

GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR  
**BURMA**  
— 2024 —



# IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE DIRECTOR 4

PRAYER FOR BURMA 5

THIS YEAR 6-7

AREA UPDATES 8-19

INTEREST STORIES 20-27

*A humanitarian aid worker holds the hand of a Karenni man as he receives surgery on his foot which was shot by the Burma Army.*

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for praying for us and for the people of Burma. This is now our 27th year of the Global Day of Prayer for Burma and we see big changes happening all around us. Even though the military is lashing out with their foreign supplied jet fighters, heavy artillery, missile systems, tanks, and mortars at a speed and vengeance we've never seen before, they are slowly but steadily losing control of the country. Since the coup three years ago, a new unity has been born in Burma that cuts across social, economic, political, racial, tribal and religious lines. This is a unity for a free and inclusive Burma and it is a unity against the dictatorship. This came as a surprise to just about everyone, but it is also an answer to prayer. As the Burma Army has tried to crack down on its own people, this has only strengthened the resolve of the people for change. The fear of bombings and attacks and the sorrow at the loss of friends and family in the face of the onslaught lies heavy on all in Burma.

In spite of this, the people of Burma have a sure resolve. When I'm with them, I see them standing with tears in their eyes burying a loved one after an airstrike or carrying the wounded as fast as they can and then turning around and going right back into the fire to save more. They are terrified and suffer great loss but are fueled by love and commitment to each other and a new rule of love and law in Burma. In the face of the attacks we pray for the dictators and their army, that their hearts would change. We pray for a solution for everyone and Burma. We know the line of good and evil isn't between us and them but in each of our

hearts, and only Jesus can save us.

There are now over 3 million people displaced in Burma in the last three years since the coup and thousands have been killed. Thousands of schools, hospitals, churches, homes and IDP sites have been targeted and destroyed. In Karenni State for example, every hospital and clinic has been bombed. The regime is supported by Russia, China, North Korea and Iran. In that sense, things have gotten worse. However, as you will see in a map in the following pages, the forces of freedom are gaining more control, and the dictators' grip and area of control is shrinking.

We continue to pray for love, justice, understanding, forgiveness, and reconciliation throughout this struggle. When change does happen, and a representative government is formed in Burma, we want love and reconciliation to be foundational. This means that right now we all have to act in love, justice and forgiveness in every part of the struggle. We pray that Burma will be a place where everyone can live freely with dignity together. As you pray for Burma, please pray also for neighboring countries and your own nations for ways they can help the people of Burma more. Thank you so much, each of you who pray for us and for the people here. May God bless you in Jesus' name.

Love,

Dave, family and Christians Concerned for Burma

## AS YOU READ

Through this year's Day of Prayer for Burma, we encourage you to use the individual prayer points placed throughout the publication as a guide and reminder for the different and specific ways to pray for this country.

## A PRAYER FOR BURMA

Heavenly Father, you are awesome and mighty. Your love extends beyond measure. You are good. We declare and hold fast to your nature in faith as war continues to wage in Burma and the innocent continue to be oppressed. Thank you that you care for the oppressed. May the people of Burma feel your loving presence. Provide for them in all ways - mind, body, and spirit. Bring them a peace that transcends all understanding. Guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Provide for their basic needs - food, medicine, and shelter. Reveal to their hearts that you have provided for their ultimate needs through Jesus Christ - justification and redemption into a new family, your family. May your love and life flow like a river through Burma to bring healing and restoration. May love, unity, forgiveness, faith, and courage characterize each community. Only you can bring this transformation. We wait for you.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



# BURMA

**THE GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR BURMA HAPPENS EVERY YEAR ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF MARCH. PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR BURMA.**

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Christians Concerned for Burma (CCB), PO Box 392, Chiang Mai, 50000, THAILAND

• [www.prayforburma.org](http://www.prayforburma.org) • [info@freeburmarangers.org](mailto:info@freeburmarangers.org)

# THIS YEAR COUNTRY OVERVIEW

## A NEW BURMA EMERGES

BY ASHLEY SOUTH

Three years after the coup of 1 February 2021, Burma faces deep and protracted political, humanitarian and economic crises. Nevertheless, the resilience of communities and resistance forces is inspiring.

The State Administration Council (SAC) junta is illegal, illegitimate, and failing. Not only does the military regime repeatedly commit war crimes against civilians, and preside over a collapsing economy, it fails to exercise even limited forms of militarized control over half the country. In April 2023, the Free Burma Rangers produced a map detailing the Myanmar Army's dramatic loss of control two years after the coup, based on field reports from across the country. Since then, resistance forces have taken control of significant new areas, particularly Ta'ang and Kokang territories in northern Shan State.

Key ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) are leading a broad coalition of federalist and democratic forces in the struggle against the junta. When people across the country rose up against the reviled junta, these EAOs sheltered refugees from the towns and cities, and played important roles supporting the emergence of People's Defense Forces (PDFs) - a new generation of armed groups determined to resist the military takeover.

Some PDFs work with the National Unity Government, while many operate independently or are aligned with EAOs. The combination of EAO and PDF forces has been highly effective. For example, PDFs continue to battle against the junta in Burman-majority communities long considered to be under central state control. Meanwhile, the Karen National Union (KNU), which had not taken and held onto a Myanmar Army base since the 1950s, has, since the coup, liberated over 50 enemy bases, expelling the Myanmar Army from large parts of Karen State. The KNU and PDFs have inflicted multiple defeats on junta forces in areas which have not seen fighting since the 1960s. Significant victories have been achieved by EAOs and PDFs in Karenni, Kachin, Chin and northern Shan States (Ta'ang and Kokang).

While it seems likely that this conflict will drag on, EAOs and other anti-junta forces are on the 'front foot' for the first time in decades. The resurgence of ethnic self-determination movements since the coup has profound political consequences. In the absence of a legitimate legal central authority, political sovereignty arguably reverts to the ethnic nations that were first yoked together as a colony of British India. The inheritors of these ethnic nations – EAOs, new state-level consultation and coordination bodies (for example, the Karenni Interim Executive Council), and civil society organizations (CSOs) – have key roles to play in building a new Burma from the "bottom up."

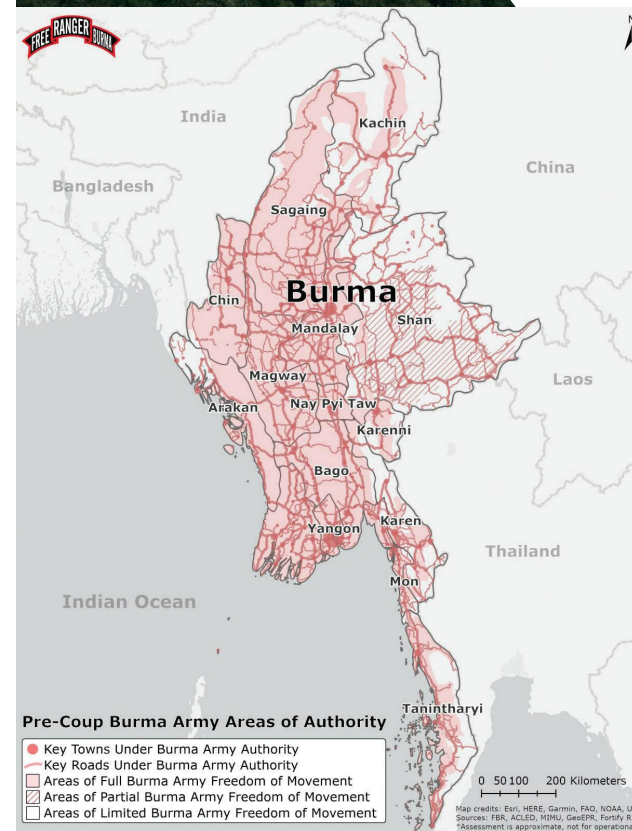
The recognition of ethnic homelands should form the basis of discussions on ethnic self-determination and federalism in Myanmar. Federalism has long been



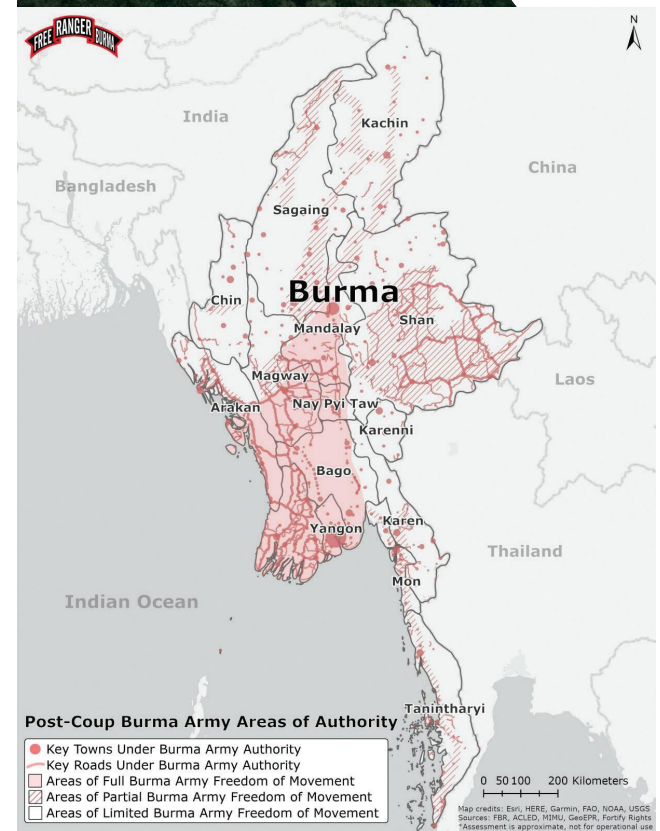
Children participate in a rally in Karenni State, Burma.

## SHRINKING DICTATORIAL CONTROL

### PRE-COUP



### POST-COUP



considered an important tool for resolving the country's protracted state-society conflicts and achieving self-determination for ethnic nations. Federalism has often been discussed in terms of the need to revise - or better, replace - the military's 2008 constitution. While this type of top-down ("blueprint style") constitutional change is necessary, federalism can also be seen as an emergent phenomenon, developing out of existing practices of communities and EAOs, state-level bodies, and CSOs.

Before the 2021 coup, the challenge in Myanmar was to federalize an authoritarian and centralized (albeit deeply contested) state, following decades of mostly low-intensity civil war. Since the military takeover, the challenge is to rebuild Myanmar through a new federating process.

It will be important to support the resilience of communities, CSOs, and EAOs in order to meet another existential challenge: climate change. Conversations with people across the country indicate that rural communities are already beginning to experience the negative impacts of climate change, with higher tem-

peratures and more unpredictable rainfall affecting rice and other harvests. As well as urgent humanitarian needs across the country, it is essential to support locally-led adaptation and mitigation activities (including climate-smart agriculture and forest conservation). Local organizations (CSOs and EAOs) have access, but more funds are needed.

The struggle for self-determination and indigenous rights in Burma draws on, mobilizing the extraordinary resilience of communities, CSOs, and long-standing EAOs. Given the likely protracted nature of conflicts in Burma, it is essential to support legitimate EAO governance authorities which provide services to vulnerable communities. For example, key EAOs administer – and have for years – at least 3000 schools, providing mother tongue-based, multilingual education to some one million vulnerable children across the country.

Meanwhile, the State Administration Council (SAC) junta detains and tortures citizens, rains death from the sky in airstrikes on IDP camps, and loots the country's natural resources. However, a new federal Burma is emerging, from the bottom up.



## JACK'S STORY

Jack is a Burman from deep inside Burma. He joined the pro-democracy resistance three years ago. Before that, he had not had much interest in politics – but when he was faced with the oppression of the dictators and the death of his friends, he knew he had to do something. He is an ethnic Burman from the majority ethnicity in the country, but had to flee to the Karen ethnic area and learn to make friends with the Karen and other ethnic groups. That is how he came to join a team of Rangers.

Jack loves people and loves making them laugh. His role with FBR has been in the children's programs. He is a natural actor and comedian and has become one of the top leaders with the Good Life Club program for displaced children in Burma. His infectious smile and talent changes the whole atmosphere. On a recent mission, airstrikes occurred near the team in the middle of the GLC program. After the jets had finished their bombing runs, including strafing just a few hundred meters away, Jack walked right into the middle of the group and said, "The planes are gone now; it is OK, we are with you. We are

all free people and we can choose to be happy so let's be happy. We won't let the dictators or their airplanes steal that from us." Then he broke into an impromptu skit that left everybody rolling with laughter.

He was born into a Buddhist family, but later decided he had no religion and no faith in anything. However, after he joined the Free Burma Rangers two years ago, he began to wonder if God was real. He said, "I began to feel something about God in my heart, and in my spirit. I began to ask God to help me like I was told I could. I began to see answers to prayer. Multiple times on this mission alone, during Burma Army attacks and airstrikes, I asked Jesus to protect me and the people we were with. Miraculously, even though many bombs and mortars came close to us, even though the Burma Army tried to kill us, they could not. Two times, when I thought I would surely die, I just said 'Jesus, please save me.' After these events, I began to share with other Ranger team members my own belief that God was real, and my own desire to follow him. Still, I wasn't sure."

*Opposite Top: Jack leads a Good Life Program for displaced children in Karenni State, Burma. Opposite Bottom: Jack and Peter Eubank perform a skit for IDPs in Karenni State, Burma.*





Then one day, Jack approached one of the Ranger leaders and said, "I want to be baptized." They were surprised and asked him what had happened. He answered, "You know I've been asking Jesus to help me so many times and he's faithfully answered me so many times and I became very close but still I wasn't sure, because it's a big step. And then I was talking to many of the FBR team, and then with a GLC teacher, who prayed with me. And then just yesterday, I faced what looked like an impossible situation that might be the end of me. I prayed 'Jesus help me.' And suddenly the obstacle was removed. The danger was gone. It really was a miracle. I saw it with my own eyes. So I decided I want to be baptized and follow Jesus."

Jack was baptized on the Fourth of July. It was a wonderful, joyous day. Allan Eubank, who has been a missionary in Thailand for over 60 years, once said, "Spiritual freedom is the foundation of political freedom. God gives us freedom and when we decide to follow Jesus, we find ourselves the most free: free from selfishness, free to love others, free to forgive, and free to follow the life that God has for each of us."

Above: Jack's baptism and celebration of new life.



## HELPING THOSE ON THE MARGINS

### SHARING LOVE IN THE SLUMS OF A WAR-TORN NATION

Yangon Slum Outreach (YSO) is a grassroots community service organization based outside of Yangon City since 2013. YSO works with squatter communities that have developed on the outskirts of this former capital. These impoverished communities are comprised of relocated city dwellers, itinerant farmers, mountain people, and families displaced by Cyclone Nargis.

#### Challenges:

In these types of communities, there are few, if any, government services. There are usually no schools available, no running water, few jobs, little police presence or infrastructure. The people of these communities live in great uncertainty knowing that they can be evicted at any time and would have to move on once again, only to find similar prospects. As a consequence of this instability, children are deprived of basic education, medical needs are unmet, and families experience food insecurity.

#### YSO Main Program Areas:

- Provide basic education programs to primary school students who do not have the opportunity to attend government schools.
- Provide healthy meals to children who have a lack of nutrition and who are experiencing food insecurity.
- Offer basic medical and social service referrals through community outreach.
- Provide a transportation grant for YSO children to attend a government school.
- Provide home care for selected children through a children's hostel program.
- Offer special tutoring and logistical support, which makes it possible for children to attend government schools.
- Tailoring programs for youths to make proper income.

#### Prayer Requests:

- One special prayer request for YSO is for the hostel. The cost of renting a house is increasing, and the house we are currently renting is selling. We need everyone to pray for us as we have many children and big families, and it is difficult to find a house to rent.
- Please pray that people in these Yangon slums come know the Lord Jesus as their Savior.
- Please pray for our team (staff), that God will give us wisdom to work in this slum area.
- In these Yangon slums, many people do not have jobs and do not have food. Please pray for their daily food.



Above: A slum outside Yangon. (Credit: Frontier Myanmar)

## PRAYER POINTS

PRAY FOR GOD TO DELIVER TO THE HUNGRY DAILY BREAD; TO THE HOMELESS SAFE SHELTER; TO THE SICK OR WOUNDED MEDICAL CARE.

## KAREN STATE



## FAITH UNSHAKEN: KAREN VILLAGERS PERSEVERE THROUGH ATTACKS AND DESTRUCTION

BY KAREN EUBANK

Sitting under a tarp for church with the people of Doh Thu Plaw Village, I'm frustrated by the attack that destroyed their beautiful church building and made them once again flee to a temporary tarp structure in the forest. Just days ago, the church was demolished, left in pieces, when an airstrike landed right on it.

But the gracious flexibility of these villagers reminds me that ingrained in the Karen people is a loose hold to physical things of this world. The people here fluidly shift footing between the permanent and temporary. Displacement by the Burma Army has been almost as regular as the seasons for the last 70 years in these communities. They honor God by building a wooden church nicer than any bamboo home in the village and then lose it; and yet, with their eyes focused heavenward instead of on earth, there is no break in their worship: the same Sunday school, same order of service, same offering, same choir, same hymns – but in a tent instead of their decorated wooden chapel.

The message from the Karen pastor this morning is from Psalms 39, 103, and 21: "Make me to know the measure of my days. The earth is full of your steadfast love. I will hope continually

and praise you even more." The choice of attention is ours. The pastor talks about who we will follow in the new year. He shares how the year 2022 is finished and now 2023 is ours to choose who we'll go with. Exodus 33:14-15 has Moses telling God, "If You are not with us don't send us..." after God has said, "I will go with you and give you rest." Matthew 28 tells us that Jesus said, "I am always with you." His promise is sure, what is our response? The lyrics of an old Amy Grant song about our part in choosing to follow Jesus connects my mind to the message: "Deep inside you there's a spiritual battle, the voice of darkness and the voice of light, and just by listening you've made the decision, because the voice you hear will win the fight."

During the prayer, I hear a loud sound out in the field. A tree falling? A hunting shot in the distance? I'm now listening for sounds of mortars or shooting from the Burma Army camp on the hill above this village. I remember the verse that the Devil is a roaring lion... crouching at our door... seeking whom he may devour. My senses are heightened to threats to my physical safety but am I as aware of Satan's threats to my soul? Are the temptations to sin as fearful

or serious to me? Even now I hear an airplane overhead. Everyone tenses slightly, despite the resolve of the speaker who either didn't hear or has chosen to ignore it, and we stay sitting in the service instead of evacuating to a bunker. People outside look up, trying to identify the speck of evil, but it's very high and passing by. Not enough threat to warrant the warning bell. We relax and finish the service.

What are my choices? Anger at the Burma Army. Anger at oppression in general. Frustration at international apathy and indifference. Despair at the lives laden with anxiety and victimization. Discouragement for the chronic interruption of education. Or, I can follow the example of these Karen families, and shift footing fluidly to keep pace with their seamless discipline of worship. We just sang the hymn that says: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." Where's my focus? Living "heavenward" means leaning into the eternal. When I lean on the world for answers to the hardest questions, it breaks; it can't support the weight of the Ultimate. Lean into the eternal and it can handle the weight of both good and evil, both our "ageless spirits [that are] like a burden of solid gold" (C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*), as well as the destructive yokes of sin and evil we carry. Evil seems so heavy, more than we can bear at times, but Lewis reminds us that, as it says in Hebrews 12, the eternal has more substance and, in the end, "all that can be shaken will be shaken and only the unshakeable will remain" (*The Great Divorce*).

I have choices: Be afraid of the arbitrary airstrikes, mortars, and bullets from a human enemy, or let it



Opposite: Karen Eubank dances with refugees from Karen State, Burma.

Above: Karen refugees hold church in the jungle.

more keenly remind me to be vigilant about the attacks less profound to the immediate senses but more chronically debilitating to the human spirit. Can I keep my soul's sensitivity heightened to spiritual attack as much as I question yielding to sleep while sounds of shelling punctuate the night around me?

Three weeks later, I'm in another prayer service in a different part of Karen State. The displacement I saw at the beginning of our trip has both grown heavier on my heart and become the "norm." Almost every Karen community we've passed through has relocated from their homes and villages to the trees and riverbanks, to escape relentless shelling and bombing. Now I find myself at a school set up similarly to the church mentioned earlier: chemistry equations and English lessons are written on a chalkboard propped under a tree for students sitting in clean school uniforms on a tarp on the ground. They fluidly shifted their commitment to education out of their school building to a hide-site. Even the preschool Legos made the move, we see as we watch the youngest pupils playing before class, before the agile little kindergarteners perform their choreographed dance to "Baby Shark."

A committee of village elders shares their situation, mostly of thankfulness that, despite all they have lacked these last three months of displacement and unemployment, God has provided. "None of us have starved, we've miraculously been able to work together and provide for each other." It reminds me of the parable of feeding the 5,000. The disciples asked Jesus to solve the problem and He replied that they should start with what they had. There has been very little international help for the ethnic oppression in Burma, but the people we've spent the last month with haven't stopped to wait. Their faith in Jesus' promises has given them enough for each day, including a hope and perseverance to press on toward what they can't yet see.

I ponder again on the question of how good and evil are permitted to exist together in God's sovereignty. We're here in the early-morning church looking in the direction of the closest Burma Army camp two kilometers across misty rice fields. The answer that comes first contains both hope and destruction: freedom. God gives us all freedom and therefore oppression exists by those who reject him, but so does the opportunity to live in love and faith and hope, as we've been reminded by our Karen brothers and sisters. They are being shaken, but, even so, are holding – with gratitude! – to Jesus' promise of abundance, adeptly keeping the rhythm of life.

# ONE LIFE LOST, ONE SAVED

## THE TRAGIC CHALLENGES OF MEDICAL CARE IN BURMA

BY SAMI DONNELLY

Like most tropical places in the world, Karen State has two seasons: rainy season and dry season. During the rainy season, it can rain for days on end without stopping. Living in this environment adds extra challenges to daily necessities such as having dry shelter and clothes. Extremes of precipitation can cause all kinds of inconveniences, including landslides and flooding. It can take a babbling stream and turn it into a roaring river, cutting off road access. This can create a difficult challenge to navigate when facing a medical emergency.

Such was the case for one woman we met while serving at one of FBR's remote jungle clinics. This particular woman was seven months pregnant. Her labor had begun prematurely at home, and things quickly progressed into a medical emergency. Her baby was breech and as her body began to push, the baby's arm and umbilical cord presented first. With it being the

rainy season, the roads were in bad condition. She made the brave decision for her and her baby, to walk for two hours, crossing a large river in order to reach a vehicle that could bring her to the only clinic for 11 surrounding villages, ours. By the time she got to our medics, they could see the baby crowning – from the wrong end. Our medics can't perform surgery, but they could stabilize her and escort her to the nearest hospital, a six-hour drive away.

On the way, she gave birth to a stillborn baby but was severely hemorrhaging. The medics with her were able to slow the bleeding and get the mother to the hospital in time for the staff there to take over and assist. The mother remained stabilized the entire time, and while we mourn the loss of her child, we also rejoice over the mother's life. This is one of many stories these villagers live out on a daily basis. Knowing the extreme emergencies and deep grief they experience helps us know how to pray for Burma.

## MILITARY BOMBS DESTROY CHURCH



Since the coup, every day the military is killing its own people, partly by conducting airstrikes all over the country. Hundreds of people have been killed by airstrikes, and churches have been directly bombed. This was a beautiful church in the village of Mae Ka Nae, Dooplaya District, Karen State, Burma. On 11 April 2024, the Burma military launched a ground attack against this village, as well as bombing it multiple times. They dropped a 500-pound bomb directly on the church, which destroyed the church and set it on fire.

In addition to the church being bombed, other buildings were destroyed by airstrikes and 12 other homes were burned to the ground when the Burma Army occupied Mae Ka Nae after the bombings.

All the villagers have fled, including the pastor. He said he is praying to rebuild the church after the dictatorship falls and he appreciates everyone's prayers. The Burma military also pounded the surrounding area with heavy mortar and machine-gun fire. They set up near the ruins of the church and are preventing anyone from coming back. Thank you all for caring and praying.

*The church before and after it was struck by a 500-pound bomb by the Burma military.*



## DOCTORS AS TARGETS: MANY KILLED IN THE BURMA ARMY'S ATTACKS ON MEDICAL FACILITIES

The bombs came down with very little warning and the four medics, manning their casualty collection point, were instantly killed by the direct hit of a 500-pound bomb. The very next day, at a different casualty collection point, two couples – both husband-and-wife teams of medics – were also hit directly with a 500-pound bomb as they served at their medical post. The intentional targeting and murder of these eight people by airstrikes as they manned medical facilities is evil and a war crime by the Burma Army. Just prior to these incidents, we visited two clinics that had been destroyed by Burma Army airstrikes, as well as a hospital that had been destroyed, killing two patients, including a baby. Before that, we visited teams of doctors from three different hospitals that we support and every one of them has been hit by airstrikes, each one has had to move, and all have been attacked again.

These airstrikes and destruction, and the murder of medical personnel, have affected all medical operations in Burma. In Karenni State, every single hospital and clinic have been attacked from the air and many have also been attacked by mortars on the ground. The direct targeting by the Burma Army of medical personnel and the facilities that give life-saving help is a regular pattern in Karenni State and all over Burma. It is a huge evil. One local leader told us, "Did you know those supporting the dictators of Burma are Russia and Iran and North Korea and China? These are evil governments supporting an evil government, all united, supporting them. Why aren't the good countries united to support us? Why isn't even one good country helping us? Why do only the evil countries get involved?"

Dear friends, please pray for the medical people: that they could survive this, and that we could help them find places to hide and rebuild hospitals and clinics that continue to serve and give life-saving help. Thousands of villagers have been killed, as well as local resistance; thousands are wounded and help is greatly needed. In Karenni State alone, over three hundred thousand people are displaced; many are in need of medical care and all are living with fear. All over Burma there are over three million people displaced. Please pray for countries of good will to choose to help the people here.



*Top: Thaug Salone Clinic, destroyed by Burma Army bombs on 10 May 2023.*

*Bottom: An IDP receives care from a medic.*

## PRAYER POINTS

PRAY THAT THE GOOD SHEPHERD WOULD GIVE VILLAGERS SAFE PASSAGE TO SECURE PLACES, AND SHIELD THEM FROM BULLETS, BOMBS, AND THE EVIL HANDS OF OPPRESSORS.



KACHIN STATE



DESPERATION AND DESTRUCTION

BY TAYLOR CARMICHAEL

Nearly three years after the 2021 military coup, Kachin State has experienced a significant change in its political landscape. On October 27, 2023, the Brotherhood Alliance and other resistance forces launched Operation 1027 in Northern Shan State, resulting in the seizure of multiple towns and hundreds of Burma Army camps and positions. The operation created a domino effect across Burma, which has resulted in major territorial gains by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and other resistance organizations in Kachin State. The Operation represents a significant inflection point in the war, the scale of which has not been seen since the beginning of the conflict many decades ago.

This shift in Burma is indicative that the people of Kachin are strengthening in resolve after suffering years of exploitative governance, military assaults, and air strikes. The Burma Army has only become more destructive as its hold on power melts away, which in turn only increases the solidarity of the Kachin people.

In March and April 2023, the Burma Army con-

ducted an offensive and destroyed 12 villages with ground assaults, airstrikes, arson attacks, and artillery, displacing at least 10,000 people along the Mandalay-Myitkyina highway in Shwegu Township. In another instance, on October 13th, Burma military jets bombed Munglai Hkyet Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp in Waingmaw Township, killing 29 civilians while wounding another 57. These heinous attacks have been characteristic of what the Burma military has been doing across Burma, and the people are not standing for it.

Please pray with us that the displaced people of Kachin would be richly provided with hope, food, shelter, and medicine. Please pray for the encouragement of the KIO and other governing bodies in Kachin who are standing against the oppression of the military regime. Pray that the military regime would be stopped, brought to justice, and that the democratic government would be restored. Lastly, please pray for unity amongst all of the ethnic groups as they build a new country based on freedom, justice, and peace.



Top: Si Taung IDPs hiding in a makeshift jungle shelter. Opposite Top: Man Hka IDPs living in the farm fields. Opposite Left: Si Ta Public Hospital destroyed by airstrikes. Opposite Right: Man Win Village destroyed by the Burma Army arson attacks.

PRAYER POINTS

PRAY FOR GOD TO COMFORT AND HEAL THOSE WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES OR SUFFERED TRAUMA.

## CHIN STATE



## HOPE AMIDST DESTRUCTION

BY STEPHEN WEISENAUER

*In April and May 2023, twenty-five volunteers from Chin State received humanitarian training which included medical training, reporting, spiritual leadership, survival skills, and children's ministry. The following account took place during the training and was written by one of the trainers.*

On day three of leadership and reporting training in Chin State, we saw a Burma Army MiG-29 roaring through the skies above. It flew out of sight, and a few minutes later we heard a distant boom. Tlanglo Village, about 15 kilometers away, had been bombed. The initial reports were that two people had been killed and several injured. We stopped to pray for the people of Tlanglo, and asked God what we should do. The Chin National Army had already evacuated and treated the injured, so we decided to send a reporting team to interview eyewitnesses and document the airstrike.

Six reporting students and two instructors piled into a flatbed truck and started out for Tlanglo. After three hours on difficult mountain roads, we arrived in the shattered and desolate village. The combination of large-scale destruction and

utter stillness was unsettling. As the students climbed out of the truck, they stared all around, wide-eyed, visibly disturbed and anxious. They had never seen a bombed village before. The instructors called the students together to pray first. We prayed for the victims, for God to use us to help the people, and through good reporting to get the word out about what happened. We prayed for God to bless our interactions with people, and for God to fill us with His peace and love to give others. We said "Amen," and started walking down the village main street.

We walked past shattered homes - windows and siding blown out. The homes closer to where the two 500-pound bombs hit were reduced to contorted piles of lumber and sheet metal. As we surveyed the damage, we were met by a handful of people there to guard the village (from looters) or to pick through their wrecked homes. The students wasted no time connecting with the villagers, asking questions and listening to their stories. They ascertained that 51 out of 81 homes were destroyed or badly damaged. Two people were killed: a woman in



*Top: Spiritual leadership students pray for a man who lost family in airstrikes. Opposite: (Top to Bottom) Thant Lang city destroyed by Burma Army airstrikes. A spiritual leadership student. Two volunteers run medical clinics in Chin State.*

her 50s (a beloved schoolteacher) and a father of two. Eleven people were severely injured, including a six-month-old baby boy and an eleven-year-old boy. Seeing how the students listened to, consoled, and even prayed for people was extremely moving. The expressions of fear and apprehension when they arrived had been replaced by love-driven compassion. The Holy Spirit grabbed them, gave them the right heart and the right words, and He used them just as we had prayed. It was amazing to see. It made me think of Nehemiah 9:20 when the Levites praised God for the many ways He provides for and leads His people by praying, "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them."

The team stayed in Tlanglo for about two hours, taking pictures, interviewing, taking notes, listening, crying with, and praying for people. When it was time to go, two students were nowhere to be found. Slightly annoyed that these students were late, we began searching for them. I eventually saw them in the shattered but still standing home of an elderly villager. As I came closer, I could see through the missing siding that their heads were bowed. They were praying for the elderly man. It felt like I had stumbled upon a holy place. With reverence and awe, I watched them pray, and I lifted up my own silent prayer. I thanked the Lord for using these students to be ambassadors of God's mercy and peace. God used these faithful students to not only conduct interviews and write a good report but also to bring help, hope, and God's love to this man amid extreme loss.

We then headed back to camp to debrief and have a follow-up reporting class. It was wonderful to see how they took what they learned and put it into practice in such a direct way. It was a true joy to see them grow in their ability and confidence as reporters and see how they were stretched and grown as spiritual leaders. They didn't just interview people and gather information. They ministered to people, prayed for them, and gave them hope. They also grew in their desire and passion to love and help others. The students said the experience made them want to keep helping people more and more. For everyone, it seemed like a small spark had been fanned into flames. Pray that God will continue to fan that flame and bring to completion the good things he started in them. And pray that God's good Spirit will continue to instruct and guide them.

## PRAYER POINTS

PRAY THAT GOD WOULD BRING COURAGE WHERE THERE IS FEAR, COMFORT WHERE THERE IS GRIEF, LOVE AND FORGIVENESS WHERE THERE IS HATRED.

# STOPPING TO SMELL THE ROSES

BY JESSE CUSIC



*The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

- Isaiah 58:11 NIV

Every morning students and staff carry loads into the FBR training camp. Some days it is wood to build a new building; other days it could be clothes and toiletries for the FBR students. Most days it is food – endless loads of rice on the backs of people from all across Burma carrying in food for that week. The loads never end – there is always something that needs to be carried, either for the clinic or the FBR training. Like ants, there will be a line of 200 people with loads on their shoulders or a tumpline on their forehead walking, heavily-burdened, into camp.

One morning as I watched the students, the line of ants, coming into camp, I looked in disbelief as more than half the students were not carrying food or supplies – but potted flowers. Person after person walked by with orchids and roses, and small trees. What in the world were they doing? We need food and supplies – why were they wasting their time carrying hundreds of flowers into the jungle?

I followed the line of students carrying flowers as they made their way through camp and deposited their fragrant and colorful potted plants at the door of an orchid trellis that was being built out of bamboo. The students in camp who would normally be digging a new bunker in the side of the hill were instead putting up a beautiful trellis in the middle of camp.

The whole situation made me laugh. Every day we wonder if our camp will be blown up tomorrow. Jets scream by overhead and we hide in our holes and it feels exhausting to just survive. In my mind I want to tell others that we should not put up flowers but just focus on surviving until this war ends. But I realized: this war has been going on for 75 years and it might not end in any of our lifetimes – so, these students had decided that instead of just surviving, let's thrive. Instead of just having our daily rice, let's also bring in beautiful things like flowers and take the time to enjoy the beauty that God has made in the world.

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.*

*Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.*

- Luke 12: 22-23,27 NIV



Students carry loads across the mountains of Burma.



Above: Mae La refugee camp near Mae Sot, Thailand.

## A REFUGEE STORY

BY JAMES GONZALEZ

A veteran Karen ranger named David lives with his wife and three children at Mae La refugee camp. David has been one of the most active Free Burma Rangers over the last decade. He has been on countless missions inside Burma and has even traveled to the Middle East to serve the people under oppression there. Many of the most memorable photographs and videos of the last ten years of missions have either come from David himself, or the students he taught. However, right now he awaits the possibility of relocating to another country so his children might have the opportunity to receive a quality education. Despite the possibility of living in a more developed country without the fear of nightly airstrikes or an oppressive dictatorial regime, David would tell you he wishes there was another way.

David loves his people. He loves his homeland. He has spent most of his adult life helping people in need. Yet, because of the ongoing conflict inside Burma he realizes that leading his family well means making tough choices. David is not alone.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are over 90,000 refugees living in nine camps inside Thailand. Additionally, the Royal Thai Government has registered over 480,000 persons as stateless. The oldest of the camps in Thailand is the Mae La refugee camp near Mae Sot. Some residents of this camp, which was established in 1984, have lived there over twenty years. Refugees living in the camp are not allowed to work and some months they receive less than \$20 per person for food.

Join us in praying for these men, women, and children as they live in a state of limbo for years on end. Pray for peace to prevail inside Burma so that these families can return to their homes and live in harmony with one another. Let us pray also for those that do relocate to another country, that they are able to build a new life and maybe even return to Burma at some point in the future.

## PRAYER POINTS

PRAY THAT EVEN IN THE MOST DIFFICULT PLACES, PEOPLE WOULD KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST, BE RECONCILED TO GOD, AND BE RECONCILED TO ONE ANOTHER SO THAT THERE WILL BE TRUE AND LASTING PEACE.



## HEALTHCARE ON THE FRONT LINES

BY ANDRE HUEGEL

*The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.”-Psalm 103:6*

Some of you may be wondering, what is the current state of healthcare in Burma? In a recent conversation I had with a commander from Karenni State about this topic, he explained:

“Right now our hospitals are working, but the Burma Army is still trying to find them and destroy them with the airstrikes. We have many nurses and doctors who fled after the coup and are now working to help the people. These hospitals don’t only treat soldiers, they help all the civilians. We are still able to get medicines, thankfully. All the care in the hospitals is free. None of the patients pay, but their families normally come with them to care for them and the villagers also bring food and vegetables so that the hospital is able to survive.”

The grim reality is that these patients, healthcare workers, and hospitals are not treated as bystanders, but as targets by the Burma Army, which makes concerted efforts to destroy them. Reports from teams in the field continue to confirm this.

The country of Burma is like any other place. People get sick and some illnesses are complex conditions requiring specialists. Babies are born needing heart surgery just like any other country. Individuals suffer from kidney failure, cancer, ulcerative colitis, you name it. In addition to this, the war creates a different range of problems: traumatic amputations, vascular injury, hemothorax, pneumothorax, traumatic brain injuries and the list goes on.

All these problems require a complex interdisciplinary team of healthcare workers to effectively meet the need. The team includes medics, doctors, nurses, lab technicians, logisticians, and others. We are so thankful for the healthcare workers willing to stay with the people and bridge the humanitarian gap instead of fleeing. They do so at great personal risk and sacrifice.

Additionally, we are thankful for all the other organizations who choose to stay. We are deeply grateful for them. The medical needs in Burma are so big that no lone person or organization can meet them. Only by working together, loving each other, and forgiving each other can we work to help the people of Burma.



Healing was an important aspect of the ministry of Jesus. It often consumed most of his time when he was with the multitudes. Sometimes it feels that way for us. However, our hope is that we can look deeper, the same way Jesus did.

Amidst the suffering and pain, we are reminded of the hope that continues to exist. The following words from Lamentations are of great comfort:

*But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are made new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion says my soul, therefore I will hope in him. The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him, it is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. - Lamentations 3: 21-26*



Above: A resistance fighter receives treatment for a gunshot wound.

Opposite Top: Medics carry a humanitarian worker who had his foot blown off by a landmine.

Opposite Bottom: Medics practice placing tourniquets.

## JESUS REVOLUTION OF THE HEART

On 22 May 2023, a young Ranger asked to be baptized. He said he could feel God’s warmth ever since he joined training a year ago. He had watched people be baptized, he felt God’s presence when people prayed, and he wanted it for himself. At first, he said he didn’t believe in anything or any religion. As he began to open his heart, he began to feel the warmth and love of God. He started thinking about how to be baptized, and praying. He could feel the presence of God. He wanted to change his life and become a follower of Jesus.

One night they showed a movie in camp, a new movie called “Jesus Revolution.” It’s about a revival in the US, especially among the hippies in the late ’60s and early ’70s. He said, “I watched that movie and I could feel

God’s presence and love. And when I saw the young people getting baptized, I knew I had to do it. I wanted to be baptized right away!” Right after the movie he wanted to be baptized, but it was already late at night. Then the next day he wanted to jump right in the water, but he talked to another Ranger who is a Christian and they prayed together. They came to the camp leader and Blade asked, “Can I be baptized today?”

“Yes!” he replied, and we went down to the river by camp and baptized him. Everyone was so happy. Thank you for praying for him as he is part of God’s kingdom of love, on earth and in heaven.

Blade’s baptism and celebration afterwards.





## WOMAN MEDIC UNDER FIRE

BY KAREN EUBANK

Nwyee Nwyee could be my daughter. She was born the year between my two girls and, at 22 years old, is beautiful, vibrant, committed, and a little precocious, laughing, "If you're the only child you get all the good looks." She is both confident and sweet...a behind the scenes powerhouse of capability and courage. It's often hard to appreciate all the intersections in the lives of those around us that have brought us together on the same path, and that is especially true for the many young Rangers who join FBR.

Nwyee Nwyee is Shan, from the multi-lingual Golden Triangle region where she grew up speaking Shan, Burmese and Thai. She was interested in Environmental Studies and started a Zoology degree at the University in Loikaw, Karenni State. In her second year, the military takeover canceled her studies and she joined her fellow students in protesting. She served her Karenni PDF team administratively by fundraising for financial help from abroad. "That's a tough job," she said. "You have to be really patient and humble." Later, when a FBR team came to do a GLC program in her town, she was interested in joining but was concerned the training would be too rigorous for her. She rose to the challenge and completed the 2022 four-month training as a team leader and then returned to Karenni State on our 2023 January-February mission. She said, "I'm not animated or musical like the GLC group, so I started helping the medics with the clinics for the villagers."

What did she think about the FBR training? Being a brand new swimmer she said the hardest thing was the Big-River-day which culminates in swimming, rappelling, rope bridge crossing, and a high-jump from our 30-ft suspension bridge over the river near camp. She said, "Despite all the hardships in the training we are all happy finishing together."

The best thing about the training was learning to love my enemy. "Before, I used to hate the Burma Army...I was so angry at them. Then I started to think of them as just people, maybe some were just following orders or had other reasons for what they did." Nwyee Nwyee was one of the Rangers who chose to be baptized at the end of the training. She started hearing about God's love from Catholic Karenni PDF friends. When she

*Nwyee Nwyee describes an airstrike at the clinic behind her.*



became interested in FBR, she watched the documentary and thought, "While I'm at the training I need to learn more about the love they're talking about." From morning devotions those three months she made her decision to give her life to Jesus and be baptized. "This love for God was simple and light and I wanted that."

After our FBR Headquarters mission team left Karenni State in March, Nwyee Nwyee's real-time mission was about to begin. She wanted to serve on the frontline but knew her petite size couldn't contribute to those who carried wounded away from the battlefield. She teamed-up with Kuku, one of the sweetest and bravest frontline nurse-medics serving at Casualty Collection Point locations where wounded first receive medical attention. Not able to stifle the strength of the resistance, both soldiers and villagers refusing to flee, the Burma Army's most recent strategy has been to hunt out and bomb all medical facilities, from the secret tarp and cave triage stations, to camouflaged hospitals with operating suites. During March and April, four of these CCP stations where Nwyee Nwyee helped were bombed and destroyed by jet fighters. She said, "The worst was when you never heard the plane coming until it was right overhead and the 500lb bomb was exploding near you." Once she took cover in an irrigation ditch and the other times in caves where the CCP was located.

On the evening of May 9th, the Burma Army jets bombed their CCP cave site three times. By 10:00 the next morning the jets were back bombing them. In an intermission a truckload of people left to start relocating their group. When the next bombs came, two of the people with her were injured and Nwyee Nwyee

found herself the only one able to help. After using all gauze available to pack wounds, she said, "I was tearing off pieces of their clothes to stuff in the holes to stop the bleeding." Despite having serious abdominal injuries everyone survived! She said, "Even though I didn't have real medical training I just did whatever I could." There was no cell service in the cave and every time they went out to get a signal, there was a mortar or jet attack. Still, they were eventually able to make contact with another CCP to come pick up the patients. There were so many different jets: black, green, sky blue.

They thought it might be safer to stay in the cave as jets were tracking escaping vehicles, but then feared an impending ground assault would completely trap them. By 3:30 in the afternoon they had made contact with someone to pick them up; it took them a long time to leave the area as they kept jumping out of the truck to hide when jets came close. Finally they drove far enough to clear the area and arrived to a safe place.

The following week, on May the 17th, our team arrived and we're thankful to be working on another mission together again. Looking at sweet young Nwyee Nwyee hanging out with her Ranger friends, including my daughters, I would have never expected her to have experienced such a tumultuous last two years just as she was venturing out into adulthood. But her story is representative of so many young men and women serving their people. I wish I had more opportunities to honor the courage and commitment I've seen. I thank God for the intersections in our lives that have caused our paths to cross. Jesus has brought his simple and light love into her world full of heavy complexities that is too much to bear but not beyond God's hand to navigate for all of us.



## PRAYER POINTS

PRAY THAT GOD WOULD MAKE EVERY PERSON A PEACEMAKER AND GIVE THEM COURAGE TO GO WHERE GOD LEADS TO BRING HELP, HOPE, AND LOVE, EVEN IN DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS PLACES.

# FALLEN STARS

BY MOON AN FBR TRAINEE

Because of the action of some people  
They walked the road to freedom  
leaving the greatest things in their lives behind  
Not to stay under the military rules

Youths have become a target of war  
Is it a fair war or unfair war?

Could not distinguish

Carry their backpack over the mountains

Even though the darkness of the night is covering  
the moonlight

Without reducing his vigor

The Column marched

He was scared when he heard the order

To fight from the frontline, but forgot all the fears

With a bowl of meat

Based on courage and sacrifice, he attacked the  
enemy like a moth to a flame

Even when the cruelty struck, the bullets  
penetrated the chest

And entered the flesh, accepting his fate...

“I will go first”

Those who paid with their lives...

Let this war end

May our earth become peaceful

May the future of our next generation be beautiful

The fallen stars who were not allowed to shape  
their dreams,

Are to shine brightly in the sky

All the brothers in blood,

Let us join hands and contribute to the  
eradication of tyranny from the ground....

# 11 RANGERS MAKE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF FAITH

The Free Burma Rangers (FBR) is made up of people of many faiths and ethnicities and all are welcome to serve together for love. For many, Jesus is the source of that love, and baptism is a sacred display of commitment to follow Him and love others as He first loved us. On December 30, 2022, 11 Rangers decided to proclaim their faith in Jesus through baptism before many fellow Rangers, instructors, and community members. For some, this decision is one that will be celebrated as they return home to their communities. For others, this bold proclamation is accompanied by worry as they return to family and communities hostile to Christianity. All stated in their own words that during FBR training God touched them in some way, whether through the instructors, community, or prayer. These newly-baptized Rangers, many who are young, ask you to pray for their health, their families, and repeatedly, for their country. More than anything, they pray for peace for their people and their enemies. Please join us in praying for and congratulating these amazing men and women of God!



Starting top left, left to right:  
Kant Nyar (Burman), John (Karenni), Thet Htoo Oo (Karenni), Nwye Nwye (Shan), Saw Lee Lu (Karen), Sender Htun (Karen), Bue Reh (Karenni), Saw Ney Htoo (Karenni), Saw Soe Doh Htoo (Karenni), Saw Blute Wah Htoo (Karen), Saw Ahde (Karen)  
Opposite: Saw Ahde is baptized by FBR chaplains.

**REJOICE IN HOPE,  
BE PATIENT IN TRIBULATION,  
BE CONSTANT IN PRAYER.**

————— *ROMANS 12:12* —————

