

*“For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you,
Do not fear; I will help you.” Isaiah 4:13*

MBF Classifies DR Congo as Conflict Area

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been in a constant state of political unrest and regionalized armed conflict for many years. The central region has been especially volatile serving as a battleground for rival ethnic militias. Recently however, the violence has escalated. Roads have been blocked, airports shut down and villages are fighting with each other in addition to clashing with both government and rebel forces. Residents and missionaries continue with only very basic activities and are essentially “sheltering in place”.

The violence began in response to the start of the presidential election process back in August. The elections have been postponed for a number of reasons. As a result, protests have erupted throughout the capital region of Kinshasa. It is unclear where talks between the government and the opposition party now stand in their efforts to avert a serious civil conflict. According to the UN, since August, more than 400 people have been killed and more than 200,000 displaced.



MBF staff member, Jack Muthui, second from the right, with administrators at IMCK during less volatile times.

Parts of Congo, particularly in the east, have experienced insecurity for more than two decades since the end of the Rwandan genocide. In the central region of Kasai, where many of MBF’s partners and PC(USA) missionaries are located, clashes between local villages have been ongoing for several years. However, the unrest in the region seems to have intensified. As recently as last month, some 40 police officers were found beheaded and the bodies of two UN experts, one a U.S. citizen and one a Swedish national, were abducted along with their interpreter. Their bodies were found after about two weeks. This is the first time UN experts have been reported missing in Congo and it is the first recorded disappearance of international workers in the Kasai provinces.

Due to security concerns, this is all we can report at this time.

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For our ministry partners in DR Congo who were already operating in a precarious situation, this has turned into a crisis. While some missionaries are still in place, many have been evacuated for safety reasons. Some Congolese hospital and nursing school staff have left to take their families and seek refuge, and an increase in wounded (both military and civilian) are straining the limited resources at IMCK and other hospitals and clinics.

We have monitored the situation since August, hoping it would improve. However, things have continued to deteriorate and it is becoming increasingly difficult for our ministry partners to operate under normal conditions. Based on our assessment, MBF has decided to internally classify DR Congo as a **Conflict Area** and begin immediately working in an “emergency relief” approach.

For MBF this means that for the immediate future our primary focus in DR Congo will be on getting funds and support to our partners for their basic survival. We will also temporarily suspend long-term development projects, as well as the planning and reporting those projects entail. We are not abandoning these projects, but rather suspending our current work efforts until the situation is stabilized and staff is able to return to normal operations. MBF will work with staff members of our partners currently in place to identify basic services that need funding, and, if needed, supplement staff salaries in order to keep the hospitals open and providing humanitarian medical services.

First and foremost, we ask all of our U.S. ministry partners to pray for the staff and their families of our partners in DR Congo:

- Congo Presbyterian Church (CPC)
- CPK Clinics in Kinshasa
- Good Shepherd Hospital and PAX Clinic
- IMCK
- ITSM and ITM Nursing Schools
- Lubondaie Hospital
- Moma Hospital
- Jeff and Christi Boyd
- Dr. John and Gwenda Fletcher
- Marcia Murray
- Larry and Inga Sthreshley



People waiting outside Good Shepherd Hospital.

Your financial support is also critically needed. By faith, MBF is already responding to the needs of these partners. Please consider a special gift, as generous as possible. It can help in providing medications, medical supplies and salary support. To make a donation, please visit us at MBFoundation.org and click the *Latest News* link on the homepage or mail your check to the address below. Thank you for considering this gift beyond your regular support.



Medical Benevolence Foundation

MBF is a Christ-centered organization dedicated to transforming lives by building sustainable medical ministries by partnering with hospitals, nursing schools and clinics in developing countries.

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