

# Using Babel Street for Disaster Response and Humanitarian Aid

Disaster strikes. Floods, wildfires, landslides, hurricanes and other natural disasters wreak havoc and strain the ability of responders to help those most affected. During many of these disasters, electricity grids fail, cell phone and internet services are limited, and transportation is halted. Well before news agencies and journalists can report on the ground, the first indications of the scope of the damage often come from impacted persons posting on social media or communicating through friends and family. Collecting and analyzing this information is imperative to focus humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

## Gleaning insight from open-source intelligence

Government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must work quickly and collaboratively to coordinate disaster response: saving lives, minimizing economic consequences, and providing humanitarian aid.

Social media posts and other publicly available information (PAI) can help improve situational awareness immediately following a natural disaster. By searching thousands of global and regional sources of PAI, the Babel Street Insights open-source intelligence (OSINT) platform can help governments and NGOs improve disaster response and better target humanitarian aid.

Governments, relief organizations, and media outlets can also use OSINT tools to monitor established information sources and social media platforms to chart and respond to slower-onset disasters including famines, pandemics, and droughts. To detect emerging areas of drought, for example, officials may search for terms such as “crop failure” or “water shortage.” When searching for emerging epidemics, they may look for terms such as “fever,” “outbreak,” or “ICU.”

## Using Babel Street to track the course of disaster

Myanmar suffered a 7.7 magnitude earthquake on March 28, 2025, leading to widespread damage, destruction, and loss of life in the city of Mandalay and as far away as Thailand.<sup>1</sup> Getting accurate information from Myanmar can be difficult, and the military junta that has ruled the nation since 2021 controls nearly all local radio, television, print, and online media. It has often suppressed information around the scale of natural disasters.<sup>2</sup> An organization seeking situational awareness into the disaster could perform these steps in Babel Street Insights to gain further insights.

### Collect news reports

Users can quickly and seamlessly use Babel Street Insights to see timely updates from news sources around the world. Insights ingests documents from millions of news sites daily and can translate over 200+ languages by simply toggling a switch. Users can stay abreast of details in real time as new articles are published. Users can also set up organic collections and crawl websites of interest.

## Assess the damage

Users can leverage Insights to get the latest updates on the scope and scale of a natural disaster via domestic and international social media. Queries can include or exclude specific social media sources. Critical metadata associated with social media posts, including mentioned URLs and locations, can assist users to identify key areas of interest.

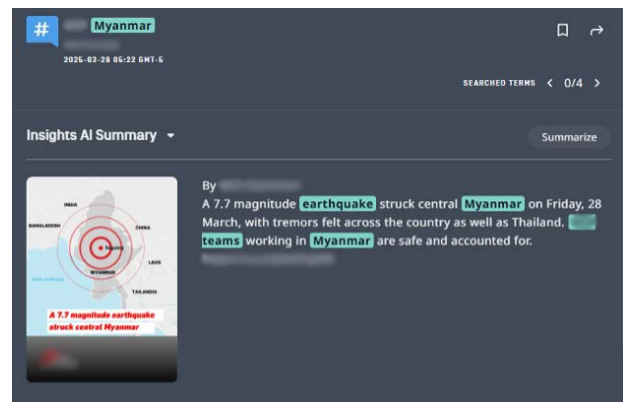
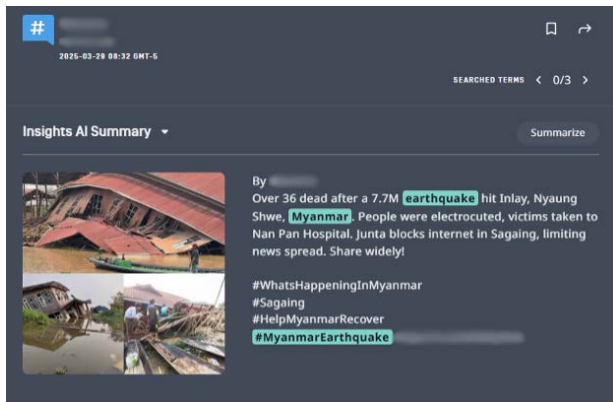


Figure 1: Social media posts showing scenes of destruction in Myanmar

## Evaluate the response

Insights can also help illuminate worldwide NGO and government responses to an emerging crisis, such as what they plan to send and how they plan to assist in relief efforts. Users can set up queries to look for specific groups and countries along with key terms to ensure all critical information is collected.

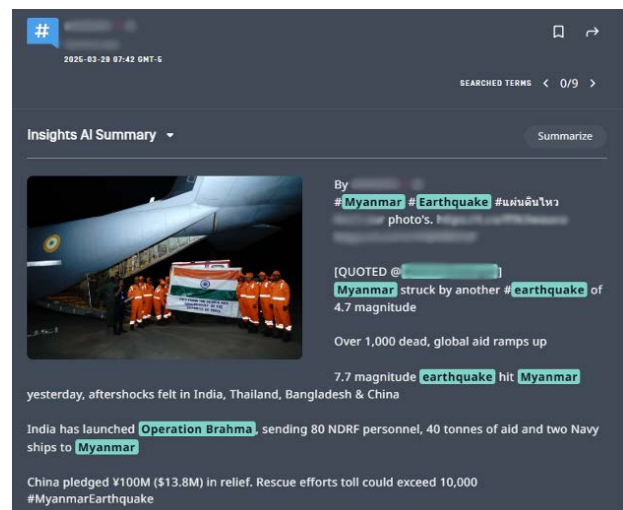


Figure 2: A social media post describing planned international aid

## Endnotes

1. Burgess, Jack and Hagan, Rachel, BBC News, "Myanmar earthquake: What we know," April 1, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crlxld7882o>
2. ibid

Babel Street is the trusted technology partner for the world's most advanced identity intelligence and risk operations. The Babel Street Insights platform delivers advanced AI and data analytics solutions to close the Risk–Confidence Gap.

Babel Street provides unmatched, analysis-ready data regardless of language, proactive risk identification, 360-degree insights, high-speed automation, and seamless integration into existing systems. We empower government and commercial organizations to transform high-stakes identity and risk operations into a strategic advantage.

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