



Figure 1: A woman carries a small child through the mountainous terrain of Nepal, which becomes increasingly difficult to navigate during the country's monsoon season. (Tomas van Houtryve for International Medical Corps)

Summary

Approximately 2.8 million people in Nepal remain in need of humanitarian assistance due to the April 25 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks, according to the UN. Amid the ongoing monsoon season, humanitarian organizations are seeking more information from the Government of Nepal (GoN) regarding evacuation plans for residents in areas at high risk of landslides. In Gorkha and other affected districts, International Medical Corps continues efforts to expand access to orthopedic and rehabilitative care for people injured in the earthquake. International Medical Corps is also working with partners—including local Nepali organizations—to provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, assist earthquake-affected women and girls, and help vulnerable populations meet their food security and nutrition needs, in addition to conducting other activities.

Highlights

- International Medical Corps' emergency response team (ERT) launched a new mobile physical therapy unit to provide care for orthopedic patients unable to reach hospitals or clinics; the unit visited 20 patients in the past week.
- Working with Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal (TPO Nepal), International Medical Corps is supporting the integration of MHPSS services into Nepal's primary health care facilities.
- With support from International Medical Corps, the Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) has established 10 safe spaces for women and girls in Gorkha and Dhading districts.

1. Situational Overview

More than two months since the Nepal earthquake, the UN estimates that 2.8 million people remain in need of humanitarian relief, including 2.3 million people not currently living in their original houses. Data from the International Organization for Migration indicates that more than 100,000 people continue to live in open-air displacement sites, while hundreds of thousands of people are residing in makeshift shelters. In the health sector, humanitarian organizations have identified several priorities, such as essential medicines for district health offices and remote health posts; reestablishment of disrupted primary health care services, including routine immunizations; improved disease surveillance of water- and vector-borne diseases; and provision of maternal and reproductive health care services, as well as orthopedic care.

One month into the annual monsoon season, heavy rains, floods, and landslides continue to generate difficulties for earthquake-affected communities. In Gorkha District—the location of the magnitude 7.8 earthquake’s epicenter—joint assessments by humanitarian agencies and local authorities suggest that approximately 2,550 households across 12 village development committees (VDCs) are particularly vulnerable to landslides, falling rocks, and floods. On June 30, the GoN issued a directive that households in high-risk zones of Nepal’s affected districts must temporarily relocate to safer areas by mid-July. The humanitarian community is assisting District Disaster Relief Committees with developing evacuation plans, and the UN Humanitarian Country Team is following up with the GoN for more details, including the duration of the evacuations, destinations for evacuees, available services for evacuees, and plans for return.

2. International Medical Corps Response

Primary Health Care: International Medical Corps’ ERT recently launched a new mobile physical therapy unit to expand access to rehabilitative care for orthopedic patients in rural areas who are unable to reach hospitals or clinics for follow-up care. From July 5–12, the mobile physical therapy unit provided outreach care to 20 patients in Bhaktapur and Gorkha districts. The mobile unit complements services provided at Gorkha District Hospital, where International Medical Corps provides inpatient services and outpatient care through its physiotherapy unit, which opened last month. On July 17, International Medical Corps will host an orthopedic camp, bringing surgeons from Kathmandu to Gorkha to assist people who sustained injuries in the earthquake. In addition, patients and doctors have begun to utilize the new physical therapy hotline established by International Medical Corps to increase public awareness of available physical therapy services. Patients can also use the line to schedule therapy sessions, while doctors are able to reach International Medical Corps’ physical therapists for assistance with patient screening. Orthopedic care and physical rehabilitation services are part of International Medical Corps’ programmatic focus on supporting the mid-to-long term recovery of Nepal’s health system.



Figure 2: A young boy injured in the earthquake waits to be examined at International Medical Corps’ physiotherapy unit in Gorkha. (Tomas van Houtryve for International Medical Corps)

MHPSS: International Medical Corps is working with a local partner, TPO Nepal, to integrate MHPSS services into Nepal’s primary health care facilities. With support from International Medical Corps, TPO Nepal aims to build the MHPSS capacity of professional health care workers; provide psychosocial counseling services in earthquake-affected communities; and conduct awareness-raising and sensitization activities on mental health and psychosocial conditions, referral options, and

community support. In coordination with the Gorkha District Public Health Office, TPO Nepal has identified 17 earthquake-affected VDCs in which to implement activities.

GBV: In the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake, women and girls face increased protection risks, such as gender-based violence (GBV) or exploitation, due to displacement, the breakdown of social structures, lack of attention on women-specific needs, and widespread psychosocial distress. International Medical Corps and a local partner, WOREC, are providing support to earthquake-affected women and girls in Dhading and Ghorka through the establishment of safe spaces, in which women and girls can access health information, medical and protection consultations, and referral services. WOREC has set up five safe spaces in each district, and 2,820 women and girls have visited the spaces to date. Of the attendees, 681 received dignity kits, which include items such as sanitary napkins, underwear, clothing, a flashlight, soap, and a comb, among other items. Twenty-one trained GBV staff, including midwives, also provided health consultations to 2,169 women and girls who attended the spaces.

Nutrition and Food Security: International Medical Corps and the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) are working together to provide essential agricultural inputs for communities whose food security situation has been negatively affected by the earthquake. With support from International Medical Corps, ACTED has begun distributing seeds and farming tools to affected households in Dhading District. Since the end of June, ACTED has distributed seeds and basic tools—such as rakes, spades, and storage sacks—to 2,444 households. International Medical Corps has also partnered with HelpAge International to provide cash assistance to older Nepalis to help them meet their basic needs, as the elderly are commonly among the most vulnerable populations in an emergency context. With support from International Medical Corps, Help Age International distributed unconditional cash grants of approximately \$75 to more than 5,000 people for the purchase of essential items, such as food, cooking oil, and temporary shelter material. On July 9, International Medical Corps joined HelpAge International on a post-distribution trip to VDCs in Sindhupalchowk District, where most of the recipients reported using the grant to purchase medicine or shelter supplies.

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