



Rasuwa-Nuwakot-Dhading Flash Flood 2026

Context, Damage & Humanitarian Needs Analysis — Update

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This analysis compiles verified government data, UN agency estimates, and media/field reporting available as of the date and time above. Casualty and damage figures are preliminary and are being revised — in some cases upward by the hour — as search, rescue and assessment operations continue in remote, hard-to-reach terrain, and as different bulletins (Nepal Police, OCHA, foreign missions) report at slightly different times. Figures should be treated as indicative of scale, not final counts. UniCoN will issue further updates as more verified information becomes available.

1. Executive Summary

At approximately 8:40 AM on Wednesday, 26 August 2026, a sudden glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) originating on the Tibetan side of the Nepal-China border sent a catastrophic wall of water, mud, and debris down the Bhote Koshi and Trishuli river corridor into Rasuwa district, Nepal. The flood tore through Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha, and Chitwan districts, destroying entire settlements, markets, hydropower infrastructure, roads, bridges, schools, and government offices along a roughly 70-kilometre stretch of river.

As of 28 August 2026 (~9:00 AM Nepal time), Nepal Police have confirmed 469 deaths, with approximately 1,400 people — including more than 500 foreign nationals from 32 countries — still unaccounted for, making this one of the deadliest disasters in Nepal's modern history. A further 3 deaths and 558 people missing have been reported on the Tibetan side of the border. Preliminary government estimates put physical infrastructure damage at roughly NPR 200 billion (approx. USD 1.3-1.5 billion), a figure expected to rise once formal, district-level assessments are completed.

United Community Nepal (UniCoN) is a Pokhara-based Not-for-profit, social organisation over years of grassroots experience in Gandaki Province and neighbouring districts. In response to this disaster, UniCoN has activated an [emergency relief campaign](#) to mobilise resources for affected communities in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, and Dhading, and is sharing this analysis to help stakeholders, donors, and funding partners understand the scale of need and make informed decisions about where support can have the greatest impact.

2. Background: What Happened

Preliminary scientific assessment indicates the flood was triggered by a sudden ice/rock collapse near a glacial lake on the Tibetan plateau, which caused the lake to breach catastrophically [10]. The resulting flood entered Nepal through the Bhote Koshi River at Timure, Rasuwa, before surging downstream into the Trishuli and Narayani river systems, affecting communities as far south as Chitwan district. The event also caused major destruction on the Chinese side of the border, including near-total destruction of the Gyirong Port crossing, an important trade and pilgrimage route between Nepal and China.

The flood struck on a weekday morning as schools and offices were opening, which contributed both to the scale of casualties and to a number of narrow escapes where early warning allowed evacuation.

3. Human and Economic Impact — At a Glance

Indicator	Figure (as of 28 August 2026, ~9:00 AM NPT)
Confirmed deaths (Nepal)	579 [1]
Missing persons (Nepal)	~2,400, including 500+ foreign nationals from 32 countries (figures range 1,000-1,400+ across bulletins) [1][1b]
Confirmed deaths / missing (Tibet, China side)	5 dead / 558 missing [1]
Households in urgent need of relief	~10,000 (OCHA estimate) [2]
Children in need of humanitarian assistance	17,000 (UNICEF estimate) [3]
Schools destroyed / damaged (national total)	18 destroyed, 20 damaged (UNICEF) [3]
Districts primarily affected	Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha, Chitwan
Preliminary infrastructure damage estimate	NPR ~200 billion (approx. USD 1.3-1.5 billion) [4]
Hydropower/solar generation capacity damaged	~430 MW across 13+ projects [5]
Bridges destroyed (confirmed)	32 bridges nationally (TIME) [16]; district split of 13/14/5 (Rasuwa/Nuwakot/Dhading) from early field tallies, not yet nationally confirmed [6]
Major road sections destroyed	~40-58 km of the Betrawati-Rasuwadaghi corridor (estimates vary by source) [7][16]

Rescue operations remain extremely difficult. Many of the worst-affected areas, particularly in Rasuwa, can only be reached by helicopter, and thick mud deposits have left few safe helicopter landing sites. Ongoing risk of further glacial lake outburst flooding on the Tibetan side has led Chinese authorities to issue additional high-risk warnings for communities downstream.

4. Sector Impact

4.1 Roads, Bridges & Connectivity

The Department of Roads confirms that the entire road corridor linking Betrawati (Nuwakot) to the Rasuwadaghi border crossing — Nepal's main overland trade and pilgrimage route to Tibet — has been destroyed at multiple points, including several concrete bridges [7]. Reports vary on the total length affected: TIME magazine reports nearly 40 km of road swept away nationally [16], while a further ~16 km stretch nearer the border is separately reported destroyed [7], putting combined estimates in the 40-58 km range. TIME also confirms 32 bridges destroyed overall [16]; early field tallies by district put this at 13 in Rasuwa, 14 in Nuwakot, and 5 in Dhading [6], though this district-level breakdown has not yet been independently confirmed by a national authority. The Department of Roads' own preliminary estimate attributes roughly NPR 15 billion of the total damage specifically to road infrastructure [17]. With road access severed, nearly all relief and rescue operations are currently dependent on helicopter transport, sharply limiting the volume of aid that can reach affected communities.

4.2 Energy & Hydropower

The flood has significantly damaged Nepal's hydropower sector in the Trishuli corridor. The Nepal Electricity Authority reports approximately 430 MW of generation capacity affected across production, transmission, and distribution

facilities [5], including the Upper Trishuli-1, Rasuwagadhi, Rasuwa Bhotekoshi, Sanjen Khola, Upper Mailung A, Mailung Khola, Langtang Khola, and Chilime projects in Rasuwa, and the Trishuli, Devighat, Upper Trishuli-3A, Upper Trishuli-3B, and Middle Trishuli Ganga projects along with a solar facility in Nuwakot. This has caused significant power supply disruption across the affected region, further complicating communications and relief operations.

4.3 Markets, Livelihoods & Public Institutions

Reports from Rasuwa indicate complete destruction of the district's main markets, riverside residential settlements, government buildings, and bank branches, several of which have been fully swept away [9]. The customs facility at Timure — rebuilt after a comparable flood the previous year — has again been completely destroyed. Nine commercial bank branches were reportedly swept away, and dozens of customs, banking, and security personnel remain unaccounted for. The scale of loss to small businesses, agricultural land, and household livelihoods across the flood corridor is still being assessed.

4.4 Education

Because the flood struck at the start of the school day, its impact on the education sector has been severe. UNICEF's Representative to Nepal, Alice Akunga, confirmed that at least 18 schools have been destroyed and 20 more damaged nationally, with children across Rasuwa and Dhading in particular losing homes, classrooms, and access to medical facilities within a very short span of time [3]. At Tribhuvan Trishul Secondary School in Nuwakot, quick action by the headteacher and teaching staff safely evacuated approximately 1,600 students moments before the school building was swept away [11] — a stark illustration of both the scale of risk faced and the life-saving value of early-warning preparedness. The table below summarises the individual schools verified and documented so far by NCE Nepal district committees and local media; the fuller national picture (18 destroyed/20 damaged) is still being compiled district by district.

S.N.	District	School	Casualties	Infrastructure damage
1	Rasuwa	Timure Community School	Unknown / under assessment	Completely destroyed
2	Rasuwa	Uttargaya School	None reported (students evacuated after warning)	Completely destroyed
3	Rasuwa	Three private schools (names undisclosed)	Unknown / under assessment	Completely destroyed
4	Nuwakot	Tribhuvan Trishul Secondary School	None reported (~1,600 students evacuated by staff)	Swept away
5	Dhading	Bageshwori Secondary School	Unknown / under assessment	Unknown / under assessment
6	Dhading	Jaleswor Secondary School	Unknown / under assessment	Ground floor destroyed
7	Dhading	Amleshwor Gurukul School	Unknown / under assessment	Unknown / under assessment
8	Dhading	Success Academy	Unknown / under assessment	Unknown / under assessment

Sources: onlinekhabar.com [8]; NCE Nepal Dhading District Committee via Dhading Education Development and Coordination Unit (EDCU).

Higher education has also been disrupted: four Kathmandu University students undertaking internships at hydropower projects in Rasuwa remain missing, and Purbanchal University, Sudurpaschim University, Pokhara University, and the Agriculture and Forestry University have all postponed scheduled examinations [12]. With school infrastructure destroyed and many affected areas already characterised by low school density and long travel distances on foot, learning continuity for thousands of children is at serious risk for an extended period, alongside significant psychosocial impact from the trauma experienced.

4.5 Displacement, Shelter & Humanitarian Needs

UN OCHA estimates that approximately 10,000 households require immediate relief assistance, with entire settlements, markets, roads, bridges, and hydropower infrastructure swept away or damaged [2]. UNICEF estimates that 17,000 children are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, with health facilities damaged and water, sanitation, and telecommunications networks disrupted across the affected districts [3]. As of this report, no government or humanitarian body has yet published a confirmed figure for the total number of people displaced — OCHA has identified this as a priority information gap for the coming days.

The Government of Nepal's Ministry of Finance has allocated NPR 20 billion for immediate disaster response through the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund [13], on top of targeted district allocations of NPR 10 million each to Rasuwa and Nuwakot and NPR 5 million to Dhading for immediate relief and rescue operations [14]. Public and private-sector donations are also flowing in rapidly — the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund reportedly received NPR 273.3 million from public contributions within the first six hours of being opened [15], alongside pledges from banks, telecoms, and business associations. Even so, these amounts fall well short of the roughly NPR 200 billion in estimated damage.

5. UniCoN's Response

United Community Nepal (UniCoN) has been closely monitoring the situation in coordination with district-level networks and community structures. In response, UniCoN has:

- Activated an emergency relief campaign to mobilise resources for flood-affected communities in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, and Dhading districts;
- Begun coordinating with local partners and community structures in the affected districts to identify priority needs and reachable communities as access improves;
- Committed to channel funds raised toward the most urgent, verified needs — including emergency shelter, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), food and non-food relief items, and support for learning continuity for affected children — as assessments are confirmed;
- Committed to transparent, regular reporting to donors and stakeholders on funds raised and their use.

6. Call to Action

The scale of this disaster far exceeds the capacity of government relief funds released so far. Stakeholders, donors, and funding partners can support the response by:

- Contributing to UniCoN's emergency relief fund for Rasuwa, Nuwakot, and Dhading — via UniCoN's active fundraising campaign [Globalgiving.com UniCoN's emergency fundraising](https://globalgiving.com/unicon-emergency-fundraising) ;
- Supporting learning-continuity and psychosocial support programming for children whose schools have been destroyed or damaged;

- Connecting UniCoN with additional in-kind resources (shelter materials, WASH supplies, medical support) that can be channelled through UniCoN's community networks;
- Sharing verified information from this report with your own networks to support informed, coordinated giving.

UniCoN will issue further updates as verified assessment data becomes available and as the response evolves. For partnership, donation, or media enquiries, please contact United Community Nepal, Pokhara, Nepal.

Sources

- [1] Nepal Police bulletin, cited in ABC News (Australia), "Nepal-Tibet floods live updates: Death toll reaches 469," updated 28 August 2026, ~8:22 AM NPT (12:37 PM AEST); Tibet-side figures per Chinese state media, same bulletin cycle.
- [1b] NBC News, "Live updates: Massive flash flood on Nepal-Tibet border leaves more than 1,000 missing, including U.S. tourists," 28 August 2026 (reports 469 dead, 1,000+ missing, 500+ foreign nationals from 32 countries unaccounted for; figures fluctuate between bulletins as verification continues).
- [2] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), cited in "How people can help Nepal's flood-affected communities," The Kathmandu Post, 27 August 2026.
- [3] UNICEF, "Flash floods in Nepal leave thousands of children in urgent need of humanitarian assistance," [unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org), and statement by Alice Akunga, UNICEF Representative to Nepal, cited in ABC News, 28 August 2026 (18 schools destroyed, 20 damaged; figures expected to rise).
- [4] Sunil Lamsal, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, cited in OnlineKhabar English News, "Rasuwa floods cause infrastructure damage estimated at Rs 200 billion," 26 August 2026 (preliminary figure; full damage assessment pending).
- [5] Nepal Electricity Authority statement, cited in Al Jazeera, "Rescuers search for survivors after Nepal-China floods kill at least 165," 26-27 August 2026; project list per Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation press release, 26 August 2026, reported by International Water Power magazine.
- [6] Field reports compiled by NCE Nepal District Committees (Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading) and verified social media/photo documentation, 26-27 August 2026.
- [7] Department of Roads, Government of Nepal, cited in Nepal Disaster Update Live briefing, 27 August 2026.
- [8] Onlinekhabar, "Floods damage 7 schools in Rasuwa and Nuwakot," 26 August 2026; NCE Nepal Dhading District Committee via Dhading Education Development and Coordination Unit (EDCU).
- [9] Kathmandu Post, "Major flood damages Syabrubesi hydropower projects in Rasuwa," 26 August 2026.
- [10] The Guardian, "Nepal-Tibet flash flood: visual guide - why and how the flooding happened," 27 August 2026.
- [11] Deshsanchar, 26 August 2026, on the evacuation of Tribhuvan Trishul Secondary School, Nuwakot.
- [12] University postponement notices: Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University, Sudurpaschim University, Pokhara University, and Agriculture and Forestry University, via official social media channels, 26-27 August 2026 (not yet corroborated by a national news outlet at time of writing — treat as provisional).
- [13] Farsight Nepal, "Nepal receives emergency assistance as relief operations continue," 27-28 August 2026 (Ministry of Finance allocation of NPR 20 billion via the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund).
- [14] Ratopati, "रसुवा बाढी : रसुवा र नुवाकोटलाई तत्काल १/१ करोड दिने सरकारको निर्णय," 26-27 August 2026 (NPR 10 million each to Rasuwa and Nuwakot, NPR 5 million to Dhading via district disaster management committees).
- [15] OnlineKhabar English News, "Rs 273.3 million raised for PM's disaster relief fund in first six hours," 27-28 August 2026.
- [16] TIME, "Nepal Flash Floods Leave Over 380 Dead and Hundreds More Missing, Including Foreign Nationals," 27 August 2026 (32 bridges and nearly 40 km of road confirmed swept away).
- [17] 2026 Nuwakot Flood, Wikipedia, citing Director of the Department of Roads Bijaya Jaishi (preliminary estimate of NPR 15 billion in road/bridge damage), accessed 28 August 2026.