

Background Information:

Insecurity and violent conflict have increased significantly in the east of DR Congo in recent months. A new and powerful armed group called M23 emerged in late March 2012, and terrible violence by this and more than two dozen other armed groups across eastern DRC has created enormous humanitarian needs and displacement in North and South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema and Katanga Provinces in recent months. There are an estimated 1.7 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in DRC.

Goma Region and Beyond:

Since April more than 500,000 people have been displaced in the east, including 60,000 into Uganda and Rwanda, following M23 violence against civilians and fighting with the national army, in the Rutshuru area north of Goma. Many moved into IDP camps while significant numbers also found shelter in schools and churches and with local families. This in turn places a huge burden on the local hosts and impacts the life of the local community. For many people this is the third time – or more – that they have fled their homes and land. This human suffering is repeated across other regions of DRC including most recently around Mambasa (Orientale Province). The LRA continues to spread fear in the remote border region with Sudan and CAR, and in Dungu area where an outbreak of Ebola and flooding have added further problems. On 20th November M23 took control of Goma.

Prayer Pointers: ***Blessed are the peacemakers***

Pray for political will and determination from the DRC government and other actors, both international – Rwanda and Uganda – and national, to engage and persevere in dialogue to find resolutions to the hugely complex issues of this conflict in order to bring about lasting peace in DR Congo.

Pray for church leaders and workers, leaders of civil society, health and aid workers, and MONUSCO (UN peace-keeping/stabilisation force) as they work in hugely challenging and often dangerous circumstances. Pray for wisdom and strength as they minister and respond to needs. Remember especially Bishops Bahati (Bukavu), Isesomo (Butembo) and William (Boga).

Pray for provision of international aid resources to tackle the needs for food, shelter, sanitation, healthcare and education for those affected by conflict and displacement.

Pray for an end to impunity, and justice for those who perpetrate violence, rape, kill and maim, abduct, steal and destroy.

Give thanks to God for all those who have opened their homes to displaced people, for their sacrificial giving and sharing of slender resources, and pray for provision of their needs.

Pray for God's protection on the minds and lives of young people, for healing and psychological treatment for those who have seen and experienced things no child should be exposed to, and for access to education.

Give thanks for the work of HEAL Africa in Goma and Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, and other church groups working amongst rape victims, and pray for God's blessing on their multi-faceted work tackling medical, psychological and spiritual needs.

Pray that God will heal and bring comfort and care to all those who have been raped and tortured. Pray for an end to sexual violence and restraint of this evil behaviour.

Give thanks for the extraordinary resilience and firm Christian faith of many Congolese; pray that many would turn to the Lord and know him as their refuge and strength. Praise God and pray for health, education, peace and reconciliation, and development work undertaken in Christ's name in DRC.

Prayer Resources – with thanks to the Rev Ian Tarrant and the Rev Tim Naish

A short prayer, based on part of the South African national anthem:

God bless Congo:
guard her children,
guide her leaders.
and give her peace;
for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen**

Longer intercessions for use in a service or meeting:

Almighty God, maker of all, enemy of none,
we pray to you for the people of Congo,
whose troubles are in your heart and ours,
whose hopes are set in your promises.
Stretch out your arm, your mighty hand,
and touch this wounded land.

Lord of heaven and earth: **bring peace and healing**

Touch those whose lives have been scarred by violence and death;
as they look on the cross of Christ, bring them from pain to joy.

Lord of heaven and earth: **bring peace and healing**

Touch those who are guilty of greed and cruelty;
by your Spirit bring them through repentance to new life.

Lord of heaven and earth: **bring peace and healing**

Touch those who wield power, of government, of arms, and of commerce:
give them a vision of Congo rebuilt, united, free and prosperous.

Lord of heaven and earth: **bring peace and healing**

Touch your church, troubled and tired, and give it new strength,
so that with Bible and hoe, prayer and medicine,
it can tell of your love and show your compassion.

Lord of heaven and earth: **bring peace and healing**

Touch our hearts too, renew our solidarity with our brothers and sisters,
and show us how we can support them in their difficulties.

Lord of heaven and earth: **bring peace and healing**

Stretch out your arm, your mighty hand,
and touch the wounded land of Congo;
for Jesus' sake. **Amen**

A dialogue based on Isaiah 43, for use at the beginning or end of a service:

Leader The God of Israel has redeemed us
All **He has created us and called us by name**

Leader He is with us and we need not fear
All **Rivers will not overwhelm us**

Leader Flames shall not consume us
All **For the Holy One of Israel is our Saviour.**

Litany:

For the diverse beauty and potential glory of all your creation, and especially the land and people of the Congo, ***we give you thanks O Lord.***

For the faithful and perfect witness to your love borne by Jesus Christ your Son to the whole world, including the people of the Congo, ***we give you thanks O Lord.***

For all those who despite their flaws have mirrored that witness in the proclamation and living out of the gospel among the people of the Congo, ***we give you thanks O Lord.***

For the worship and mission of the body of Christ in Africa, and particularly of the Anglican Church of the Congo, ***we give you thanks O Lord.***

For faithful and persevering parishes, for health care and education, for work with young people and for the Mothers' Union, for evangelism and training, for ministry and service to the desperate in the Congo, ***we give you thanks O Lord.***

For your steadfast love, for Christ's bearing of the world's woe, for the promise of ultimate reconciliation and the hope of glory even in the Congo, ***we give you thanks O Lord.***

Silence

As we move from thanksgiving to intercession, the response to the words '...and we turn to you' is
'hear our cry O Lord.

When we recoil from the worst of the forces of evil, from oppression and corruption, from cruelty and great suffering, and we turn to you, ***hear our cry O Lord.***

When we long for the leaders of the peoples, especially in the Great Lakes region of East Africa, to find in their hearts compassion, wisdom and the springs of right action, and we turn to you, ***hear our cry O Lord.***

When we fear for the well-being and the very lives of your poor and those we love, when our hearts are breaking and we turn to you, ***hear our cry O Lord.***

When we see discord and hatred seeming to prevail and bitterness fuelling human hearts for violence, and we ache for change and we turn to you, ***hear our cry O Lord.***

When we hope with passion for the development of life, material emotional and spiritual, and find our hopes in part frustrated and we turn to you, ***hear our cry O Lord.***

When we wait boldly for the coming of your kingdom and lament the dullness of our perception of your mission and the fragility of our participation with you, and we turn to you, ***hear our cry O Lord.***

We pray now in silence for each of the dioceses of the Anglican Church of the Congo – Aru, Boga, North Kivu, Kisangani, Kindu, Bukavu, Katanga, Kasai, Kinshasa (or other churches known to us):

Blessed and holy Trinity,
within the mystery of your perfect love the Son knows the depth of human brokenness,
the Spirit is constantly in movement for abundant life, the Father is working out your glorious purpose;
receive our thankfulness and attend to our plea for the whole life of the Province of the Anglican Church of the Congo,
heal its brokenness, renew its life, and bring to fulfilment your purposes for it and through it,
for the sake of your kingdom, through Christ,

Amen

A Prayer for the People of DR Congo

O God,
Loving parent of all,
comfort your children
displaced, wounded, lost or orphaned by conflict in D R Congo;
and give the people of that country
courage to seek enduring peace with justice and freedom,
that their children might grow up without fear,
for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ
Amen

(Adapted from a Prayer from the Congo Swahili Prayer Book 1998)

See also the Collects and Post-Communion Prayer and readings for the Third Sunday before Advent, which can be found here <http://almanac.oremus.org/2012-11-11>

Various Links in English and French for current news:

<http://www.irinnews.org/Country/CD/DRC>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>

www.icglr.org

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/map_3128.pdf

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/emergency-response/great-lakes-crisis>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/ocha-operations-director-john-ging-press-statement-joint-mission>

http://fr.allafrica.com/congo_kinshasa/

<http://radiokapi.net/congo//actualite/>

