

# NEPAL: Western Nepal Earthquake 2023

Situation Report No. 03

As of 16 November 2023

This report is produced by the Humanitarian Country Team Nepal in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by the UNRCO and covers the period from 11-16 November 2023.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- After the initial magnitude 6.4 earthquake that struck Karnali Province in western Nepal on 3 November, a series of over 350 aftershocks further damaged already damaged homes and partially buildings, forcing people to sleep outside in freezing overnight temperatures.
- A week and a half after the earthquake, the life- saving phase of the response is ending, with the Government and humanitarian organizations now focusing on recovery and reconstruction efforts.
- Winterized shelter remains the critical need for long term recovery and reconstruction efforts, particularly with the start of the winter season.
- According to the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC), by 15 November, approximately 62,000 homes were affected (35,455 partially and 26,557 completely damaged) by the earthquake.
- Some 250,000 people were affected <sup>of UNICEF</sup> by the earthquake and require humanitarian assistance according to NEOC.
- Final displacement figures of those most affected are still to be provided by the Government of Nepal.
- As part of reconstruction efforts, the Government approved and issued building guidelines for transitional shelter and will provide 50,000 Nepali Rupees (NPR) (US\$375) to families with completely damaged homes.
- Humanitarian partners continue to dispatch humanitarian relief items from in-country stocks with some delays in distribution related to last-mile transport to remote and hard to reach areas. However, concerns exist that in-country stocks may not be able to cover the longer term needs of transitional and winterized shelter of displaced households.

## 250,000\*

People targeted for Assistance

154 Deaths

366 Injured 35,455

Partially Damaged Households

## 26,557

Completely Damaged Households

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

After the initial magnitude 6.4 earthquake that struck the districts of Jajarkot, Rukum West and Salyan of Karnali Province in western Nepal on 3 November, a series of over 350 aftershocks further damaged already partially damaged homes and buildings, forcing people to sleep outside in freezing overnight temperatures. A week and a half after the initial earthquake, the Government-led live saving phase of the response is concluding, with the Government and humanitarian partners now shifting their efforts to reconstruction and recovery with a focus on the winterization of transitional shelters for those that cannot return to their homes.



In one of the communities most affected by the earthquake that hit western Nepal on 3 November, a family of four stand outside their damaged home, before heading to receive relief supplies. Aathbiskot Municipality in Rukum West District,06 November. Picture courtesy of UNICEF

According to the NEOC, by 15 November, approximately 62,000 homes were affected (35,455 partially damaged, 26,557 completely damaged) by the earthquake. These figures are slightly higher than the 47,428 homes affected (34,299 partially damaged and 13,129 completely damaged) being reported as of 11 November by the Karnali Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC). More clarity on figures is expected as technical assessment teams continue to conduct structural assessments of damaged homes to determine whether they are safe for return or not.

Most affected families have taken to setting up temporary tents next to their damaged homes. Where homes are partially damaged, some people enter and use their homes during daylight hours but sleep outside over fears of aftershocks and homes collapsing. These households will require an intersectoral response focused on winterized



Earthquake-affected community members coping with life after the 6.4 magnitude earthquake, Chepare settlement in Aathbiskot Municipality in Rukum West District, 8 November. Picture courtesy of UNICEF.

transitional shelter until longer term reconstruction can be achieved, particularly with the beginning of the winter season and accompanying rain and snowfall. The situation is further compounded as rainwater is posing a significant risk to partially damaged homes that are fragile and face the risk of collapsing. Debris and rubble removal of damaged or collapsed homes is still required to provide space for appropriate sites in which to build transitional shelters on.

Survivors of the earthquake are also beginning to report health issues related to increasingly cold weather. Public health authorities have warned of outbreaks of communicable and vaccine-preventable diseases in the affected areas as thousands of people are displaced, compromising health and hygiene standards. In response, the Ministry initiated a risk-mapping assessment to launch measles and rubella interventions in the affected areas of Jajarkot and Rukum West districts. The National Immunization Advisory Committee also requested the Ministry of Health and Population to launch an additional vaccination drive against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The earthquake also had devasting impacts on the livelihoods of already vulnerable populations. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the loss of livestock is estimated to be around NPR19 million in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts. However, losses are likely to increase as the Ministry is still collecting information on damage incurred on agricultural plantations and in rice, wheat, maize, and millet production in the affected districts.

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The Government of Nepal continues leading response and coordination efforts with support from the private sector, local NGOs, neighboring countries, and international humanitarian organizations. On 12 November, following a Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Executive Committee meeting, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, the Government approved the transfer of NPR50,000 (US\$376) to every household with completely damaged households for the construction of temporary shelters, to be disbursed in two installments. Transfers will include the minimum standards required for the construction of these shelters. The Government encouraged businesses to make these products available and for volunteers to assist in reconstructing households. The Government also decided to provide free medical treatment to those injured in the earthquake across all hospitals and provided NPR200,000 (\$1,500) to the families of those killed in the earthquake.



Shelter and NFI distributions by the Nepali Red Cross Society. Picture courtesy of the NRCS.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) released 775,395 Swiss Francs (\$872,436) to the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) through its Disaster Response Emergency Fund to support the ongoing response. On 11 November, the Government of the Republic of Korea also provided \$300,000 worth of humanitarian assistance, while local corporations and associations have donated relief supplies and pledged financial support through the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund to provide support to earthquake affected households.

In the provincial capital of Surkhet, Government-led coordination meetings are held regularly with humanitarian partners where updates are shared from the affected districts and municipalities. Assessment teams returning from affected areas report on the ongoing response, gaps, operational challenges, and disease outbreak surveillance. These coordination meetings serve as the entry point for humanitarian organizations in the province to provide support and ensure the coordination of relief items and activities. 5W information of the ongoing response and pipeline of relief supplies is collected and analyzed by the provincial government-led clusters.

UN agencies have strengthened their cluster co-leadership functions, deployed surge personnel to the provincial capital, prepositioned relief items, and facilitated the transportation and storage of assistance. Several agencies are also reprogramming their current activities to meet the pressing humanitarian needs of people affected by the earthquake. Additional response and coordination capacity in terms of additional personnel, is also being brought into the country to bolster the response. The Resident Coordinator's office has already dispatched personnel to the Surkhet and district levels to support local coordination efforts, monitor the response and identify any potential response gaps. It is also exploring possible funding opportunities to ensure the necessary resources to provide assistance to the most vulnerable households likely to be displaced for the coming winter months.

The Provincial Humanitarian Staging Areas (PHSA) and forward logistical bases continue to be used for the receiving, storage, and distribution of relief items for Government and humanitarian organizations, including temporary shelters, emergency food, and non-food items. With markets fully functional in the earthquake affected areas of Rukum West and Jajarkot districts, in Bheri Malika Municipality, local authorities launched Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA) to enable households to purchase essential cooking utensils.

Humanitarian partners are mobilizing relief supplies from available in-country stocks, but more will likely be required to meet the needs of those affected. The provincial government is also facing challenges in effectively distributing humanitarian items in a timely manner, with affected families in more accessible locations receiving assistance first than those in more remote locations.

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#### Needs

- Identification and mapping of appropriate open spaces for setting up temporary sites to provide refuge and services to displaced people.
- Shelter winterization kits including warm clothing and blankets.

#### Response

- More than 130 organizations provided immediate relief and support related to Shelter/CCCM.
- Support to the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction at federal level and the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Urban Development (MoPIUD) at the provincial level in the mapping of open spaces.
- Dedicated personnel deployed at the provincial level to work closely with the MoPIUD to support cluster coordination.

#### **Gaps and Constraints**

- Official data on displacement is being sought, however no definitive displacement figures have been provided by the Government.
- Structural assessments of homes and buildings to determine whether they are viable for returns are yet to finish, leaving many in temporary shelters uncertain on whether they can return home.
- Due to recent rains and cold weather, some affected households are returning to their damaged homes despite risks as they are unable to light fires outside and have adequate protection against the cold.

## Early Recovery

#### Needs

- Information management and coordination.
- Debris and domesticated animal carcass removal.

- Small infrastructure rehabilitation interventions through cash for work.
- Support to Government services related to retrieving damaged records, office equipment and facilities.
- Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise and livelihoods support.
- Disaster risk management.

#### Response

- Multipurpose CVA to 8,700 households in Bheri, Nalgad and Aathbiskot municipalities, providing NPR15,000 (\$113) per household for early recovery.
- The Cash Coordination Group is conducting a joint Rapid Market Assessment for multi-purpose cash interventions. Some data from Nalgald and Bheri is available, however the full assessment will begin after the Tihar holiday.
- Deployment of a Provincial Early Recovery Coordinator to the Surkhet to strengthen Early Recovery coordination.
- Ongoing support to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) to develop regular situational assessment reports.

#### Gaps & Constraints

• Data by sector and geographical location related to damage and loss.

#### **Education**

#### Needs

- 208 fully and 418 partially damaged school buildings, including 632 fully damaged and 1,186 partially damaged classrooms require repair or reconstruction to ensure uninterrupted learning.
- Cluster estimates that some 125,209 school aged children, of which 49 per cent are girls, are directly/indirectly affected.
- The Karnali Provincial Education Cluster estimates some 5,765 textbooks are required to replace those damaged in schools and households.
- 84 schools require 21 Early Childhood Development kits, 38 School kits, 3,839 Student kits and 116 temporary learning centers (TLCs) for the immediate resumption of learning activities.
- Psychosocial support to teachers, parents, and students in affected areas.
- Mobilization of Education Cluster members to report disaster related data through IEMIS/Education in Emergency (EiE) software module for systematic reporting.
- Resource mapping of cluster members to support learning continuity, psychosocial support, damage assessment, establishment of TLCs.

#### Response

- The Federal Education Cluster is providing technical assistance to the provincial cluster in compiling a detailed damage assessment of schools in affected municipalities.
- Deployment of 18 psychosocial support counsellors and two psychologists to Bheri, Nalgad, and Barekot municipalities
  of Jajarkot district, and Aathbiskot, Chaurjhari, Sanibheri, and Rukumkot municipalities in Rukum West for the
  psychosocial well-being of students and teachers.
- 211 children reached with psychosocial and psychological first aid in Jajarkot and Rukum West.
- Ongoing cluster support to schools and local education officers in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts with reporting education related disaster data through IEMIS/EiE software module.
- On 20 November, the Provincial Education Cluster will hold a school management committee meeting to develop a school continuity plan and request the Community School Management Committee Federation of Nepal Karnali Province and those at the local level to identify children with learning and clothing needs for the resumption of classes.

#### **Gaps & Constraints**

• Earthquake victims, including teachers and parents, may be experiencing trauma that could impact their capacity to participate in the learning process.

### **Food Security**

#### Needs

• Ready to eat food and dry rations for displaced families as an immediate response.

- Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme required for vulnerable populations (pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, children aged 6-59 months and the elderly).
- With markets fully functional, CVA interventions to provide food for the first month.
- Livestock veterinary services including vaccination for injured livestock, feed, and livestock shelter support.
- Agriculture recovery support for the interruption of paddy harvesting and incoming wheat cultivation season.
- Replacement and repair of agricultural tools inputs and grain storage capacity.
- Balanced and well proportionate distribution of relief materials covering all affected areas is required.

#### Response

- Dispatch and distribution of eight metric tons (mt) of ready to eat food (BP-5) to cover 10,000 people for three days.
- 7mt of ready to eat food (BP-5) remains in stock for additional distribution if required.
- A rapid assessment report was produced and disseminated by the cluster, identifying severely and very severely impacted geographical areas and the number of households/people in immediate need of humanitarian assistance.



Damaged seed and grain storage bins rending them unsuitable for planting or human consumption in Jajarkot district. Picture courtesy of FAO.

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, (MoALD) and the Food Security Cluster provided 40,000 hermetic bags to earthquake affected farming households in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts to allow farmers with damaged storage bins, dependent on the paddy harvesting season, to safely store seeds and grains.
- The Government to conduct a detailed agriculture and food security assessment in both the Jajarkot and Rukum West districts.

#### Gaps & Constraints

• Food assistance requirements are to be determined based on assessment results and Government requests.

## **\*** Health

#### Needs

- Continuation of essential health services and surveillance of displaced populations for early detection and response to acute public health outbreaks.
- Vulenrability of already vulenrable people, including pregnant and lactating women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities is likely to become exacerbated with winter.
- Provision and availability of sexual and reproductive health, maternity and child health services, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), for all affected people including vulnerable populations.
- Support to the 47 damaged health facilities, including birthing centers, in affected areas.

#### Response

• Continuation of basic health services following the installation of three medical tents in the municipalities of Nalgad in Jajarkot district and Aathbiskot and Sanibheri in Rukum West.



Health workers attending to patients inside a medical tent in the Dalli Primary HealthCare Centre to facilitate the resumption of health services for children and families in the aftermath of the earthquake, Nalgad Municipality in Jajarkot District, 7 November. Picture courtesy of UNICEF.

- Nearly 4,000 dignity kits with menstruation hygiene supplies distributed in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts.
- 100 newborn incentive kits (warm clothes for newborns and mothers) provided to the health authorities in Nalgad Municipality, Jajarkot district.
- Ongoing support to two temporary health posts in Jajarkot district.
- Ongoing deployment of personnel for information gathering, health promotion, disease prevention, and psychosocial counseling.

- Provision of one set of Interagency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK 2017) and one Cholera Kit.
- Provision of one Trauma and Emergency Surgery Kit and four sets of Major Trauma Bags.
- Provision of two Medical Camp Kits (24 sqm).
- Provision of 300 health kits (masks, hand sanitizers, thermometer) to authorities in Nalgad municipality, Jajarkot district.
- Ongoing provision of technical assistance for Psychological First Aid and MHPSS services.

#### Gaps & Constraints

- Risk of waterborne disease outbreaks among displaced households.
- Poor hygiene practices including improper construction and use of latrines.
- Limited human resource capacity in One Stop Crisis Management Centre to deliver services to GBV survivors.
- Health service access constraints due to challenging environment and lack of public transportation.
- Incomplete information related to the number of displaced and injured persons and interruption of medical services due to damaged facilities.

## Nutrition

#### Needs

- Based off the Initial Rapid Assessment findings, in the twelve affected municipalities, more than 32,000 children under five and more than 6,000 pregnant women are estimated to be at risk of malnutrition and in need.
- There could be some 1,280 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), requiring 1,280 cartons of Ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) with a cost of \$205,000. Similarly, there could be 32,000 children under five who will require Multiple Micronutrient Powders (MNP). 96,000 boxes of MNP each containing 30 sachets, will be required at the cost of \$150,000.
- Behavioral Change Communication to protect, promote and support infant and young child feeding through community health workers and volunteers will require an additional \$20,000.
- Additional personnel in the field to support the implementation of nutrition interventions in earthquake affected areas.
- Rapid SMART surveys in Jajarkot, Rukum West and Salyan districts.

#### Response

- The implementation of the package of nutrition interventions (screening, distribution of Vitamin A, MNP, Infant and Young Child Feeding, counselling, and iron and folic acid supplement distribution will start immediately after the Tihar holiday on 16 November.
- Multisector Nutrition Program volunteers mobilized for data collection and nutrition counselling.
- Dissemination of various public awareness health and nutrition materials, including radio messages.
- Support the Provincial Government in undertaking nutrition assessments (rapid screening using MUAC) with Female Community Health Volunteers and Health Workers, transportation of nutrition commodities from the Provincial Health Logistics Management Centre to the District Health Service Office, and onto the municipalities.

## Protection

#### Needs

- Establishment of accessible women friendly spaces for physical safety and emotional wellbeing.
- Support required for existing safe houses with limited function, including temporary arrangement for earthquake damaged safe houses to ensure continuation of services.
- Many people living in one tent raises the possibility of GBV requiring awareness interventions using appropriate platforms (radio, print media etc.)
- Warm clothing required for vulnerable people (women, children, person with disability, elderly people) to protect them from cold temperatures and prevent illness.
- Continued deployment of counselors and community based psychosocial workers to address psychosocial needs of affected people.
- Additional child friendly spaces (CFS) to accommodate more affected children.

#### Response

- 428 children benefitting from seven CFSs in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts. Through the CFSs children access
  psychosocial first aid, recreational opportunities in safe, inclusive, and stimulating environments. CFSs also serve as a
  place to identify protection risks and provide immediate response including referral to appropriate services.
- 1,113 affected people (out of which 332 were children) received psychosocial first aid (PFA) in communities and in child friendly spaces through the deployment of 17 psychosocial counselors, psychologists and community based psychosocial workers in Jajarkot and Rukum West.
- Vulnerability assessment of children through the mobilization of 26 volunteers in Jajarkot district. In Rukum West, the vulnerability assessment will begin after the festive season.
- Based on the recommendation from the preliminary assessment on GBV prevention and response services, two additional personnel were provided to the One Stop Crisis Management Centres in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts.
- Three women friendly spaces and referral points established in Jajarkot and Rukum West. Assessment for the establishment of an additional six women friendly spaces is ongoing.
- 7,687 women and girls reached through dignity kits and kishori kits.

#### **Gaps & Constraints**

- Limited capacity of local actors to respond to protection needs, further exacerbated by the geographical terrain of affected areas and limited availability of public transportation.
- Many women and girls face trauma due to the earthquake and loss of loved ones contributing to reluctancy among community-based psychosocial workers and volunteers to mobilize for response initiatives.
- More efforts required on intersectoral coordination to address the prevalence of child marriage and early pregnancy, observed during the distribution of supplies and interactions with the women and girls in the hospital.

### **Shelter**

#### Needs

- Distribution of additional NFIs to remaining affected households.
- Detail assessments of partially and completely damaged homes for an understanding on the number of displaced families that will require longer term transitional shelter support. Local municipalities in Jajarjot and Rukum West districts along with the District Disaster Management Committee are requesting the NRCS to support in the planned assessments.

#### Response

• Some 16,000 households with completely damaged homes received some shelter assistance in the first phase of the response with support from the Government, humanitarian partners, and bilateral donations from neighboring countries.



Shelter and NFI distributions in Jajarkot district. Picture courtesy of NRCS.

• On 7 November, the IFRC launched an emergency appeal of 7 million Swiss Francs (\$7,878,038) to support 50,000 displaced people with integrated assistance including shelter, livelihoods, and multi-purpose cash.

#### Gaps & Constraints

- Finalization of the transitional and winterized shelter response plan.
- Figures related to the actual number of households completely damaged and number of displaced households.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

#### Needs

- Cluster specific need assessments of displaced populations.
- Some reservoir and intake structures were damaged and leaking water affecting local water supplies.
- 40,000 hygiene kits and buckets with plastic mugs, 2,500 carton soaps, 1,000 toilet (fiber) pan sets, 200 emergency toilets, 25,000 pius (water purification tablets), 15,000 packets of Aquatabs, and 200 bags of bleaching powder.

- WASH facilities in 50 shelters, support to WASH services in 50 health facilities and at least 100 schools.
- Repair and rehabilitation of 100 water supply schemes.
- WASH promotion through 100 WASH promoters, repair of WASH facilities through deployment of 50 water supply technicians.
- Strengthened inter-cluster coordination with health, education, and shelter clusters to ensure WASH services in public facilities and to displaced families.
- Out of the 250,000 people in need of WASH support, the cluster is targeting about 60 per cent (150,000 people, including 51,000 children) with critical WASH interventions. Total funding needs are estimated to be over NPR100 million (\$750,000)

#### Response

- Over 28,000 people (more than11,200 children) were reached with tarpaulins, blankets, and WASH supplies, including hygiene kits, plastic buckets, and water purifying solution in Nalgad, Bheri, Junechande and Barekot municipalities of Jajarkot District, and Sani Bheri, Aathbiskot and Chaurjahari, Tribeni municipalities of Rukum West District.
- Provision of 102 portable toilets/pan sets and 2000 soaps.
- 200 temporary community toilets were built serving 3,000 people in different locations of Nalgadh, Aathbiskot and Bheri municipalities.
- Three water supply pipelines repaired providing water to 1,600 people in Ward 1 of Nalgadh municipality.

#### Gaps & Constraints

- Lack of local government capacity in database management.
- Limited information available on damage to WASH facilities and services.



Affected families returning to their homes after receiving NFI kits, Jajarkot district. Picture courtesy of the NRCS.

## **"L"** Emergency Telecommunications

#### Needs

- Nepal Telecom and Ncell mobile networks are working in most of the affected areas.
- The Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB) reported three radio stations in Jajarkot and Rukum West with extensive infrastructural damage, while four other radio stations have suffered partial damage, with cracks in their buildings and impairments to their equipment.

#### Response

 Emergency support to continue community radio broadcasting by providing laptops, microphone, mixers, internet back up, headphones, hybrid phone and safety equipment like helmets for five most affected community radios of Rukum and Jajarkot.

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#### Needs

- Availability and capacity exist for ground transport of essential humanitarian supplies. However, some access constraints to the most remote areas and communities remain.
- Financial support for increasing requests for emergency logistics support by humanitarian organizations.

#### Response

- To date the National Logistics Cluster facilitated the dispatch of 71 metric tons (mt) (490 cbm) and transported 56mt (263 cbm) of disaster relief items of the Government of Nepal and humanitarian organizations from the Kathmandu and Surkhet HSAs to earthquake affected districts.
- At the request of MoIAL Karnali Province, provided two prefabs to the District Administration Office, Jajarkot, to set up a temporary office to support the ongoing Jajarkot response.
- Increased the storage capacity, from 1,865 sq.m to 3,730 sqm, at the Surkhet HSA by installing an additional Mobile Storage Unit.

• The network of HSAs, particularly Kathmandu, Surkhet and Nepalgunj, remain active and available for use free of charge by the Government. On-demand logistics services for humanitarian partners remain available, though limited to available funding.

#### Constraints

- Access to remote areas and communities in mountainous locations remains a challenge.
- Growing number of requests from humanitarian organizations to provide transportation assistance with limited funding for transportation support. Cluster is seeking donor support to cover critical transportation costs.

# Social and Behavioral Change (SBC)/Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP)

- Within the cross-sectorial Social and Behavioral Change strategy, 150,000 individuals were targeted across the affected areas with an RCCE, IEC and AAP cross-sectoral program.
- Face to face RCCE Message along with relief materials reached 2,350 individuals among the affected populations, mainly in life saving messages, sanitation and hygiene including water purification messages to prevent them from possible outbreaks.
- Support to the National Health Education, Information and Communication Center (NHEICC) and the multistakeholder RCCE working group in the adaptation of life-saving sectorial communication packages including health, nutrition, education, and child protection, and its dissemination through community-based networks and media outlets.
- Humanitarian partners have mobilized 20 volunteers and social mobilizers to assess communication and information needs and collect feedback on the response among the affected populations while supporting RCCE and IEC dissemination. Simultaneously, partners are levering existing platforms such as the Child and Family Tracker and the End-User Monitoring to assess communication needs and collect feedback from the affected populations.

## **GENERAL COORDINATION**

Humanitarian coordination is taking place through the national coordination system, led by Government counterparts with co-leadership by cluster lead agencies. Humanitarian agencies are also meeting at the inter-cluster level in Kathmandu to provide cluster specific updates, seek agreement on planning figures and plan intersectoral interventions to displaced families. At the provincial level, a subnational coordination forum was established in the provincial capital of Surkhet together with local authorities to coordinate the distribution of relief supplies at the field level. These meetings take place on a regular basis and bring together humanitarian partners and government cluster leads. In Kathmandu, the Humanitarian Country Team is holding operational meetings with greater frequency to discuss ongoing needs, the required response and seek solutions to operational challenges impacting the response.

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