

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to urge the State Department to use every available resource to support ongoing search-and-rescue efforts following the catastrophic flash floods in Nepal and to ensure the safety and recovery of American citizens and others affected by this disaster. We appreciate the Department's initial engagement with Congress and urge you to ensure more information and details are provided as rescue efforts advance.

On August 26, a glacial collapse and landslide in the Himalayas triggered flash floods, sending water, mud, and debris down the Trishuli and Bhote Koshi river corridors and devastating communities in Gyirong County and Nepal. The disaster has destroyed roads, bridges, homes, and critical infrastructure, while leaving thousands of people stranded or missing. As of September 4, the death toll has surpassed 1,300 people and at least 4,000 people remain missing, including at least 75 U.S. citizens.<sup>1</sup>

Over the last week, countries and organizations around the world have announced financial support, relief supplies, and other aid to Nepal and the surrounding area. The United Kingdom has reportedly offered to send emergency responders to Nepal and provide £5 million (\$6.79 million) in aid. South Korea said it is providing response teams and \$1 million in humanitarian assistance through international organizations. India is sending emergency supplies, including temporary shelters, blankets, and medicine. The World Bank, United Nations, NGOs, and others are also sending emergency supplies and aid. And notably, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Red Cross of China have provided \$2.2 million in assistance.<sup>2</sup>

We support the Department's announcement of \$500,000 in assistance through its global award with Catholic Relief Services to support emergency shelter, relief items, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance, as well as the \$3.6 million in humanitarian assistance announced on August 29.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Irwin, Zane, and Lynsey Chutel. 2026. "Death Toll in Nepal Floods Tops 1,300: What to Know." *The New York Times*, August 26, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/26/world/asia/nepal-tibet-floods-wtk.html>;

Fiorentino, Michael, and Surendra Phuyal. 2026. "Americans Recount Escape from Deadly Nepal Flooding as 75 U.S. Citizens Remain Missing." NBC News. September 2, 2026. <https://www.nbcnews.com/world/asia/americans-recount-escape-deadly-nepal-flooding-rcna595348>.

<sup>2</sup> "Global Aid Heads to Nepal after Devastating Flash Flood." *Reuters*, August 27, 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/global-aid-heads-nepal-after-devastating-flash-flood-2026-08-27/>.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Spokesperson. 2026. "United States Expresses Condolences to the Victims of the Nepal Floods - United States Department of State." United States Department of State. August 31, 2026. <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/08/united-states-expresses-condolences-to-the-victims-of-the-nepal-floods/>;

Department of State. 2026. "There Is No Higher Priority for Us than the Safety of American Citizens. Our Embassies in Nepal and China Are." Post. X. <https://x.com/StateDept/status/2093819305934692763>.

Nonetheless, given the unprecedented loss of life and countless missing persons, we urge the Department to do much more. Specifically, we request the State Department:

1. **Provide daily updates to family members of those missing and Congress as rescue efforts continue.** Nearly one hundred Americans remain missing after the catastrophic floods, and families are demanding answers about their loved ones. The State Department must provide regular updates to family members and Congress, adequately staff consular hotlines, and support repatriation services for American citizens and their families.
2. **Deploy a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to flood-affected communities.** DARTs are rapid response units to support search, rescue, logistics, and medical services to disaster regions, which were previously administered by the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance within the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID). These elite teams can lead the U.S. government's disaster response, identify emerging needs, and coordinate with local authorities and partner organizations. The scale of the catastrophe requires DART deployment as soon as possible.
3. **Coordinate with the interagency and private sector to utilize high-altitude assets and thermal/infrared drones to search for missing persons and share aerial imagery with partners.** The United States is uniquely equipped to provide real-time imagery of damaged terrain to rescue victims and safely plan search operations. The State Department should work with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and other Department of Defense agencies to securely share geospatial and aerial imagery with first responders, humanitarian partners, and local governments. The State Department should also coordinate with commercial satellite companies to disseminate unclassified, up-to-date imagery. The Department should also work to use phone location data to locate missing individuals. These tools can save lives by providing geographical awareness for safe and efficient rescue operations, and the State Department's convening capacity can and should deliver this crucial information efficiently.
4. **Engage Nepali and PRC disaster authorities and international partners to ensure full coverage and access across search areas.** Dozens of international organizations, NGOs, and local authorities are simultaneously contributing to search and rescue efforts, creating a complicated operating environment. To work efficiently and guarantee access to all affected areas, the State Department should continue diplomatic outreach to Nepal, the PRC, and donor countries. Maintaining diplomatic channels of communication will similarly facilitate updates about missing American citizens for their family members.
5. **Ensure rapid delivery of disaster assistance and provide additional reconstruction support.** As the damage and losses of life grow every day, so does the need for speedy aid delivery and rescue support. The State Department should consider additional International Disaster Assistance funds for affected regions of Nepal to support ongoing search-and-rescue, WASH, food, and transportation assistance needs. Nepal will additionally require long-term development assistance to rebuild: Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle estimated that the cost to rebuild from the floods could cost between \$4 and \$5 billion, nearly a tenth of the country's economy.<sup>4</sup> The State Department should plan for significant reconstruction assistance to rebuild lost communities, harden infrastructure against future disasters, and spur development in affected regions.

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<sup>4</sup> Sharma, Saurabh. 2026. "Nepal's Flood Damage May Cost up to a Tenth of Economy to Rebuild." Reuters. August 29, 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/nepal-needs-least-4-billion-rebuilding-finance-minister-says-2026-08-29/>.

The videos of the catastrophic floods in Nepal have shocked the world, and the horrors faced by the victims and their families continue day in and day out. We urge the State Department to take a leading role in the search and rescue efforts, find all missing Americans, and help rebuild communities devastated by this tragedy.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



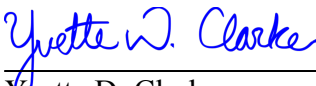
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



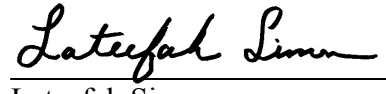
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress



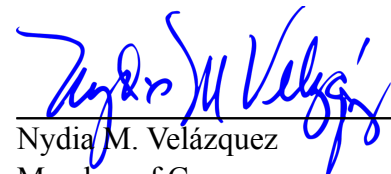
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
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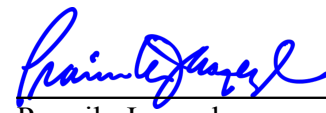
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



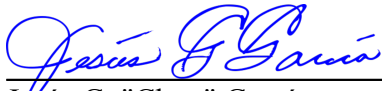
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



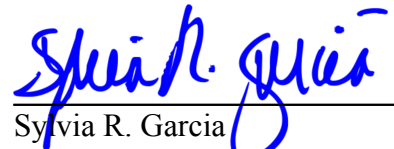
Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress



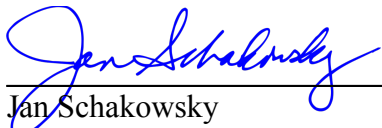
Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



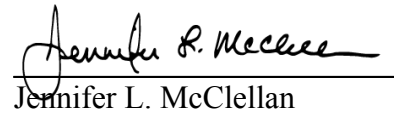
Adelita S. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



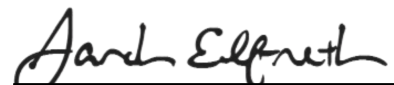
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



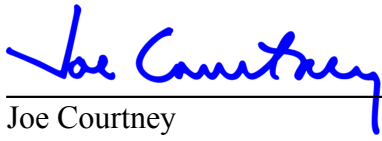
Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress

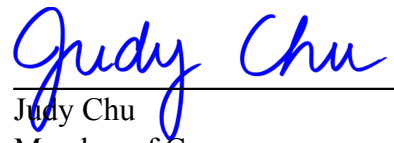


Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress



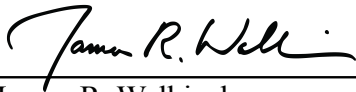
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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



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James R. Walkinshaw  
Member of Congress