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# UNJLC Pakistan Earthquake BULLETIN No. 18 (Day 41)

As of 1800 hours local, Friday, November 18th, 2005

*UNJLC Bulletins aim to provide a clear and concise regular overview of the situation as it exists in the earthquake-affected area of Pakistan and contiguous areas with regards to logistics matters affecting relief work by the humanitarian community. They focus on practical issues that affect the welfare of the afflicted populace and related humanitarian work such as the status of transport routes for humanitarian supplies and personnel into the area, relevant administrative or commercial developments, air (including strategic airlift and helicopter operations), Customs and immigration matters, and availability of accommodation and fuels. They further seek to identify major issues for the humanitarian community and other interested parties, to provide relevant background and constructive recommendations on current issues, and to alert responsible parties to emerging issues. This bulletin was produced daily from October 17<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> but as the emergency has matured is now produced on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, until further notice.*

## Summary and Highlights

- The Batagram hub is being eclipsed by Chatter Plain as a humanitarian logistical facility. Chatter Plain is better suited to large helicopter operations and warehousing and is already being used as an interagency facility with WFP storage. Co-ordination for the area remains at Batagram, the district capital.
- The lack of fuel in forward locations continues to limit the operational effectiveness of helicopters, particularly the larger ones, having to return to bases to refuel. This situation should improve in the next week or so.
- The delayed six-day operation to push supplies forward to inaccessible areas before the onset of winter from Muzaffarabad using UNJLC-coordinated Royal Air Force CH-47 Chinooks, provided by DFID, is progressing well, with 230 tonnes moved yesterday.

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### 1. Field Co-ordination: Batagram

**Batagram**, the northernmost of the six main hubs established by the Government<sup>1</sup> and one of the five (in addition to the **Abbottabad** forward operating base) being used by the major UN humanitarian agencies, is developing more into a transit point than a logistical hub.

Although the Pakistani military runs helicopters from just outside the town, there is insufficient space for a humanitarian helicopter base, other than for the regular UNHAS passenger service. Furthermore, the town itself is too congested for extensive warehousing. It has camps for displaced persons on its outskirts, the status of a district capital, and most area UN and NGO co-ordination is conducted there, but it is being eclipsed as a logistical facility by **Chatter Plain**<sup>2</sup>, 22km to the south-east on the Karakorum Highway.

Chatter Plain, as the name suggests, is a flat plain, with adequate space for warehousing and helicopter operations – including the large Mi-26's. WFP have

<sup>1</sup> The other five principal bases established by the Government (mostly capitals of affected districts) are **Manshra**, **Muzaffarabad**, **Bagh**, **Balakot** and **Rawalakhot**. Of these, the key UN agencies are not focusing on Rawalakhot. See Bulletin 8 of October 26<sup>th</sup>, item 8.

<sup>2</sup> Named for Chatter Singh, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Sikh general.

designated it as a key logistics hub for their operations, erecting two Rubbhalls as part of a planned overall total of approximately **1350 tonnes** of storage space at the location. WFP have also made this space available to other agencies and NGO's, some of whom are already utilising it.

A key area served by Batagram is the **Alai Valley**, in the northern part of the district. Vehicle access to the main town of **Banna** is limited to one difficult road (see Bulletin 15, November 11<sup>th</sup>, item 4) that turns off the Karakorum Highway north of **Tha Khot**. If this road is cut by snow, weather or landslides, ground access to Banna and most of the Alai Valley will be lost.

UNJLC, together with **IOM** and **CARE International**, are investigating the use of agricultural-type tractors with 5-tonne trailers as an alternative to 4x4 pick-ups for getting to Banna. However, there is considerable concern regarding safety of the road among both relief agencies and tractor owners. This has been exacerbated by rain since November 9<sup>th</sup> and one vehicle reportedly had its windscreen shattered by falling rock. Pakistani Army engineers have to work constantly to keep the road open, even before snowfalls and ice formation.

There is a second and reportedly better road built in the 1970's, direct from **Besham** (on the Karakorum north of Batagram and on the northern edge of the moderately-affected area) to Banna but large parts of this were cut during an earlier earthquake in the 1990's. Vehicle access is possible on this road from Besham east towards Banna to a bridge before **Dirkland**; going west from Banna towards Besham, there is access to a point a few kilometres before **Tandal**. Currently, there are no plans to join this road up. Although the road cannot be used to link Besham and Banna, it can be used to service a number of towns in between.

**ABOUT UNJLC:** UNJLC is an inter-agency facility reporting to the Islamabad-based Humanitarian Coordinator for the South Asia (Pakistan and India) Earthquake and strategically to the Inter Agency Standing Committee. Its mandate is to coordinate and optimise logistics capabilities of humanitarian organisations in large scale emergencies. UNJLC operates under the custodianship of WFP, which is responsible for the administrative and financial management of the unit. UNJLC is funded from voluntary contributions that are channelled through WFP. The UNJLC project document for the Pakistan Earthquake can be viewed at the UNJLC website ([www.unjlc.org](http://www.unjlc.org)).

**2. Fuels Issues: Aviation and Diesel**

Lack of fuel in forward areas is limiting the operational effectiveness of helicopters, particularly the larger Mi-26's, with them having to return to Islamabad to refuel. This should improve once fuel facilities are upgraded in Abbottabad in the next week or so.

There have been reports that the Pakistani military, which provides Diesel to humanitarian agencies in some areas, may cease doing so from December 1<sup>st</sup>. UNJLC will seek to clarify this. Any agencies with further information on this are ask to provide it to UNJLC.

**3. DFID Chinook Operation: Update**

As prefaced in Bulletin 15 of November 11<sup>th</sup>, item 3, and following a delay owing to maintenance requirements, three Royal Air Force CH-47 Chinook transport helicopters provided by **DFID** to **UNHAS** are now operating out of Muzaffarabad with the coordination of UNJLC in an six-day operation to push over **1000 tonnes** of supplies to forward locations. Today, they moved about 230 tonnes.

The operation is dropping vital shelter material and food to areas such as the **Neelum Valley** and the **Leepa Valley** (off the Jhelum Valley) that are currently inaccessible by road or have villages that may soon be cut off with the first heavy snowfalls.

The operational plan of using under-slung loads in cargo nets to facilitate the rapid turnaround of the aircraft and thereby increase the number of sorties has so far proven highly effective.

*"This coordinated effort is vital to make a really swift push to ensure the most vulnerable people receive vital relief supplies so that they can survive the harsh winter months,"* according to UNJLC's logistical coordinator in Muzaffarabad, Ms. Natasha Hryckow. *"The magnitude of the operation reflects the magnitude of the response that is required and would not have been possible without the collective efforts of the Government of Pakistan, donors and the humanitarian community."*



DFID/RAF Chinook CH-47 with underslung load heading to the Neelum Valley from Muzaffarabad. The underslinging allows faster turnaround and more sorties.

**4. Snow Clearance Capacity: FRC Appeal**

The Government of Pakistan has already managed to re-open many roads in the affected areas. However, with winter almost present, road access to many populations may soon be severely curtailed if snow-clearing capacity is inadequate. This may required expensive helicopter assets to be used to compensate for closed roads.

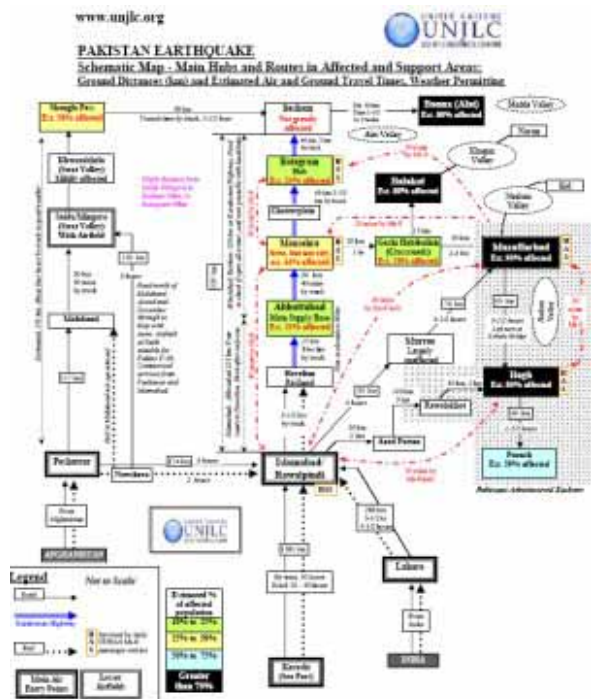
The Federal Relief Commission (FRC) has emphasised that it is vital to keep open routes in the valleys around **Bagh/Bedori, Leepa** and **Kaghan** to allow relief supplies to reach the affected areas during the winter. The FRC has therefore requested support from the UN and donor governments to acquire an additional **six snow clearing machines** to supplement the Government's current capacity to keep these humanitarian corridors open. Thus, supply of snow clearing equipment may reduce the need for helicopters.

**5. UNJLC Schematic Route Map**

UNJLC has updated its earlier simple schematic of the main logistical hubs and routes in the earthquake-affected area and contiguous supporting areas.

This map is intended to provide an overall situational awareness of the **relative times** and **distances** and times - **by road and rail and by air** where UNHAS provides a regular passenger service - between key locations in what is a geographically very complex area.

It is not an accurate geographic rendition of the relative locations of respective towns or cities but provides a general easy-to-use overview of access options for preliminary planning purposes. The map is downloadable in pdf format from the UNJLC website.



**BULLETIN ENDS**

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Detailed information on the clusters being used to manage the humanitarian response, including the Logistics Cluster in which UNJLC plays a key role, is available on [www.un.org.pk](http://www.un.org.pk). Daily situation reports from the UN Emergency Response Centre – Islamabad are available on [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).