

UPF-Nepal Appeals for Aid after Earthquake

Robert Kittel
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Kathmandu, Nepal - When a 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal at 11:56 AM on April 25, 2015, UPF leaders were in Biratnagar, southeastern Nepal, conducting a family peace festival. In spite of the strong shocks at the beginning and in the middle of the program, many people remained.

As of April 27, more than 4,300 people are believed to have died as a result of the earthquake, with casualties reported throughout Nepal and in adjoining areas of India, China, and Bangladesh.



“The Nepal Family Party is deeply saddened by this deadly national disaster,” announced Hon Ek Nath Dhakal, president of the Nepal Family Party and chairman of UPF-Nepal. “We pray for all victims to rest in peace, speedy recovery of the injured, and fast and effective relief of those affected.”

Prime Minister Sushil Koirala said he expects the death toll to top 10,000. Preliminary estimates by the Home Ministry indicate that more than 400,000 homes were destroyed. That number will likely increase. At the epicenter in Gorkha, 50 miles from Kathmandu, there are no buildings/homes left standing. The UN estimates the eight million people have been affected by the quake. The population of Nepal is 28 million.

UPF-Nepal has been organizing Multicultural Family Educational Peace Festivals in various parts of the nation, following the initial festival at the National Stadium in Kathmandu on Feb. 21.



UPF-Asia Education Director Dr. Robert Kittel and his wife Theresia were with Hon. Dhakal in Biratnagar conducting a family peace festival for 1,200 couples. The earthquake struck just as the program was to begin. Because the event was held in a tent, many people were spared physical harm. Had they been at home or school, they might have been killed or injured by a collapsing building. Many people left after the first shock, but as many as 630 couples remained.

Dr. Chung Sik Yong, chairman of UPF-Asia, was in the Kathmandu area planning to conduct a family peace festival there for 700 couples, but with transportation and communications systems broken down and many homes and buildings damaged, no public events have been taking place.



UPF-Nepal reported that their organizers were all safe, but many houses have been destroyed. However, since many houses were destroyed or are unsafe to live in, families are sleeping in open areas or campsites as aftershocks are still felt.

“Last night hundreds of thousands of people were again sleeping outside,” Dr. Kittel reported on April 27 after returning to Kathmandu. “They sleep in the streets, in parks, and in fields. They were afraid to go into their homes due to the many aftershocks, as many as 100 with one registering 6.9. Some of the smaller roads in the city are blocked with debris from collapsed buildings, but the main roads are passable. The United Nations officials are concerned that food and water are in short supply.”



“We call upon international communities, concerned national agencies, and all citizens for their support in relief activities and safety of the people,” Hon. Dhakal stated. “We asked the government to handle the disaster in a serious and professional way. Let us unite in heart and service during this national crisis.”

UPF Co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon committed \$1,000,000 in relief funds for Nepal. She directed that it be donated (1) to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and (2) to help rebuild the homes of families. "Tears well up in our eyes," said Mr. Santosh Kumar Paudel, national leader of UPF-Nepal, about the donation. "It may seem like a lot of money, yet the amount needed to rebuild homes and lives will be much more."

UPF and related organizations in Nepal are establishing a national Disaster Relief Peace Committee, chaired by Hon. Dhakal, to survey the affected areas and present proposals for the distribution of funds. All distributions will be documented.

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