



Anglican Dioceses of Aru and Boga in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Congo News No: 12 2018

DRC: The Latest News

This from the Congo Church Association May Newsletter:

Since December, violence has erupted in Djugu territory, including killings and burning of homes, churches and villages, and leading to mass population displacement. Some went north towards Aru; thousands made the risky boat crossing across Lake Albert to Uganda and tens of thousands went south to Bunia. This violence came as a huge shock as the region had been peaceful since 2007.

In Bunia, Christians worked together to provide shelter with host families and in churches for this huge influx of traumatised people – estimated to be up to 100,000 people. Some families were separated in the exodus; a number of students at UAC had no idea where their families were. There are two camps in Bunia, run by the UN with NGOs providing health care and other support. Prices of food and other goods have escalated, impacting the wider population. People are starting to return home now, desperate to rebuild their homes and start cultivating again, but many are reluctant to leave Bunia. CCA has sent £1,200 each to Boga and Aru Dioceses, and to Kasai Diocese which also has many Internally Displaced People (IDPs), for them to use as they see best, a tiny contribution in this vast ocean of need.



Update on Congo Appeal: Chester Diocese 16.07.18 From the Bishops of Chester, Stockport and Birkenhead:

Thank you to all who have contributed so generously to this appeal. The Congo Church Association who have been coordinating the response from our diocese have told us that to date over £22,000 has been raised and that £11,000 is being sent to each diocese of Aru and Boga. And more is still coming in.

The Dioceses will be working with other agencies to ensure the administration of this money goes to those most in need and Archdeacon Ian will be liaising with them so that we can report back on how the funds have been used and how we can continue to offer support.

In June this year +Keith was able to meet +William of Boga and +Ande of Aru in Jerusalem and hear first-hand from them about the continuing instability in the country and the pressures on the churches to help thousands of displaced persons and communities living with fear. +William's wife, Mama Irene, President of the Mothers' Union in Boga Diocese, spoke of the number of camps for displaced persons in Bunia, the vulnerability of the children to disease and death, and the continuing anxiety about what may happen in the country among people in the churches and the wider community. The number of refugees was estimated at 15,000 after the first outbreak of violence, and though some have returned to their villages, episodic outbreaks of killing have recurred and the situation remains unstable and uncertain.

+Ande has said the situation is becoming "more unsafe" in Aru and the planned visit from 6th formers from Bishops High School in Chester (this year would have been their fourth visit) has had to be cancelled, with the students able to visit schools in Uganda.

Please pray that the Presidential elections postponed now for nearly two years will take place and that the international community will be able to exercise maximum pressure to establish good governance in a country the size of Western Europe.

So please continue to pray. We limited the time of the appeal in order to concentrate our minds and hearts to support; if you would still like to give please do so now.

The epistle reading from last Sunday spoke of God's "plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and on earth" (Ephesians 1:10). We are a small part in our link with Aru and Boga of that alignment of heaven and earth in Christ. We praise God we can serve and express our love for one another in this way through our unity in the gospel.

Thank you again for your giving and prayer.

With love in Christ,

+Peter

+Libby

+Keith

To John Owens, Chair ABC Link Committee from Bishop William sent at the beginning of September:

Humanitarian response in Aru and Boga

Dear John,

I want to thank God and thank you for the generous assistance to the displaced people from Djugu. On behalf of all the Boga Diocese, we give our heartfelt gratitude to the Diocese of Chester and all those who have responded to the emergency call. I have copied all those who were at the first conference call. That assistance has been highly appreciated by the beneficiaries and sister organisations. May God bless you!

+William

A summary of the Relief Report dated 22nd August:

As shared in our previous reports and conference calls as well, the number of Djugu IDPS in camps and in the households within host families still remains high. These same IDPS got registered in March 2018 in Bunia General Hospital Camp where we have given relief assistance this 22nd of August 2018. For sometimes there was some little peace in Djugu,

and the Congolese Government urged them to go back to their villages of origin. But the dilemma was that when a few who went back faced a new scenario of killings, houses and farms being destroyed by armed men. Due to that, those were still in the camp in Bunia decided not to go to their villages until there is a lasting peace and guarantee for their security.

Based on the field report from our Emergencies response, there was a need to assist this big camp which for some reasons did not benefit much support from NGOs and other well-wishers.

The diocesan Emergency team during survey found that the real need of those IDPS was to get a supplementary feeding as the quantity and quality they receive from the W.F.P and MAF Nyankunde, was not enough. For that our assistance was centered on purchasing, rice, beans and laundry soap.

The choice for soap was motivated by the new Ebola outbreak whereby cleanliness is a crucial issue at the moment even in the camps.

It was agreed by all concerned parties that, each household had to benefit at least 5 Kg of rice, 2 kg of beans and 1 bar of soap. To be able to come up with this strategy, the IDPs camp Management Team worked together with our Crisis response team for the implementation of this strategy. The mere reason is that at least a big number of people in the camp get assisted.

After this intervention, there is still a big need in the area of feeding and other non food items. For the time being as it is a rainy season, rain water is leaking in most of the huts in the camp. Based on the facts at hand these people may be willing to go back to their villages in early January 2019 or February. This after a new political climate is observed when new a government is put in place in the country. It will be good if we could continue to offer our assistance to the during settlement. Our action was really appreciated, and a way for spiritual care.

We thank the Diocese of Chester and CCA that have made this appeal to get a response, may The Most High grant you all blessings.

A testimony from the beneficiaries:

“This is a blessing from God, may all the glory and honor go to Him, we have been waiting for someone to give us some boost in this camp so as to get some soap for laundry and other household tasks;

The Church has remembered us today it is good news, may God bless all that have contributed towards this assistance.” (Pastor Bingi member of the Civil Society& Crisis group management)



Pastor Bingi, the HGR Bunia camp Manager giving a word of thanks the day of distribution at the camp site. August 22, 2018.



Day to day life in the HGR Camp Bunia / Ituri



Food items in the truck before unloading to the distribution site



IDPs in Bunia HGR camp waiting to receive their relief kits



Reverend Japhet Barozi of All Saints Parish during distribution on the 22nd of August 2018



Vulnerable families in IDPs camp Bunia

From Revd Bisoke Balikenga, Provincial Youth Coordinator. This was in the twice monthly CMS Africa newsletter:

Please pray for local partner Revd Bisoke, Provincial Youth Minister and his ministry among young people, especially in peace building. He writes:

"We really need your prayers because of the violence and killing of people in the east of Congo is still going on. Over the past week in Bule, 45km from Bunia, 500 people fought government soldiers, killing 16 soldiers and some civilians.

"As you might have read, we are also struggling with the Ebola virus disease in this country and it has now reached Chomia, near Bunia.

"Bunia also has many displaced people, who were preparing to go back home but with all the above problems, have been discouraged to do so. Many are going hungry and some dying, and children are also struggling with malnutrition and chest infections.

"We really need your prayers."

Update on the spread of Ebola:

Ebola struck DRC this summer for the tenth time in 40 years. On this occasion, however, the outbreak was in North Kivu, an area never affected before, and even spread into the southern parts of Boga Diocese. Ebola first appeared in DRC and is named after a river in Equateur Province near the original source of the disease. Fortunately, partly due to the sparsity of the population, all outbreaks so far have been contained, unlike those in West Africa a few years ago. This time the effects of the virus peaked in early August and now seem to be fading. On 17 September 142 cases had been reported, with 97 deaths. Organisations such as WHO, Red Cross and UNICEF are involved in the control of the disease.

Please pray for those affected, the bereaved and those who are working to prevent the spread of Ebola, and that things may soon settle.

At the end of October, Ven Jean Bagada, Diocesan Secretary, Boga writes:

'We thank our Lord for his protection and guidance and your prayers for the mission of Boga Diocese. May God be blessed!

NEWS

- *Bishop William has held seminars in most of the archdeaconries. The object was to strengthen the capacity of all church leaders and to equip them to face the various challenges of mission. The seminar ended with a confirmation service.*
- *In August the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission organised a conference in Bukiringi for 60 delegates from each archdeaconry. The topic was 'How can Christians facilitate peace and reconciliation through dialogue without violence?' Delegates challenged the organisers to continue and maintain the programme at this election time.*
- *The Medical Department has opened up a new health centre in Makabo, 3 Km to the west of Bunia.*
- *The diocese was blessed with a gift from Médecins Sans Frontières, who are building a new hospital in Bunia to replace the old one. This will take 9 months.*
- *The gift received from Chester Diocese has been very helpful in fighting Ebola virus. A report will be produced in due course.*

PRAYERS

- *For security during the electoral period, especially in areas prone to violent episodes.*
- *Christians here love God and have a vision for evangelism and church growth but are adversely affected by the destabilising influences in the country. Pray for them as they face this challenge.*
- *Some chapels are closed because of robbery, rapes and torture and some parishes have to worship away from their sites. This is a particular problem in the Gety area. Please pray.*
- *A violent storm blew away the roofs of the schools in Bukiringi so pupils have to study in the open air. Please pray.*
- *Remember the building of the new hospital in Bunia.*

ELECTIONS

President Kabila should have stood down in December 2016 but is still in power. In August this year he at last agreed not to stand again as the constitution states. Elections are planned for 23 December. A hard-core loyalist of Kabila, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, is a candidate, together with 20 others. Two other prominent names have been excluded. Unfortunately, the opposition parties are disunited.

Pray for fair and peaceful elections.

This prayer request was received from the Congo Church Association (CCA) last week:

Please pray afresh for DR Congo in the critical coming days and weeks:

- Pray for an end to the Ebola virus outbreak in North Kivu and Ituri provinces – there have been cases in Beni, Butembo, Mabalako and Mandima health zones. Pray for health professionals, seeking to combat the epidemic through medical care and, together with church and community leaders, raising awareness of prevention measures and how to recognise signs and symptoms; also, safe access for medical teams to communities where cases have been identified so they may implement vaccination programmes. Over 200 people have been infected with Ebola virus, but a significant number have recovered, thanks to the availability of new vaccinations and new drugs and patients swiftly seeking medical help.
- Pray for free, fair, transparent and credible elections, due to take place on 23rd December 2018. There are still many hurdles to overcome in the preparations for presidential, legislative and provincial elections.
- Pray for Churches to play their prophetic role with integrity and wisdom at this time.
- Pray for an end to the violent massacres in Beni territory, and for many people displaced by violence and insecurity in parts of eastern Congo, and living in fear.

CMS Partners update from Dr Patricia Wyard: (Patricia is of Belgian descent and was a consultant in palliative care in the UK. She is going to Aru to carry on the work Dr Francesca Elloway started. Her husband, Peter, is ordained and will be teaching in the Theology School at Aru.)

“Dear friends from our supporting churches,

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace

those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Apologies for silence, a quick update:

Our commissioning service is in Datchet where Peter was the vicar at 9.30. We very much look forward to that and that, of course will be marking the last stage in UK.

We are hoping to leave during the latter half of October. We are not booking a date till we are fairly confident a number of health, practical paperwork details and transport(of books)

can be dealt with in the remaining time frame. Once we are in Aru, we want to fully focus and 'be present'. This week, we had a skype telephone call with bishop Ande in Aru via his mobile which was encouraging and uplifting as it reminds us of our call. Peter now knows what topic he will be teaching: Old Testament, I now know I can work as a doctor as my registration has been accepted.

We really value your prayers and support and do pray for you as well. Those of you who supported Francesca Elloway in the past (she was for 24 years in Aru) she will be coming to Datchet despite orthopaedic surgery recently. She is a great support for all the practicalities.

Ebola remains an issue in the politically unstable Eastern Congo region but hopefully with adequate vigilance and WHO input, this will not become a problem in Aru.

Prayer requests:

- Your prayers for Eastern Congo as a whole are badly needed: Beni the epicentre of the latest Ebola outbreak experienced a lethal rebel attack, just a week ago which left 18 people dead including 14 civilians.
- Bishop Ande and the team in Aru for their continued Christian witness
- Please also continue to remember our children. Henry is still with us until he goes to his Uni accommodation, Mari and Catherine will also join us for our commissioning service. We will miss them very much too!
- For our final preparations: not too many obstacles and enough patience and clarity of mind.

Once more thank you from both of us,

Patricia and Peter.”

And this a few days later:

“We leave for Congo, flying to Entebbe first, on November 16th.

We hope to hear from some of you if possible as we are also interested in your lives!

We will have a postal address via a post box in Arua in Uganda. I believe someone from the Diocese empties that about once per week, so post can arrive!

Looking forward to hearing from you and we hope to start a blog very soon but right now, we are packing boxes as our freight is being collected later this week. **PO BOX 226 Arua Uganda.**”

To finish, here are some photos showing IPASC support in fighting Ebola:



Hand sanitation materials



Training for Community Relays and Nurses



Education and demonstrations