

Alan and Megan Barker

Quite an eventful month or so

September 2025



www.bmsworldmission.org/ambarker

In the last newsletter, we mentioned that Megan was likely to be heading out to a new project in the remote western region of Rukum. Well, she did get there, but things didn't quite go to plan...

...As many of you will have seen on the news, what started as a peaceful anti-corruption protest march, organised by young people, turned into a time of great sadness and also mayhem for a few days. For reasons we do not understand, someone gave the order for the police to shoot at the young people on the march. Initially, 19 young people (mostly in school uniform) were declared dead, but since then the total number of deaths has been given as over 70. Following the shooting there was much anger and the next day violent protests spread across the country. Many government buildings were burnt down (photos like the one shown were being passed around on social media in shock that such things were happening).

Other buildings, mostly belonging to wealthy politicians, were also attacked like the school also pictured here – owned by a wealthy politician's wife. The initial protests were against corruption and mismanagement of funds which is widely acknowledged as endemic here. The aforementioned school is extremely expensive and was making a lot of profit for those involved, for example.

The riots resulted in the government stepping down, the army taking over temporary control and curfews being imposed. For the week of the riots, we were in two different places as Megan had already arrived in Rukum before everything started. Alan was in Kathmandu and from the roof of our house he could see smoke rising from all over the city. However, at no time did we feel unsafe or threatened as foreigners were never the target. We know that we have to stay indoors in such situations and take advice from our Nepali friends and keep listening to local news. Colleagues from BMS in the UK were in regular contact with both of us, checking that we were OK.



The Singha Durbar, Nepal's main government building, set on fire during violent protests on September 9, 2025.

As we write, things have calmed down for time being. An interim prime minister has been appointed and she has selected various people to hold office in the cabinet until elections are held next March. All the people who are in the interim government are known to be honest and anti-corruption. We wait to see what happens in the next 6 months.



A School which Alan passes on his way to KISC, burnt out following the government crackdown on what started as a peaceful protest.

We mentioned in our previous letter that we arrived back to monsoon season here which means it is raining a lot and very humid, as the temperatures here in Kathmandu are in the high 20s-low 30s oC most of the time. We often mention that this time of year means loss of life and property for communities in rural areas because of landslides and floods triggered by the heavy rains. And that has certainly happened in some parts. On the travel to and from Rukum, Megan saw first-hand the effects of the heavy rain where mud and trees had slid down the hillside and occupied half the road in places. In some stretches, 3 or 4 landslides had happened very close together. However, Megan had a good trip home on Saturday 13th September – just 6 hours of road travel and a one-hour flight! Although she returned on schedule, with all that had gone on it felt longer and we were much relieved to be together at home again.

The drought conditions we mentioned are gone but still rains came late and planting and harvesting has been affected, so some places will find it hard to survive on what they produce.

Having said all that, Megan was able to do some valuable work in Rukum and has plans for further visits as requested by the organisation we are seconded to here.

The first week was spent in the hospital training a young lady, who has some basic medical training, to extend that to offering post-surgery therapy on the wards. This is focussed on maintaining joint mobility before surgery, whilst in plaster and after removal.

Megan was also able to teach some basic exercise programmes to the same young lady for the conditions most commonly seen in the outpatient department. Together they also created some poster ideas on good nutrition and hydration that will be further worked on in the office communications department by Astha, who we have introduced to you before.

The second week was supposed to be out and about in the community. Before all the troubles started they had 2 days of visits where Megan was able to work with the team physio and demonstrate some different approaches, as well as working with the team to assess the environmental needs. After the riots started, the team was restricted to the office but there Megan was able to do some brainstorming about prioritising and choosing candidates when there is a limited supply of funds for home adaptations but many demands. A difficult and emotionally challenging task for the team.

Prior to that, Megan was able to give some input at a family retreat for people living with disability. First she helped with the training of volunteers, August 19th, in Kathmandu and then joined the retreat about an hour's drive away for 2 of the days (21st and 22nd) where she lead some sessions about health and wellbeing, both for those living with disability personally and those who live with it as a third person supporting a family member or close friend.

Alan has been helping colleagues finish off reporting for some projects, including one that supported communities after the 2023 earthquake in the west of the country. A small village that lost just about everything has been rebuilt and all the work complete. He is also planning ahead for a series of workshops coming up later in the year. Together we are travelling to Bangladesh at the end of September for two weeks to work with a BMS partner organisation in Dhaka.



For those of you that pray:

Please join us in giving thanks for

Rains refreshing the lands

A good trip for Megan and safe return from Rukum

And in asking that

Wisdom regarding planning for the next few months and the events and travel coming up

For the country as it comes to terms with what happened and looks ahead

For the team in Rukum as the work develops and as they seek to help in the best and most advantageous ways.

With thanks as always for your friendship towards us

Alan and Megan xx

If you would like to support Alan and Megan Barker by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/247 or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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