

Two Quakes Rattle Burma

Two quakes rattled Burma within seconds of each other late Thursday.

The temblors struck near the borders with China, Thailand and Laos but did not present an immediate tsunami risk. Initial readings from the U.S. Geological Survey showed the quake measuring at 6.8.

Dyann Romeijn with Vision Beyond Borders says, "Chiangrai and Chiangmai were the hardest-hit population centers, although we're not hearing that there was extensive damage. They were still a ways from the epicenter; the quake, it sounds like, was more in some rural areas."

VBB had a team on the ground in the region where the quake struck. "We actually have contacted our contacts inside Burma to see what the story is from inside [the country], but at this point, we have not heard anything back from them," says Romeijn.

Vision Beyond Borders works in Karen refugee camps in Burma. "We work with local contacts there to try to bring food, we help build buildings," Romeijn explains, "try to provide schooling for these children, work a lot with medical care, and just meet basic needs."

Over the weekend, Burmese soldiers attacked the KT Children's Home because they wanted to reclaim the territory belonging to the Karen National Union. "It sounds like they're actually coming closer and closer to these refugee camps with the fighting and actually trying to get into the camps themselves," Romeijn says.

On Sunday, fighting came close to the camp with the KT Home. By Tuesday, there were 100 Burmese soldiers about 20 minutes away from the Karen soldiers' base across the river from the

KT Children's Home. Four hundred other Burmese soldiers are 25 kilometers away and were expected to meet up with the first unit.

A VBB team member summarizes it this way, "We need a major miracle. We have about 20-30 Karen soldiers defending their territory, and 500 Burmese soldiers are on the way to get it."

The earthquake may actually have been an answer to prayer. Romeijn explains: "With the fighting that close to the camp, I would also hope that possibly it was something that God could use to send the army back, to protect the people. We're just praying that God will use it to accomplish His purposes. "

The team member writes that "the children are very well aware of the dangers but are also trusting God that He will protect them. God has rescued these children already many times, and we know He will do it again and again."