

Press release

August 2017

More than 100 dead in Nepali Floods and Landslides Relief Packages Urgently Needed

Flash floods and landslides, triggered by heavy rainfall, have swept across the southern plains of Nepal. More than 100 people are confirmed dead. Others are still missing. The Nepali government estimates that 60,000 families are displaced because their homes are under water.

People affected by leprosy, disability and poverty are especially vulnerable following disasters. They are often forgotten and excluded in immediate responses and relief efforts. Relief packages are urgently needed.

The Leprosy Mission is in the first phase of organising relief. Now calling for donations by the Australian public for the next two weeks, they aim to fund 250 Relief Packages. These will include emergency food items, tarpaulins, utensils and medical items and services.

To deliver one Relief Package costs approximately AU\$160. It will provide a vulnerable community with safe shelter and enough medicine and food to survive the immediate aftermath of this disaster.

The Leprosy Mission currently operates projects in the affected regions of Rautahat, Ramechhap and Chitwan and is well-placed to carry out a relief program.

“We have staff and project members already active on the ground, an existing partnership with government officials and emergency services, and extensive local knowledge of the region. This means that The Leprosy Mission can get your gifts to those in need efficiently and safely,” said CEO of The Leprosy Mission Australia, Sheldon Rankin.

You can help provide those in need with safe shelter, medicine and food to support vulnerable families—those affected by leprosy, disability and poverty.

GIVE NOW to help a community. Or share this need with your friends.

Provide a Relief Package by donating by August 31 via phone on 1800 LEPROSY (1800 537 767) or online: <https://chuffed.org/project/250-relief-packages-for-nepal>

If more than the intended target of \$40,000 for 250 relief packages is raised, donations will provide additional relief packages to those affected. The Leprosy Mission team in Nepal are planning to deliver at least 700 relief packages.



All gifts \$2 and over to The Leprosy Mission Australia are tax deductible.

Updates on this disaster and your relief efforts will be documented on The Leprosy Mission Australia's KIT blog at leprosymission.org.au/kit

For more information about leprosy go to www.leprosymission.org.au

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About The Leprosy Mission

The Leprosy Mission is an international Christian development organisation striving to defeat leprosy and transform lives. It serves people affected by leprosy, other neglected tropical diseases and disability.

About leprosy

- **Someone is diagnosed with leprosy every 2 minutes.**
- Leprosy is a mildly-infectious disease caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium leprae* (a relative of the tuberculosis bacterium or 'TB' germ). It can stay in the body for up to 20 years before displaying symptoms.
- Leprosy causes nerve damage and, if left untreated, can lead to a loss of sensation in the hands and feet. This can lead to disability and the amputation of limbs. Leprosy also damages nerves in the face causing problems with blinking, eventually leading to blindness.
- It is not hereditary and it cannot be caught by touch.
- It is most common in places of poverty where overcrowding and poor nutrition and housing allow people to become more susceptible to leprosy infection.

- Leprosy is curable with multidrug therapy (MDT), which was developed in the 1980s. Within one day of starting MDT there is no risk of the disease spreading to anyone else. Lack of education, however, means that many people affected by leprosy are still stigmatised, even after they have been cured, especially if the disease has caused disability.