Beat: Local

Moderate earthquake in SW China destroys 520 homes, injures 30

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USPA News - A moderate earthquake shook southwest China on Sunday afternoon, causing more than 500 homes to collapse and leaving 30 people injured, authorities said on Monday. More than 10,.000 people in the affected area were forced to leave their homes.

The 5.5-magnitude earthquake at 1:41 p.m. local time (0541 GMT) on Sunday was centered in a rural and mountainous region about 22 kilometers (13.6 miles) northeast of Guan Ping Xiang, a small town in Yunnan province. It struck about 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to China`s Earthquake Network Center. Officials at the China Earthquake Administration (CEA) said the tremor destroyed at least 520 houses and damaged more than 17,600 others. Footage from the state-run Xinhua news agency showed rescue workers, buildings which were reduced to piles of rubble, and victims sleeping outside. But despite widespread damage, there were no immediate reports of fatalities. The China Earthquake Administration said 30 people were injured and sought treatment, but only one of them was seriously injured. Authorities had earlier said three people were seriously injured but later corrected the information. Hundreds of rescue workers were sent to the region to assess the damage and to provide aid to nearly 13,.000 people who were forced to leave their homes. The Chinese government said it dispatched an initial supply of aid which includes 5,.000 tents, 10,.000 cotton quilts, 10,.000 cotton-padded coats, and 4,300 kilograms (9,500 pounds) of rice. Buildings in many regions of China are extremely vulnerable to earthquake shaking, and even light earthquakes frequently cause serious damage and casualties. A 5.7-magnitude earthquake struck southwest China in September 2012, killing at least 80 people and injuring nearly 1,.000 others. A 2.9-magnitude earthquake struck central China in November 2011, causing a rockslide at a coal mine which killed eight workers. It followed a 5.8-magnitude earthquake in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in China`s Yunnan Province in March, killing 26 people and injuring more than 300 others. Most notably, nearly 3,.000 people were killed and more than 12,.000 others were injured when a powerful 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck northwest China in April 2010.

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