



Rasuwa Bhotekoshi–Trishuli Flood:

The Tragedy of the Century, Global Structural Injustice
and the Quest for Climate Justice

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Executive
Summary

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Various studies have confirmed that a massive fall of ice and rock occurred on 26 August 2026 at an altitude of approximately 5,000–5,200 metres in the Langtang Lirung region, temporarily blocking the Lhende River. This was followed by an exceptionally powerful flow containing ice, water, rocks and debris that reached the Trishuli River through the Bhotekoshi. Based on the available scientific evidence, the event appears to have been not a conventional glacial lake outburst flood, but a cascading hazard involving a sequence of interconnected processes.

The Rasuwa–Bhotekoshi–Trishuli flood should therefore not be understood merely as a normal monsoon flood or a natural disaster, but as a multidimensional disaster in which climate change, instability in mountain systems, transboundary risks, the prevailing model of development and global inequality are deeply interconnected. This incident has further reinforced the question of climate justice, particularly for Nepal—a country with a very low contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, yet highly vulnerable to climate change and increasingly exposed to risks associated with the activities of the world’s major emitters.

From the perspective of climate justice, Nepal should not limit itself only to relief and reconstruction, but should collectively advance demands for loss and damage finance, adaptation, technology transfer, scientific capacity-building and emissions reductions by high-emitting countries. Although Nepal initially demanded US\$20 million, this should not be regarded as the final solution; rather, it should serve as a basis for securing additional financial support following a comprehensive assessment of the damage and losses incurred. Climate justice should not be limited merely to relief and compensation but should be linked to the broader concept of climate reparations. Therefore, Nepal should continuously lead the call-in international forums for the strict implementation of provisions under which countries that have historically emitted more should bear comparatively greater responsibility.

At the same time, alongside its demand for climate justice, Nepal must also strengthen its domestic policies and practices. It is necessary to prioritise monitoring glaciers and glacial lakes, establishing automated early-warning systems, ensuring real-time data sharing between Nepal and China, promoting safe land-use practices, protecting critical infrastructure and strengthening local disaster preparedness.



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