

'...helping to bring hope to the people of the democratic republic of congo.'



friends of cme trust

charity number: 1104119

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November 2008

Dear friends and supporters,

Welcome to the quarterly update on our recent activities to support the work of *Centre Medical Evangelique* in North-East DRC. A lot has happened both locally and in the wider region in recent weeks.

Civil war in North-Kivu: Nkunda's CNDP vs. DRC Government forces (FARDC)

You will no doubt be aware of the distressing news that has thrust DRC into media limelight this month. So fast is the situation around Goma developing that any information I give here will be well out of date by the time this letter reaches you, so please seek updates. In brief, Laurent Nkunda's rebel army – the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) – has advanced from Congo's eastern border with Rwanda. Government forces engaged them and fighting has been heavy around the city of Goma. Nkunda claims to be protecting the minority Tutsi population in the east from militias linked to the Rwanda genocide. The DRC government accuses Rwanda of backing the rebels. So far hundreds of thousands have been displaced, fleeing before the rebel advance, including those already in IDP camps. Retreating Congolese army soldiers, bandits or troops on the fringe of the rebels have been causing havoc looting, raping and killing. Please do what you can to support the exceptionally needy in this part of the country and apply pressure for sustained Western aid and diplomatic intervention. If you pray, please remember this devastating situation. Particular critical needs include:

- Food, water and basic supplies for the tens of thousands displaced
- Protection of local people living in the threat of terror, looting, torture, rape and death
- A swift, united and powerful international response to the situation, including adequate bolstering of UN/MONUC forces
- A diplomatic resolution between the DRC government/army and Nkunda's forces (and the Rwanda government); that all would adhere to the ceasefire

The CME hospital at Beni sits 150 miles North of Goma, in the North-Kivu province.

Report of the APPG [All Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes Region of Africa], July '08

This quote from the above report reminds us of the scale of the need in DRC:

"The conflict [In DRC] has cost more than 5.4 million lives since 1998, mainly through disease, poor nutrition, and lack of healthcare: most of these are children under 5. This is a considerably worse disaster than the one affecting Darfur, but commands a fraction of the international attention. It demands concerted, long-term and effective engagement by the [...] whole world."

The report can be read online at:

<http://www.appggreatlakes.org/images/stories/APPGReports/congo%20unfinished%20business%202008.doc>

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'Attack' at Nyankunde Hospital – 15th Oct 2008

Local fighting between rebel supporters of Nkunda and FARDC reached Nyankunde on 15th October. We received reports from Dr Philip Wood (Executive Director at Nyankunde). Although a very frightening episode the attack was, fortunately, very different from that in 2002. Early that morning gunfire nearby led students and staff to shelter in the hospital. When gunfire stopped some armed insurgents (suspected FARDC soldiers and some "drunk youths") arrived and started opportunistic looting. They entered several parts of the hospital and some private houses. Although they took solar panels, motorbikes, some machinery, carpentry tools, phones and money, most of the hospital equipment remained intact. Most importantly, they did not hurt anyone. In the afternoon a MONUC convoy from Bunia arrived and safely escorted some 300 people and patients out of the fighting zone to Marabo (4km away, travelling by foot) for the night. A small group of staff returning the next day found Nyankunde in calm, but with hospital paperwork strewn everywhere. But the fear had sadly displaced many people who had not been re-settled long in Nyankunde.



The displaced sleep under the stars



Displaced people leaving Nyankunde

The Aftermath

- The militia reported that they did not come *for* Nyankunde, but rather to attack the Congolese army (FARDC) stationed at Marabo.
- Incredibly, Nyankunde staff were able to ensure the safe delivery of a number of babies, including some caesarean section, amidst the disturbances!
- Initially a small group had volunteered to keep the hospital open in spite of the attack. However, within a couple of days more hospital staff had returned along with a steady influx of patients and women for maternity care, which is great news!
- For safety, the Nursing School students had first considered relocating to Beni for the rest of the academic year. Fortunately this no longer looks necessary and studies were planned to resume in Nyankunde this month.
- Senior hospital staff have requested a UN/MONUC contingent at Nyankunde to protect the hospital and village. The UN says it does not have enough personnel to do this although they may be able to do patrols in the area. Please pray for safety for the staff, patients and equipment there.

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New Physiotherapy project at CME

The latest venture to join the list of services provided by CME is the establishment of Physiotherapy Departments at both Nyankunde and Bunia. Chris Phillips (UK) will be based at Nyankunde and Wendy McAlister (Canada) at Bunia. Chris has just arrived in DRC this October (and is currently at Bunia, learning Swahili, refreshing her French, and getting acquainted with the local medical needs). Wendy plans to follow soon. As well as helping to set up both Physio Departments they will also be teaching about Physiotherapy in the Medical and Nursing Schools at CME. Chris also has a particular interest in Leprosy work and hopes to help people affected by Leprosy in the more remote areas. Previously Chris mostly worked as a Physio in UK, but has also worked in Africa with *The Leprosy Mission*, most recently in 2007 at Bukavu, DR Congo. Wendy has also worked as a Physio in Congo, and in West Africa with *Mercy Ships*.

Friends of CME Trust is pleased to be involved in supporting Chris in this new and much needed project. Please remember her as she adjusts to life in Congo again, learns Swahili and start the challenging work. If you would like to donate specifically to the Physio project please contact us.

Hospital Activity and Financial Reports, Beni & Nyankunde

We have received the following two reports on activities in Beni and Nyankunde CME hospitals (many thanks to Gary Wannan for his work translating these reports for us):

- During 2007, \$9,300 of our gifts was spent by CME in Beni treating 137 patients who could not afford their treatment. From the period Dec 2007 to April 2008 'Friends of CME Trust' further funded, to the sum of approximately \$2,500, the treatment of 74 patients – who ranged from babies to the elderly – for a range of medical conditions. During these five months over \$2,000 bought a variety of medicines to treat vitamin deficiency, malaria, worm infestation, and infections. These have been identified by CME as the most critical medicines that patients need.
- 'Friends of CME Trust' funding for the Nyankunde Nutrition Project between Dec 2007 and April 2008 was reported as follows. Each month £207 was spent on food (maize flour, soya and sugar) and medical consultations for malnourished children under the age of 5 years, approximately 140 receiving assistance every month. Since June 2008, we have increased the monthly amount to £382 because of an increase in the number of malnourished children at Nyankunde.

Beni building work (Operating Theatre and ICU)

Unfortunately, there have been delays in completing the Operating Theatre due to contractor negotiations. The contract was for a fixed price but large increases in material costs have made the contract uneconomic for the contractor. Another builder has been appointed for the finishing touches: doors, septic tank, plumbing, electricity, windows and paint. This builder is also ready to begin building the accompanying intensive care unit. However, CME is not sure how it is going to fund the budget deficit. A design and budget has been agreed and we very much look forward to getting going with this since, once finished, the new operating theatre can also go in to action! Thank you so much for everyone who has given towards this appeal – once completed it will greatly aid surgery and help save lives in the region.

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OEIL News – “Souls’ rehabilitation first” (May 2008)

OEIL stands for Organization, Evangelism, Intercession and Liberation. Daniel Masumbuko has been leading reconciliation work in the Ituri region. This includes bringing people from conflicting tribes together for reconciliation and forgiveness and incorporates churches, local politicians, prisoners and former militia. We are very pleased to be able to support Masumbuko in this very important work.

Between Jan 06–July 08 OEIL:

- Ran 99 seminars on forgiveness and reconciliation
- Had attendance from over 14,000 people
- Brought many different tribes together
- Saw over 5,000 people repent of war crimes and seek forgiveness from other people groups
- Brought church leaders from the region together
- Included local politicians such as the Nyankunde chief
- Talked with 535 prisoners in Bunia
- Held 2 peace rallies in major towns – 20,000 attending
- Have been teaching new skills to former militia
- Attended a Europe–Africa reconciliation conference in the capital Kinshasa



Finally...

Our annual accounts have been independently examined and are available from the Charity Commission and a summary is on our website.

If you have received this letter by post but would prefer it by email, please return the reply slip below.

We have recently re-designed our website. We would invite those on the internet to browse the site and trust you'll find it simple to navigate with more information that these newsletters can supply. We will also be using the website homepage to feature urgent news and prayer requests (as in the recent Nyankunde threat) so please do add it to your favorites! The website is: www.friendsofcme.com.

Thank you so much for your concern and support for our friends in DRC.

Best wishes,

Chris

(On behalf of the trustees)

Reply slip:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Please tick the box that applies to you:

I'd like to receive this quarterly newsletter by email. My email is: _____

Thank you, but please unsubscribe me from all future newsletters

Please return to: Chris Almond c/o Hannah Morrell, 295, Hillgrounds Road, Kempston, BEDFORD, MK42 8TH, UK. Alternatively, email it to: info@friendsofcme.com