs and international agencies for disaster management is notable. Given the minimal recovery needs, the focus should shift to supporting the government in expediting reconstruction efforts, including mason training, implementation of building codes, and simplified data collection formats. Lastly, relief standards should be tailored to specific local needs rather than following rigid guidelines designed for different contexts.

Situation Analysis and News in Details

1. Status of Relief Distribution

On October 9, 2023, during the DDMC meeting, it was decided to revise the one-door policy for relief distribution. The meeting reached an agreement to engage NGOs, INGOs, and the Red Cross at the local level to expedite the relief distribution process. Relief distribution is the primary response effort in the district, with all agencies providing assistance to listed families through local government representatives. Relief materials consist of basic shelter items (tarpaulin, P-foam, mattress, blanket, and



sanitation items), and some agencies also including food items like rice, lentils, cooking oil, and salt. Notably, some local governments have yet to provide a list of affected individuals. On October 10, 2023, Save the Children provided relief items to 72 families, while World Vision International provided relief to 92 families in Jay Prithvi Municipality wards 6 and 7. To date, the Nepal Red Cross Society has distributed 412

| Name of Local Government | Agency |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Masta Rural Municipality | UNFPA/NRCS |
| Chhabispathivera Rural Municipality | NRCS |
| Durgathali Rural Municipality | UNICEF |
| Khaptadchhanna Rural Municipality | Plan International Nepal |
| Thalara Rural Municipality | UNICEF, UMN |
| Kedarsyun Rural Municipality | World Vision International |
| Jayaprithvi Municipality | |
| Ward # 4, 5, 9 and 10 | Save The Children Nepal |
| Ward # 1, 2 and 3 | UNFPA/NRCS |
| Ward # 6, 7, and 8 | World Vision International |
| Ward # 11 | NRCS |
| Bungal Municipality | NEEDS Nepal |
| Saipal Rural Municipality | NRCS, Others if any |
| Surma Rural Municipality | UNICEF |
| Talkot Rural Municipality | NRCS, other if any |
| Bitthadchir Rural Municipality | NRCS, Others if any |

tarpaulins and 315 blankets to the affected community in Bajura and Bajhang Districts. Save The Children, World Vision, UNICEF, UNFPA, UMN, and Plan International are mobilizing their

partner NGOs for relief distribution. The list of Relief Providing Agencies in Local Government is attached herein:

According to data from Save the Children, Save the Children has provided assistance to 427 individuals from 78 families residing in Sutiya, Dila, Koteli, Luyata of Ward 5, and Golai of Ward 4 in Jayaprithvi Municipality, Bajhang up to October 9, 2023. This support includes the distribution of 78 shelter kits, 78 hygiene kits, 10 kitchen utensil sets, and 10 dignity kits. Save the Children's ongoing efforts include



reaching an additional 122 families in the coming days. To efficiently manage these relief operations, Save the Children has assembled a dedicated team of 122 members who have received training in Emergency Response. Furthermore, the organization has strategically prepositioned nearly 10,000 kits across five different geographic locations. The response team has already initiated relief distribution activities in Bajhang. Additionally, immediate basic relief items for 200 households have been dispatched from Save the Children's Dhangadhi warehouse, which is the closest facility to the earthquake's epicenter.

On October 10, the Bajhang District Police Office organized a coordination meeting to discuss security arrangements during relief distribution. The DSP emphasized the importance of involving and seeking support from the local Nepal Police office during relief distribution. He advised agencies to engage at least one police personnel during the distribution process.



Furthermore, he assured that all police posts are aware of the ongoing relief efforts and that Nepal

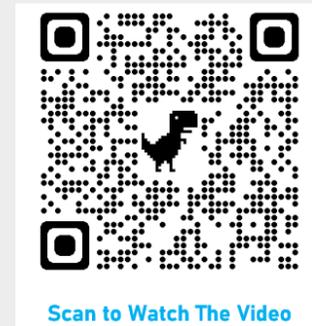
Police is ready to provide support as needed. He also shared the District Police Office's contact number and encouraged agencies to reach out in case of security concerns.

2. Scenario After Earthquake Damages

Bal Bikash Secondary School Seeks Support for Reopening

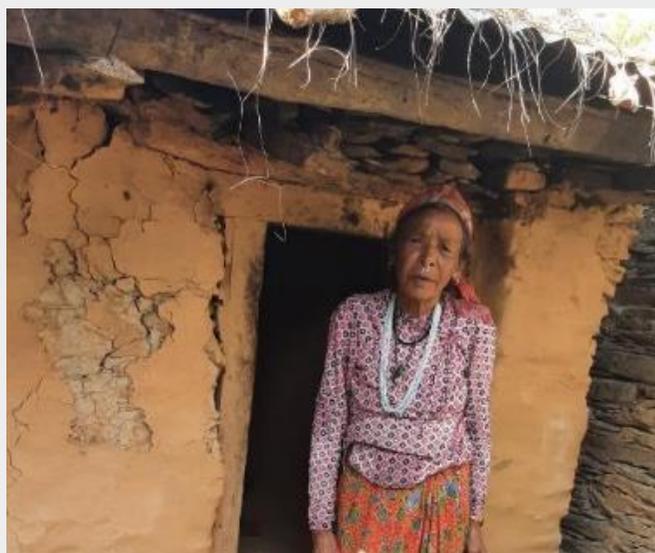
Bal Bikash Secondary School, located in Golai, Jayaprithvi Municipality-4, Bajhang, accommodates students up to the 12th grade, with a total enrollment of 290 students. Unfortunately, a significant portion of the school infrastructure, including classrooms, the laboratory, computer lab, administration area, and storage section, has been damaged due to the earthquake. Additionally, the school's kitchen and dishes were buried under debris as a result of the seismic event. Mr.

Narendra Upadhyay, a teacher at Bal Bikash Secondary School in Golai, Bajhang, shared that, in response to the initial aftershock, students were quickly sent home, minimizing the risk to their lives. Currently, the school remains closed with the notice of Jayaprithvi Municipality. The school administration is appealing to potential donors for assistance in constructing Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) and resuming educational activities. A video showcasing the extent of the classroom damage is available for viewing by clicking on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXoNaj3Fqhk> or by scanning the attached QR code.



70-Year-Old Auji's Struggle After Earthquake

Ms. Jalu Auji, a 70-year-old woman, from Jayaprithvi Municipality ward no 11 Bhopur Bajhang has faced immense hardship following the recent earthquake. She tragically lost her husband and one of her sons at an early age. Her other two sons now reside in Bangalore, India, leaving her to live alone in their family home. Unfortunately, her house was severely damaged by an earthquake, and she has



not received any support, such as tarps or other essentials. Consequently, she has been forced to live in her damaged house.

Eight Health Institutions Totally Damaged, Yet Service Continues

Eight health institutions have been fully devastated, while another 34 have incurred minor damages due to the recent earthquake. Impressively, despite the extensive destruction, the flow of health services has remained uninterrupted. Our team observed that these institutions, even those completely ruined, have shown remarkable resilience. They continue to serve the community by operating from makeshift offices, ensuring that healthcare remains accessible to those in need.



3. Heartbreaking Loss of a family member in Israel brings more sorrow to the Earthquake affected family

The Bajhang earthquake struck, bringing ruin to many homes, including that of the Nepali family from Jayaprithvi Municipality. The aftershocks of the disaster rendered their mud masonry house uninhabitable. The plight of many in the area. As they were coming to terms with the destruction, news



from abroad darkened their doorstep. Ganesh Kumar Nepali, the younger son who visited to Israel for higher education just a month prior, was tragically caught in a violent attack by Hamas, becoming one of the ten Nepali students killed. While they faced the twin tragedies of their collapsed home and the irreplaceable loss of Ganesh, the family awaited governmental support to

repatriate their beloved son for his final rites. Amid this overwhelming sorrow, the DPNet team reached out, standing by the family in their bad time.

4. Initial Damage Assessment Completed by Local Government

The initial damage assessment has been completed by the local governments. Data from all 12 local governments reporting earthquake damage during yesterday's DDMC meeting and collected by the DPNet team in Bajhang. However, it's essential to note that comprehensive assessment data, which needs proper verification, is still pending and may take more time than initially predicted.

| SN | Name of Local Government | Private Houses | | Government Buildings (Schools, Health Post, Local Government Offices etc.) | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| | | Completely Damaged | Partially Damaged | Completely Damaged | Partially Damaged |
| 1 | Masta Rural Municipality | 393 | 924 | 17 | 27 |
| 2 | Chhabispathivera Rural Municipality | 150 | 789 | 6 | 14 |
| 3 | Durgathali Rural Municipality | 184 | 384 | NA (0) | NA (0) |
| 4 | Khaptadchhanna Rural Municipality | 245 | 780 | 13 | 5 |
| 5 | Thalara Rural Municipality | 664 | 408 | 17 | 14 |
| 6 | Kedarsyun Rural Municipality | 206 | 848 | 23 | NA (0) |
| 7 | Jayaprithvi Municipality | 482 | 853 | 6 | 22 |
| 8 | Bungal Municipality | 74 | 479 | 9 | 21 |
| 9 | Saipal Rural Municipality | 18 | 69 | 1 | 12 |
| 10 | Surma Rural Municipality | NA (0) | 203 | NA (0) | 4 |
| 11 | Talkot Rural Municipality | 23 | 258 | 10 | 6 |
| 12 | Bitthadchir Rural Municipality | 6 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | | 2445 | 5995 | 102 | 134 |

5. Expansion of Seismometer Network Enhances Earthquake Monitoring in Bajhang

In an effort to strengthen earthquake monitoring in Bajhang, significant steps have been taken to install additional seismometers, or seismic instruments, in the region. The Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), in partnership with the Department of Mines and Geology, has

launched a project to deploy more seismometers in areas susceptible to earthquakes. Dr. Shiba Subedi, geophysicist affiliated with NAST, disclosed that a central foundation has been established in Chainpur, the district's headquarters, to serve as the installation hub. Seismometers are being strategically placed in various directions. Notably, installations have already been completed in Khaulabazar of Talkot Municipality on Sunday and in Daulichaur of Surma Municipality on Monday. Preparations are currently underway for installation in the southern region of Jayaprithvi Municipality. This comprehensive distribution of seismometers in all directions, including east, west, north, and south, will significantly improve the speed and precision of earthquake event determinations. These determinations include identifying the earthquake's epicenter, determining the precise timing of seismic events, and accurately gauging their magnitudes on the Richter scale.

Prior to this initiative, only one seismometer had been operational in Bajhang, located in Bayana within the Khaptadchanna region. However, this single seismometer had limitations, as it could only detect the earthquake's epicenter within a range of four to five kilometers. Pinpointing the exact location within that range presented considerable challenges. With the placement of multiple instruments in all directions outside the earthquake-affected area, the process of swiftly and accurately locating the epicenter has been significantly streamlined. As of the preparation of this report on October 10, a total of 42 monitoring stations have been established nationwide to closely observe earthquake activity. As of today, almost 450 earthquakes with their epicenters around Chainpur have been recorded.

6. Challenges and Recommendations in Relief, Response and Reconstruction

a. Data Reliability and Accuracy: The reported damage data appears to be highly exaggerated, with partial damage often recorded as full damage. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct independent field verification before commencing any recovery or reconstruction efforts.

b. Need vs. Supply: Based on interactions with affected individuals, it appears unlikely that people will use tarpaulins and other shelter materials for temporary shelters. Many have already improvised makeshift shelters or continue to reside in cracked houses. The data on damage seems to be manipulated to secure relief and reconstruction grants, resulting in a lower actual need for temporary shelter.

c. Food Requirements: The earthquake did not damage grain supplies, so there is no inherent need for additional food items. However, some agencies are providing food items, including biscuits, which may not align with local requirements and may lead to issues in their utilization.

d. Winter Preparedness: Considering the upcoming cold season and the potential for people to remain outside their homes due to aftershocks, the most critical needs are warm clothing, mattresses, and blankets. Agencies should focus on providing these essentials, particularly to economically marginalized communities and families.

e. Government Investment: The government's financial investment in relief efforts in Bajhang has been minimal. While humanitarian agencies have provided relief materials, the government should collaborate on the construction of permanent structures, such as classrooms, school buildings, health posts, and other public and government buildings.

f. Government Expectations: Government representatives have been seeking assurance from humanitarian agencies for reconstruction support, although this was not documented in meeting minutes. This reliance on NGOs and international agencies for disaster risk reduction and management responsibilities is noteworthy.

g. Recovery vs. Reconstruction: Given the earthquake's impact, the need for recovery is minimal, and agencies should shift their focus from traditional processes to advocating for and supporting the government in expediting reconstruction efforts. Reconstruction support could be achieved within the next eight months if local governments are assigned clear responsibilities and accountabilities.

h. Building Back Better: To address the issue of poorly constructed buildings, mason training should be a top priority. Engineers should also receive training to incorporate local construction materials into their designs. Designs should provide flexibility to allow local residents to maintain the traditional appearance of their houses while ensuring earthquake resilience.

i. Implementation of Building Codes: Prioritizing the implementation of building codes, with various design options and prototypes, is essential. Each local government should be accountable for ensuring that new houses are constructed using appropriate technologies.

j. Impact Assessment and Database: To address discrepancies in data reported by different local governments, data collection formats should be simplified and the process strengthened. The terminology used, such as 'fully damaged,' 'completely damaged,' and 'partially damaged,' should be clarified, and forms should be updated to align with Nepal's local context.

k. Relief Standards: While agencies have claimed to follow Sphere Project Standards, these standards are minimum guidelines and not a strict mathematical scale. Agencies should contextualize the provision of Sphere Standard.



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