

NESRA FloodWatch — Situation Brief #05

Rasuwa / Bhotekoshi–Trishuli Flood 2026

Data cutoff: 30 August 2026, 09:00 NPT **Published:** 30 August 2026, 14:00 NPT **Status:** Active Response / Monitoring / Early Recovery

Phase: initial emergency → sustained search & rescue → evolving secondary hazard → access & infrastructure disruption → expanded satellite mapping → early recovery planning.

1. Executive situation summary

Four days after the 26 August glacial-origin flash flood swept the Lhende Khola into the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli rivers, the Rasuwa response has moved from initial emergency into sustained search, rescue and early recovery. In NDRRMA's 30 August 09:00 NPT update, **734 bodies and human remains** had been recovered across affected Nepali districts, **2,498 people** remained unaccounted for, and **8,186** had been rescued; over 15,000 security personnel and 15 helicopters were mobilised. The immediate barrier-lake overflow pressure has reduced — a lower impoundment has substantially drained — but a second upstream impoundment still requires assessment, and rainfall, unstable slopes and renewed river rise keep downstream flood and landslide risk active. Access has deteriorated on a key artery: Trishuli erosion severed the Muglin–Kathmandu section of the Prithvi Highway at Krishnabhir on 30 August, with only partial, one-way movement for essential vehicles as clearance proceeds; the primary Betrawati–Rasuwagadhi corridor remains severely disrupted. Satellite mapping has expanded — the International Charter now lists eight external products and Copernicus EMS has released rapid-mapping products. NESRA's Rapid EO Assessment v1 remains live, and early recovery and a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment are beginning. Follow DHM, NDRRMA and local authorities for official warnings.

2. Current hazard status

Official / technical information reported by media.

- **River & rainfall:** Bhotekoshi and Trishuli levels were reported below alert on 29 August, but renewed rainfall and river rise on 30 August contributed to fresh erosion downstream. Hydrometeorological risk remains active.
- **Barrier lakes:** the immediate overflow pressure has reduced and a lower impoundment has substantially drained; a second upstream impoundment still requires continued assessment. Reduced lake pressure is not the same as an end to flood, landslide or rainfall risk.
- **Landslide / access:** saturated, unstable slopes continue to threaten roads and isolated communities.

NESRA does not issue warnings. For official warnings, route decisions and public-safety instructions, follow DHM, NDRRMA and relevant government authorities.

3. Latest official impact — Nepal scope

Recovered bodies / human remains 734 NDRRMA, 30 Aug 09:00 NPT · provisional. Reported as a recovered-remains metric, not a final confirmed death toll.	Missing / unaccounted 2,498 NDRRMA, 30 Aug 09:00 NPT · provisional. Foreign nationals are included as a subset, not an additional count.
Rescued 8,186 NDRRMA, 30 Aug 09:00 NPT · national total (Army 2,974 + Police 2,699 + APF 2,513 as reported subsets).	Response mobilisation 15,000+ & 15 helicopters NDRRMA · security personnel and aircraft. A consolidated injured figure was not authoritatively confirmed at this cutoff.

4. Data reconciliation note — why some numbers differ

Figures from different authorities and times are not always directly comparable. NESRA does not add incompatible datasets. Differences arise from: different reporting times (e.g. a 06:00 police recovery count vs a 09:00 NDRRMA update); different authority lists (NDRRMA, Nepal Police) still being reconciled; different definitions (bodies/human remains recovered vs deaths; missing vs out of contact); Nepal-scope vs broader cross-border totals; foreign nationals reported as a subset of the missing, not an additional count; and agency rescue counts (Army/Police/APF) that are subsets of the national NDRRMA total. **Cross-border context:** combined Nepal–Tibet totals reported internationally are larger than Nepal's figures. This brief reports Nepal operational figures only.

5. Search, rescue & humanitarian response

Search, rescue and relief continued across affected districts where weather and access allowed, with security forces, helicopters and inter-agency coordination engaged. Nepal has sought specialised technical assistance — tunnel rescue, transport and communications restoration, body identification, DNA testing and longer-duration body storage — rather than general foreign search-and-rescue teams. Deployment of specific foreign technical teams is not established here as confirmed.

6. Access & critical infrastructure

- **Prithvi Highway (Muglin–Kathmandu):** Trishuli erosion undermined the road base at Krishnabhir (Benighat Rorang, Dhading) on 30 August, severing the corridor; partial, one-way movement for essential vehicles was reported at points as clearance proceeds. Confirm current status with Traffic Police before travel.
- **Dhunche:** the alternative light-vehicle route via Kathmandu–Tokha–Kalikasthan remains open, with caution on risky sections.
- **Primary Rasuwa corridor:** the Betrawati–Rasuwadaghi / Timure–Syabrubesi route remains severely damaged and not open end-to-end; the Rasuwadaghi border road is not open.
- **Infrastructure:** approximately 40 km of road and 41 bridges were reported destroyed or damaged; a broader restoration requirement (~42 Bailey bridges) is distinct from the immediate procurement of 10 long Bailey bridges (~70 m). These are requirements/requests — not confirmed delivered or installed.

Physical condition (state of the structure) is shown separately from passability (whether an authority has established the route is open).

7. NESRA Earth Observation — Rapid EO Assessment v1

NESRA Rapid EO Assessment v1 is live. It is a rapid, cloud-limited Sentinel-2 flood/debris-path and exposure assessment (imagery 27 August 2026). No validated final NESRA flood extent or damage assessment has yet been published.

- 101.6 km river corridor assessed (92 km measured; 4.1 km under solid cloud).
- 3,216 buildings, 11.5 km of major road and 62 bridges intersect the mapped flood/debris path.
- Exposure is not verified damage; areas under cloud must not be read as unaffected — "no evidence" is not "no flooding". Treat the mapped extent as an upper bound requiring field or official verification.

Earth Observation analysis led by **Michael Hylind, NESRA Earth Observation Lead**. Dashboard: npl-flood-dash-356251209726.europe-west1.run.app

8. External Earth Observation

International Charter (activation 1052): eight external products are now listed, spanning Rasuwa pre/post mapping and mudflow/rockflow extent, Nuwakot pre/post damage imagery and a Timure–Syabrubesi impact map. These are external products, not NESRA-generated analysis.

Copernicus EMS (EMSR927): Rapid Mapping products have been released across multiple areas of interest. Within its mapped Syapru Besi area, Copernicus EMS reported **more than 240 buildings destroyed and 32 damaged** (WorldView-3, 27 August 2026).

Do not conflate datasets. The Copernicus figures are an external finding for a specific mapped area and are **not** NESRA findings; they are not comparable with NESRA's 3,216 exposed-building figure (exposure is not verified damage) and must not be generalised to the whole corridor.

9. Recovery & reconstruction

The response is beginning to transition toward recovery. A Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) / detailed loss-and-damage assessment is under development. A preliminary reconstruction requirement of approximately **USD 4–5 billion** has been cited by government. **Preliminary only** — this is an early estimate, not a final damage figure.

10. Key information gaps

- Reconciliation of missing-person lists across authorities and body identification (DNA/forensic management).
- Stability of the remaining upstream impoundment and slope/landslide risk.

- Authoritative road-restoration and passability timelines (Prithvi Highway / Krishnabhir; primary Rasuwa corridor).
- Tunnel / hydropower rescue and restoration status; a consolidated, authority-confirmed injured figure.
- Final loss-and-damage assessment (PDNA); validated final NESRA EO flood extent and YIL geospatial products.

11. Selected sources

- NDRRMA 30 August operational update (impact, missing, rescued, mobilisation), relayed by RSS / national media.
- DHM / Flood Forecasting Division river and barrier-lake status, via RSS and Reuters.
- Department of Roads / Traffic Police and The Kathmandu Post — Prithvi Highway / Krishnabhir and Rasuwa access.
- International Charter activation 1052 (disasterscharter.org); Copernicus EMS EMSR927 (mapping.emergency.copernicus.eu) and EU Space Programme.
- NESRA Rapid EO Assessment v1 (NESRA EO dashboard).

Governance. NESRA owns, operates and publishes FloodWatch and remains its scientific and geospatial lead. FloodWatch Programme Lead — Anamol Mittal, Founder & President, NESRA. NESRA Earth Observation Lead — Michael Hyland. Technology & Innovation Partner — Infinity Innovation Center (IIC), programme-wide. Drone Field Assessment Contributor — Youth Innovation Lab (YIL), Rasuwa 2026. Impact figures are provisional and attributed to their originating authorities. Briefs #01–#04 remain immutable archived snapshots.