

UPDATE ON KARONGA EARTHQUAKES

Thank you for prayers and support you have given us. The situation has not improved much. We have had a series of tremors on daily basis for the last two months. Some of the tremors are minor but from time to time there is a major one. The situation in Karonga is unpredictable.

The Government of Malawi has sent different groups of geologists to monitor the situation and the best advice they have given us here in Karonga is to stay away from buildings and trees. Thousands of people are spending nights in the open enduring rains that are pounding Karonga at the moment. There is effort to distribute tents by the Government but they are not enough.

Houses have collapsed and others have gaping cracks. The infrastructure has been destroyed. Three or four days without power and phone services has become a common lifestyle. There is a general cloud of fear among the Karonga residents. Families with a second home have moved away to escape what locally has been called *chindindi*.

There are those without a place to go. They live in makeshift houses and watch buildings they have called home for years weaken and eventually collapse. The trail of destruction does not spare anyone; churches, markets, school and even power posts and trees.

The situation is worrying as students report to schools this week. They will report back to schools with collapsed classrooms and dormitories. Each of the school here is making varied arrangement depending on the extent of destruction. In some schools the students will have to study in the open air at least for now.

At Chaminade Mission buildings have cracked badly. The Brothers' residence, staff houses, dormitories, and classes all have cracks. There are sections of the residences and classrooms that have been rendered inhabitable. They are deemed weak and can come down any time. If the situation continues through January, most of buildings at Chaminade will most likely come down.

A predication that the tremors will continue to the end of February by the Government geologists creates both anxiety and hope. Anxiety because we will have to live with the

tremors for two more months, and hope for we know a time will come when the peace of Karonga will return.

We continue to thank all of you for the support you have given us during this difficult time. We thank you for your continued prayers and words of encouragement. Please keep us and those we minister to in prayer.