



NEWS RELEASE – for immediate release

Relief agencies facing logistical nightmare in Nepal

A leading aircraft charter specialist, experienced in coordinating mass relief efforts, including following the Asian tsunami, Haiti earthquake and, most recently, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, has said that aid agencies will be facing unprecedented logistical challenges in trying to help victims of the Nepalese earthquake.

Justin Lancaster, Group Commercial Director of Air Charter Service, said: “Speaking with major aid agencies, there are grave concerns about the amount of relief goods they will be able to get in. One of the biggest problems is that the only international airport in Nepal is Kathmandu, which is a very small airport, with the cargo ramp only capable of handling two or three widebody aircraft at any one time. The warehouse is also insufficient and is, apparently, already full, with cargo being offloaded onto the parking areas.

“Ideally, the quickest way into Nepal is from the air as the country is just so isolated, but the authorities have marked cargo flights as low priority at present and are taking up to four days to grant landing permits for Nepal and overflight permissions for India. Top priority is being allocated to scheduled passenger flights, emergency rescue flights and military operations.

“The situation is so bad that the possibility of trucking aid from other airports in the vicinity, such as Calcutta is being considered, but that is also posing its own challenges, including customs issues and the condition of the roads. With previous relief operations there was often another way in - for example, when there were problems at Port au Prince airport in Haiti, we could fly into Santa Domingo in the neighbouring Dominican Republic and could ferry aid in on trucks and smaller aircraft from there.

“The weather has not been kind either, with several flights being diverted into India already due to storms. Bad weather is forecast for the rest of the week and there appears to be no let up until at least the weekend.

“We have booked several charter flights carrying search and rescue teams and relief goods, and are just awaiting slots and permits. In order to get the aid the flow of help, the relevant authorities will need to relax their red tape as much as possible, so that the necessary aid is able to get in. We currently have two staff members on their way to the area – they should be there by Wednesday morning at the latest, with more to follow. Armed with satellite phones, they will be able to give us a much better idea of what is going on and will be able to coordinate all matters on the ground and hopefully get around some of the red tape.”

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About Air Charter Service

- Our name is Air Charter Service: no 's' on the end, and not simply 'Air Charter' as email addresses might suggest, it can be abbreviated to ACS however
- Formed in 1990 by Chairman Chris Leach in his basement, now employs more than 300 staff worldwide
- We are a global company with 18 worldwide offices, not 'UK-based', with offices spanning five continents offering private jet, commercial airliner and cargo aircraft charters
- Revenue in excess of US\$ 450 million and arranges more than 9,000 charters annually
- Total number of passengers flown in 2014: 327,299
- Total amount of cargo flown in 2014: 36,974,583 kgs
- Voted Cargo Charter Broker of the Year at the ACW World Cargo Awards 2013 and 2014, voted Charter Broker of the Year at the Payload Asia Awards 2013 and 2014 as well as being awarded Charter Broker of the Year 2014 by Air Cargo News