



**Baby Shreya was just eight days old when the earthquake hit Nepal. Her family live in Nuwakot District, one of the hardest hit regions.**  
© UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sanchez

# Earthquake in Nepal

## Thank you for your support!

**UNHCR has been helping thousands of families survive the strongest earthquake to hit Nepal in 80 years**

The effects of the earthquake that struck Nepal on 25 April remain

devastating but the situation is improving day by day. Thanks to the incredible support received so far, we are pleased to report that **UNHCR's has received almost \$4.2 million which we have put to work immediately for survivors**. This has gone a huge way towards providing protection from the elements and helping families survive both the physically and psychologically in the aftermath of this tragic crisis.

UNHCR's role in this disaster was to provide immediate materials for shelter, and offer legal and psychosocial support to the hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes. We are so grateful to supporters for coming on board to help us with this challenge. With your help, we have been able to reach more people, faster, with vital supplies – helping to ensure that no more lives were lost following this tragedy.

The report that follows shows what UNHCR has been focusing on since the moment the earthquake struck. **Now that other reconstruction and development agencies have arrived and are in place to start the rebuilding phase of the response, UNHCR has handed over to them and our needs for emergency response are now met.** We will of course remain in Nepal and continue our work with refugees from Tibet and Bhutan.

### **UNHCR in Action – What have we achieved?**

**UNHCR was the FIRST agency to respond on the ground...** Before the earthquake even struck, UNHCR was fully operational on the ground, having spent the last 30 years supporting nearly 40,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Tibet and Bhutan in Nepal. Some 21,000 refugees from Bhutan live in two camps we support in the Eastern Region, and for the last 30 years we have been keeping them safe while negotiating with Governments to end their plight and help them find home again.

**Within 24 hours of the earthquake, our staff on the ground had delivered 11,000 plastic sheets, 4,000 solar lamps and other basic supplies to meet the most urgent needs of survivors.** 100% of our supplies in country, normally used for the refugee populations, were immediately redirected to provide support in the Eastern Region - including the emptying of the UN staff food store. **We gave away literally everything we had within hours.** UNHCR is the only agency present in the 3 eastern provinces where we focused our initial support. We also provided vital shelter materials in Kathmandu in the days that followed. The map below shows where we focused our distributions.



## Nepal Earthquake: UNHCR distributions

Following the 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25 April 2015

As of 28 May 2015

Interactive version available at <http://data.unhcr.org/nepal/shelter>

### ITEMS DISTRIBUTED

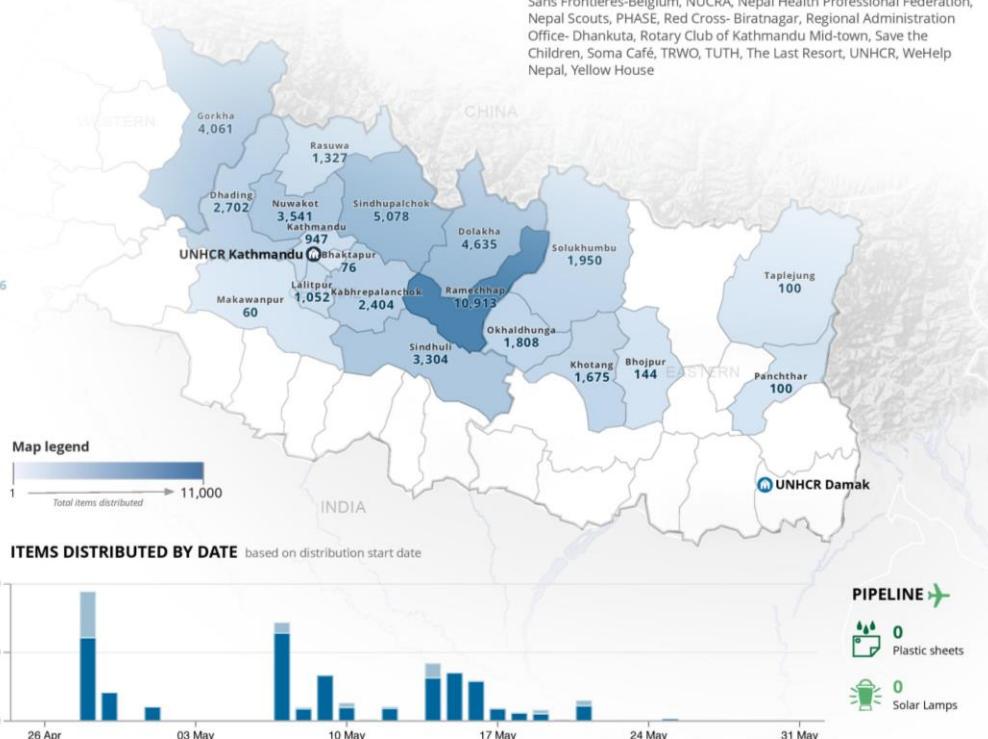
**41,575**  
Plastic sheets

**8,032**  
Solar lamps

### 19 RECEIVING DISTRICTS

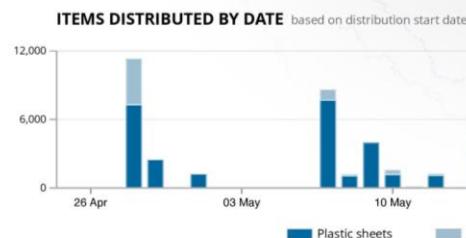
	Plastic sheets	Solar lamps
Ramechhap	8,287	2,626
Sindhupalchok	4,674	404
Dolakha	4,103	532
Gorkha	3,594	467
Nuwakot	3,130	411
Sindhuli	2,800	504
Dhading	2,288	414
Kabrepalanchok	1,954	450
Solukhumbu	1,410	540
Okhaldhunga	1,520	288
Khotang	1,585	90
Rasuwa	1,177	150
Lalitpur	1,052	0
Kathmandu	777	170
Bhojpur	0	144
Panchthar	100	0
Taplejung	100	0
Bhaktapur	76	0
Makawanpur	60	0

### ITEMS DISTRIBUTED BY DISTRICT



Sources: UNHCR, Mapbox, OCHA, UNRCO (Nepal)

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## We provided shelter

With around 500,000 houses destroyed and 270,000 damaged, providing shelter was UNHCR's utmost priority. An estimated 2.8 million people were living in the open and in need of urgent assistance. With the rainy season following just weeks after the earthquake, the needs were all the more pressing. Sleeping outside can have the most devastating effect on health – particularly for the very young, the very old and the 14,000 or more people who were injured. Helping families stay warm and dry has gone a long way towards preventing more tragic deaths as a result of this disaster.

To support families hard at work repairing their homes or creating their own temporary accommodation, UNHCR initially delivered **over 40,000 tarpaulins**. This was in response to requests on the ground: by combining tarpaulins with wood and bricks already available, families can build structures that are more flexible than tents. Tarpaulins are also lighter and more compact, saving space for more supplies by air. In the weeks that followed we

continued to organise the international and in-country transportation of materials needed to help people make their homes safe and habitable as quickly as possible. We provided a further **60,000 tarpaulins and 50,000 blankets** and made sure they reached those who most needed them.

**"I am grateful to the Bhutanese refugees for helping to build my bamboo hut. At least now we have a durable roof and I don't have to worry about rain and windstorms, my seven grandchildren can now sleep tight!"**

73-year-old Pancha Maya Tamang who had been living under a plastic sheet for over a month

**Blutanese refugees are continuing to help Nepalese families rebuild their homes...** After decades of Nepal extending a generous welcome to refugees, many from Bhutan, this refugee community were extraordinary in their response to the earthquake. They quickly organised a collection amongst the camp communities of their own family food rations which they generously donated to their



Nepalese neighbouring villages where people had lost everything. UNHCR is now supported a team of 15 refugees in a unique building project to help local Nepalese families affected by the earthquake in two villages in Ramechap District. These skilled refugees constructed two small model bamboo shelters and provided on-site support some 22 households to construct similar shelters using local materials, practiced techniques and UNHCR plastic sheeting.

**Refugees from Bhutan assisting in the rebuilding of Nepalese family homes.  
UNHCR/Nepal**

This wonderful initiative also helped refugees and host communities come together – one positive outcome from this desperate tragedy.

### **We protected health and helped people feel safer and stay in touch with relatives**

In addition to building materials, UNHCR provided **mosquito nets to 40-50,000 families**, an estimated 20,000 of which were for larger families (2 per family) or families with special vulnerabilities such as those with disabled or elderly members. We covered the 12 most affected districts giving priority to families with pregnant women and children under five.

Around **16,000 solar lanterns** were also distributed in total – providing light in at night helping people to feel safer. Some of these can also be used to re-charge mobile telephones, helping people to find relatives and stay in touch.

### **We supported education**

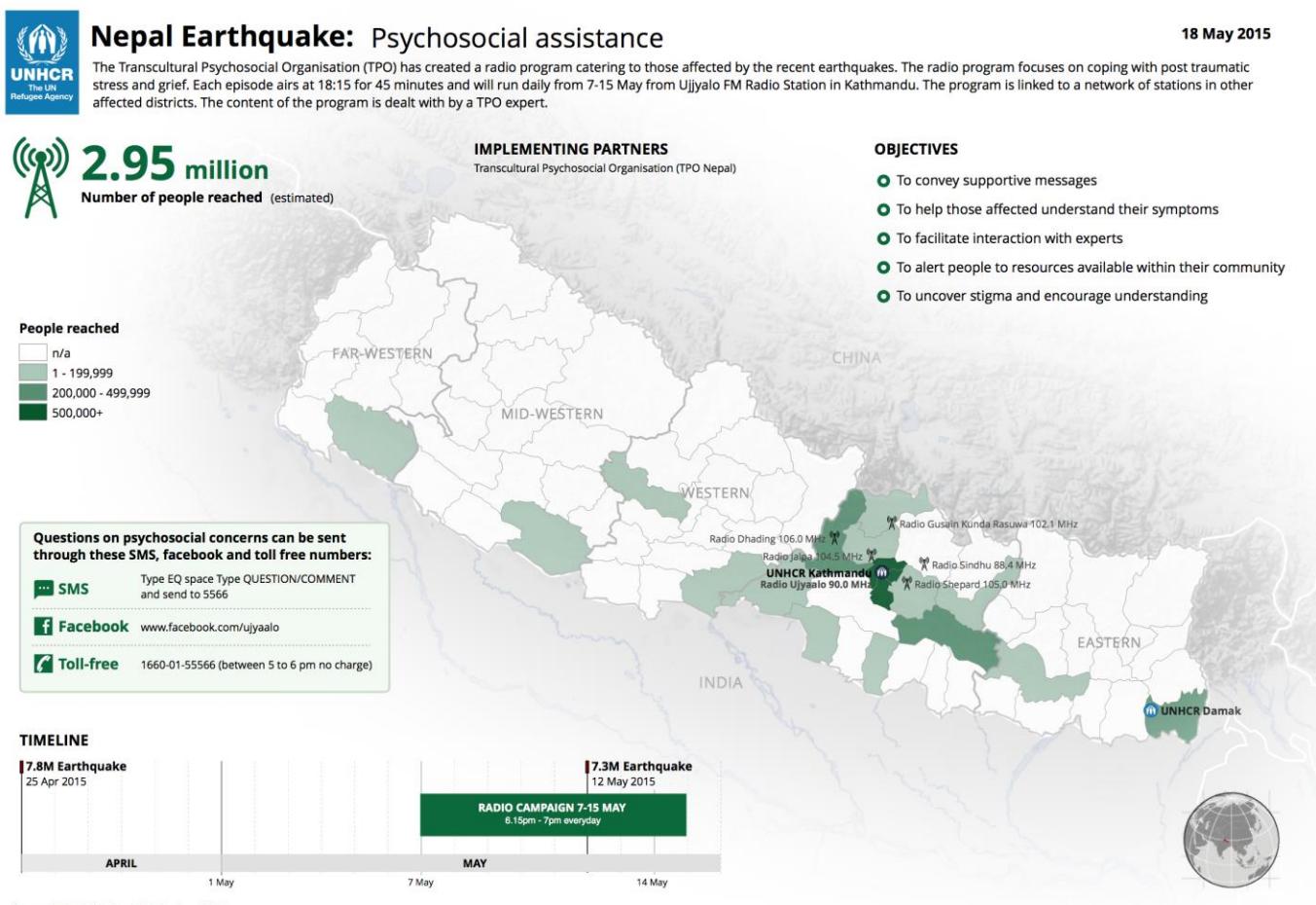
Thanks to concerted efforts, **many public schools reopened on 31 May** – an amazing achievement, allowing children to continue their education despite the disruption to their homes and communities. UNHCR tarpaulins were used for communal shelters providing medical care, spaces for children to play and school spaces. It is vital that children's education continues so that their learning progress isn't interrupted. School also goes a long way towards providing some sense of normality in the aftermath of such traumatic events, and teachers and friends help to offer much needed emotional support.

**Children are able to attend school again in little over a months after the earthquake struck.  
UNHCR/Nepal**



## We continue to provide psychological and emotional support

As well as the practical and physical challenges following the earthquake and its aftershocks, the psychological trauma of losing homes and loved ones has been making recovery all the more tough. It has been hard for people to know where to seek help or find the right people to talk to. In response to this, UNHCR supported an interactive radio programme that initially reached 1.5 million listeners with practical advice on how to identify and overcome symptoms of anxiety and help children and other family members recover from the emotional trauma of the earthquake. Messages could be sent to experts by phone, SMS or through Facebook. This was so successful that the radio program was extended for another month. It has now reached some 3 million people and, according to many earthquake-affected families, has been a lifeline in helping to answer incredibly difficult questions, address fears and provide a safe space for discussion on anxiety and trauma.



UNHCR has also reached around 5,000 people through monitoring visits to determine the needs and support required. Counselling has been given to around 500 individuals, families and vulnerable groups. Communities have also been made aware of the risks of family separation after a disaster, as well as the risks of trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable women and children. This has been done through 30 awareness-raising meetings with local authorities and community leaders - helping to ensure everyone does their utmost to protect the most vulnerable through this traumatic time.

## We continue to provide legal support

In the chaos of losing their homes, many people also lost their identification documents, and some didn't have them in the first place. Often identification is needed to access the services everyone is entitled to. Discrimination can be more acute following a natural disaster and UNHCR has been taking special care to ensure that everyone receives the support they are entitled to – whatever their background or legal status.

UNHCR worked to address this problem through legal advocacy and assistance in 8 districts throughout Nepal. Responding to natural disasters has traditionally been seen as a compassionate response to people in need. While compassion remains at the core, we must be aware that there can often be unequal access to assistance through discrimination, sexual violence, loss of documentation, trafficking and child abuse, unsafe resettlement and issues of property restitution. Thus, our major goal in establishing a legal assistance desk is to **ensure that everyone has proper, fair access to the relief assistance and support.** No one should be left out because they are without citizenship, or because they were tenants rather than property owners, and therefore are not counted for compensation, or because she is a woman or from a minority group. Natural disasters exacerbate existing gender inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities, and we want to be sure that none of the victims of this disaster are re-victimised during the recovery process.

***UNHCR would like to thank all the donors who gave generously to this vital lifesaving work... we will continue to provide support in conjunction with the reconstruction and development agencies in the coming months...***

NEPAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE		
PSFR COUNTRY or National Fundraising Partner	Total amount for Individual giving (Miscellaneous donors)	Amount of LG/HNWI contribution
<b>TRANSFERRED AND PLEDGED CONTRIBUTIONS</b>		
	Individual Giving (IG)	Leadership Giving (LG)
Australia for UNHCR	395,717.00	
Japan for UNHCR	279,083.00	
Sweden for UNHCR	200,000.00	
USA for UNHCR	100,000.00	412,500.00
Canada	195,098.00	
China (Hong Kong)	382,873.00	
France	67.00	
Greece	332.00	
Italy	445,173.00	228,026.00
Kazakhstan		30,000.00
Korea	94,948.00	
Philippines	3,837.00	
Portugal		66,372.00
Romania	2,766.00	
Saudi Arabia	22,485.34	200,000.00
Singapore		100,000.00
Spain - ECA	620,000.00	
Switzerland	1,908.00	48,008.00
Thailand	1,329.00	31,502.00
UAE	1,633.51	6,811.00
United Kingdom		50,000.00
UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe	27,747.00	
<b>Total to date (more to come!): \$3,948,215</b>		

## **Refugees from Bhutan help Nepalese rise from the ruins**



**Refugees & locals build a temporary bamboo hut ©UNHCR/D.D.Shrestha**

**RAMECHHAP, Nepal, June 11, Deepesh Das Shrestha in Ramechhap, UNHCR Nepal**

Wielding a khukuri – a traditional curved Nepalese knife –Sancha Hang Subba chops a bamboo with ultimate precision, turning it into fine pieces of stick to be used for building shelters.

Along with 14 fellow refugees from Bhutan who live in camps in eastern Nepal, Subba travelled to this remote mountainous village in central Nepal to help Nepalese families rebuild their lives following the devastating earthquakes of April 25 and May 12 that killed more than 8,700 people, injured some 22,000 more and destroyed at least 500,000 homes.

**"I am glad that I am able to help Nepalese people at this time of crisis," said Subba, 30, who is leading the team. "All these years, we have stayed in close harmony. We are living the life of refugees for political reasons. Now due to the earthquake, many Nepalese families are facing a refugee-like situation."**

Ramechhap district was declared as one of 14 districts most affected by the recent disaster. At least 39 people were killed and more than 90 per cent of the houses damaged. UNHCR was one of the first agencies to distribute tarpaulin in the district. And following a rapid assessment, the agency coordinated with the local authorities to mobilize a team of skilled refugees to help and train the affected population to build shelters using locally available resources like bamboo and wood.

**"People are in real pain as they have been living under the tarps and cowsheds near their flattened houses," said Subba. "They didn't know that they could use bamboo to build temporary shelters. Now they are really excited to know and work with our support."**

The refugees have been working with the earthquake survivors from dusk till dawn and their craftsmanship has become an important foundation in the rebuilding efforts. The team has built three bamboo huts in a small settlement in Ramechhap municipality and are helping another 20 vulnerable households in Saune Danda village in Chyasku.

**"I am grateful to the Bhutanese refugees for helping to build my bamboo hut," said 73-year-old Pancha Maya Tamang, who had been living under a plastic sheet for over a month.**

Until the team's arrival, she had been very worried about her grandchildren due to the fast-approaching monsoon season. **"At least now we have a durable roof and I don't have to worry about rain and windstorms," she said. "My seven grandchildren can now sleep tight."**



**Sancha Hang Subba, a refugee from Bhutan, cuts bamboo with a Khuluri whilst constructing a temporary shelter for earthquake affected families in Ramechhap district in Central Nepal. Subba is leading a 14 member refugee construction team supporting the local community. ©UNHCR/D.D.Shrestha**

raised \$2,500 in the camps and worked with UNHCR and the authorities to deliver food, kitchen and hygiene supplies to 200 affected families in Sindhuli district in central Nepal. Beldangi's deputy camp secretary Tikaram Rasaili, 33, accompanied the 14-hour bus trip to Sindhuli in mid-May.

**"When we arrived in Nepal [in the early 1990s], we were in a desperate situation," he recalled. "But the Nepalese people wholeheartedly opened their arms for us. It is an opportunity to give something back to them at this time of crisis. That's why we made this small effort. We are glad we did."**

There are currently over 21,000 refugees from Bhutan in two camps in eastern Nepal.

A local youth was also impressed by the support. "I didn't know about building shelters from bamboo. I am really glad they are here to help and train us," said 21-year-old Regan Shrestha, who worked with the refugees to build a hut for his family.

"I am learning new skills from them. This will help me to get back on my feet," said Shrestha. "There is a shortage of skilled people in the village to rebuild and reconstruct so their arrival is very timely."

Subba, who is the camp secretary of Beldangi refugee camp in Damak, said modestly: **"The need for support is immense and what we are doing is very little. I wish I could be of more help."**

Yet this is not the first time the refugee community is chipping in. Within two weeks of the first quake, they