

We should be doing more for Nepal

By [Kate Marshall](#)

Tuesday 5 May 2015



Image: [DFID - UK Department for International Development](#)

On April 25th, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal, and has left, as current figures stand, 6,100 dead and over 8,000 wounded. 130,000 homes have been destroyed and 2.8 million people displaced. These tolls are still rising as the dead continue to be uncovered, figures trickle in from rural villages, and the aftermath has led to food shortages, disease and exposure to the heavy rain which is currently hindering rescue efforts.

The British government declared, a few days after the event, the help that it is prepared to offer. We are sending five million pounds in funds, and eight people. Eight people, to help the eight million that the UN has said to have been affected.

Of course, Britain is in the throes of one of its longest financial crises, but like it or not, we are a wealthy country. We consistently rank in the top 30 by GDP, while Nepal is the 16th poorest country in the world.

As the Guardian observed, five million pounds is less than 12 pence per person. This is a paltry sum in the face of our overall wealth.

We already know that Britain is willing to contribute when it comes to foreign aid, a fact we should be proud of. When the magnitude seven earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, we sent 71 people to help the very next day, and pledged twenty million pounds in assistance. While the two disasters should not be compared in severity, the government's response today is markedly tight-fisted.

The news has very recently made clear, for those of us with the liberty to not understand, how desperate

life is for those fleeing a troubled country. Hundreds of Libyans, at turns called migrants or refugees, died in a capsizing boat not three weeks ago.

Immigration is a primary concern for the electorate this May, and the rhetoric surrounding foreigners runs high, at times vitriolic. Public sentiment has turned against giving 'handouts' to other countries, conflating this with benefits in our own country, and unfairly isolating the poverty of some nations from our own actions in the global market. Internationally, we are a stable and wealthy nation; it is our responsibility to help.

If we're so scared of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the answer isn't to make our own country inaccessible to them, by capping numbers and funds for assistance. The most sensible, and most altruistic route, is to help their home nations become more liveable.

Closing the borders underestimates the determination of those who would otherwise have come safely, driving them to dangerous measures. Even Nigel Farage called on the government to take in our fair share of Syrian refugees.

Of course, Britain's economy is struggling compared to how it has fared in the past, but on a global scale, our problems are not serious. Five million pounds is a tiny sum, and sending merely eight people seems like a token, rather than a genuine effort to help. Some may be concerned about an influx of refugees, but those suffering in Nepal are mostly too poor even to flee. Economic concerns are viable, but this is not an economic crisis: it is a humanitarian one, and our priority should always be human life.

Regardless of our own fluctuations, we are in a position to help, and massively. It is disappointing, to say the least, that the government refuses to do more.



Most Read **Discussed**

1. [CLASH OF COMMENTS: Should those responsible for the Grenfell effigy bonfire be prosecuted?](#)
2. [The breakup beard](#)
3. [World AIDS day - how you can help wipe AIDS out](#)
4. [First, go fix your bad service](#)
5. [The world of Yorfess: An Ode to Shitposting](#)
6. [Why the #MeToo Campaign Must Include Men Too](#)

Write for Nouse Comment

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Comment

[World AIDS day - how you can help wipe AIDS out](#)

[Why the #MeToo Campaign Must Include Men Too](#)

[CLASH OF COMMENTS: Should those responsible for the Grenfell effigy bonfire be prosecuted?](#)

[Indifference to JCRs evident](#)

Slurring champagne socialists is unfair

Don't dismiss the white poppy: it serves an important purpose

- [About Nouse](#)
- [Who's Nouse](#)
- [Website Credits](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

