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A drone view shows a broken bridge and damaged houses after the flash floods and mudslide

A drone view shows a broken bridge and damaged houses after the flash floods and mudslide, at Devighat, Nuwakot district, Nepal, Aug. 28, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Francis Mascarenhas)

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A U.S. Catholic bishop is calling on the international community to step up aid after devastating torrents of water and mud raged along the Nepal-China border, killing more than 580 with over 1,900 still missing.

"As we learn more about the devastating flash floods in Nepal, I offer the prayers and solidarity of the Catholic community in the United States for our brothers and sisters impacted by this disaster," said Bishop Elias Zaidan of the St. Louis-based Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles in an Aug. 27 statement.

The disaster was triggered by a glacial collapse in Nepal's Langtang National Park shortly after 8:30 a.m. Aug. 26, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Debris from the 5.2 magnitude event flowed more than 60 miles, resulting in "catastrophic

impacts downstream" in communities along the Trishuli and Bhote Koshi Rivers, said the agency.

Among the missing are close to 670 individuals from some 32 nations, 65 of whom are from the U.S. Many are part of tour groups and Hindu pilgrimages.

Amid rescue efforts, the region is bracing for a possible secondary flooding due to ongoing rainfall, according to the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization.

Speaking in his role as chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, Zaidan said, "I exhort the international community to mobilize greater humanitarian assistance support for vulnerable families and communities in Nepal."

The bishop also encouraged "long-term efforts to help affected communities rebuild their homes, livelihoods, and critical infrastructure."

He said that Catholic Relief Services, the USCCB's international humanitarian and development agency, is "closely monitoring the emergency."

CRS — part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church's global humanitarian network — is also "coordinating with Caritas Nepal and local partners to assess urgent needs and determine how best to support affected communities," said Zaidan.

Caritas emergency aid coordinator Raju Pradhan told German Catholic news outlet KNA that "the extent of the destruction" from the flooding "is almost beyond comprehension."

Disaster alerts the Nepalese government said it had issued "came too late" for those "near the source of the flood," said Pradhan. "But further downstream, without these warnings, many more people would likely have lost their lives."

Still, KNA reported, many did not fully grasp the urgency of those warnings.

Like CRS, Germany's Freiburg-based Caritas is working with Caritas Nepal to provide assistance, including food, water, blankets and sleeping bags, as well as emergency shelters for kids and teens.

"In just one small town where we've been active for some time, 400 homes were destroyed," said Pradhan, who also expressed concerns over the risk of secondary flooding.

Pradhan stressed to KNA the need for long-term relief efforts in addressing the scope of the disaster -- which "will require a lot of money, which we don't have at the moment."

CRS has set up an emergency relief fund in response to the flooding, with donations accepted by a number of online giving platforms, as well as phone and mail.

In his statement, Zaidan expressed his gratitude for "the partnership of the U.S. government in supporting CRS' essential work in these communities."

He added, "We are also grateful to hear that the U.S. Department of State is closely monitoring the situation and deploying key personnel to support response efforts."

Zaidan invoked Mary's Immaculate Heart to "provide consolation and shelter to all those affected by this disaster."

And, he said, "May she inspire the international community to work together, as one family, to address the urgent needs of the Nepalese people."

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