



Republic of Cameroon



République Démocratique du Congo



Republic of South Sudan

The Africa Appeal

Summer 2017

Dear Supporters of the Africa Appeal,

Fighting breaks out in Congo

I have received the following messages from Bishop Steven Ayule-Milenge in Congo:

First message: “I have just received a message to say that those living in our parishes of St. John, Misisi and St. Matthew, Ngalula, were woken by heavy weapon attacks in which the Mai-Mai militia¹ was attacking the local Police/Military headquarters, responsible for the safety of the population. The Mai-Mai militias occupy the townships of Lulimba, Misisi and Ngalula. The military had to retreat and fled to the neighbouring provinces of Tanganyika and Maniema.

... There is no news of the local Christians at present, for they are all closed up in their homes. We have tried to ask friends in the provincial government and other security services but nothing is being said, except that Christians from St. Paul, Fizi say that they have seen trucks full of soldiers and heavy weapons who passed through Fizi on their way to Lulimba, to try and liberate those villages which have fallen to the Mai-Mai.”

The Africa Appeal is an outreach project of the Traditional Anglican Church of Canada (TACC) administered by the parishes of St. Columba of Iona and St. Bride of Kildare. Along with traditional Anglicans in the USA, Australia, and the UK, it supports churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Cameroon and South Sudan. These fast-growing churches, together with the parishes of the TACC, are members of the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) - Original Province, a worldwide communion of traditional Anglican Churches. Funds collected are used for clergy support and various projects developed and run by Bishop Steven Ayule-Milenge (Congo), Bishop Wilson Garang (South Sudan) and Father Alphonse Ndutiye (Cameroon).

¹ *The Mai-Mai militias are in effect private armies which are set up by criminal groups and which control illicit mining of precious minerals.*

Second message: “I have been able to telephone Fr. Makutano Alonda, curate of the parish of St. Jean, Misisi (pictured below). ... He has told me that the government forces have pushed the Mai-Mai back so that the army has retaken several villages which had been under Mai-Mai control. But that in Misisi the situation is very tense with fighting as the government takes back control of the town. Aircraft (helicopters) are flying above, to chase away the Mai-Mai.



Misisi is a small town of some 50,000 people: the majority work in “artisanal mines”². One company is in the process of developing an industrial mine, but this is opposed by the population who feel that they would not benefit from such an endeavour. So the dispute between the Mai-Mai on the one side and the government on the other really concerns the governance of the mines. As the daily tax received by the government is more than US\$100,000 what is the amount to be gained by occupying the town for one week? The idea of establishing an industrial mine is excellent as this would provide work for the young and reduce unemployment.

Our Christians are in difficulty because the Mai-Mai are pillaging the hospitals, churches, retail stores and private homes. Assistance is needed because many people have not slept - with generalised attacks by the government army which surrounds the town. Once it is liberated, we will establish the needs of our Christians. Your prayers and assistance for the Christians of Misisi and Ngalula are requested.”

Third message: “The Mai-Mai did not get as far as Fizi Centre. They encountered a government army offensive when they were trying to reach the centre of the community. They were restricted to a distance of some 20 kms. Fizi Centre, where our parish of St. Paul is to be found, is the major centre for the territory of Fizi and is where are situated the administrative offices for the territory. The territory of Fizi is an administrative entity managed by a territorial administrator. Its size is equal to that of the Republic of Rwanda, divided into 4 collectivities which themselves are divided into smaller customary administrative units. Before the Belgians arrived, the collectivities were kingdoms. In certain territories of this land, collectivities or chiefdoms still exist with a King addressed as His Majesty Mwami.

The parishes which have been victims of this assault are St. Jean, Misisi and St. Matthieu, Ngalula; which are both in the collectivity of Ngandja, whose major centre is at Lulimba some 12 kms from the township of Misisi. Lulimba is at the border with the Province of Maniema, on the river Kimbi. When you look at the map for the territory of Fizi on Google maps you can see the lie of the land. From Bukavu to Fizi is 280 kms. Fizi to Lulimba is a further 100 kms and from Lulimba to Kalemie, major centre for the province of Tanganyika is 200 kms. From Lulimba to Kindu, major centre of Maniema is 500 kms.

The Mai-Mai militias were planning to take control of the territory of Fizi so that they would have access to the port at Mushimbakye so that the province of Maniema would be cut off from the outside world, as they receive all their supplies through the port of Mushimbakye which links Fizi territory to Tanzania, Zambia and Burundi.”

I looked up the issue of artisanal mining on the internet and found this information:

“The problem of FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo) interference in mining and trade is particularly striking in the territory of Fizi, where they are present at practically all mining sites. Units of the 112th and 113th regiment levy illegal taxes and exploit several mining pits themselves. In

² These artisanal mines are not much more than holes in the ground, sometimes to great depth but with no safety precautions, no employment supports. If the roof collapses, the miners usually die and no-one will know. It is why Bishop Steven likes the idea of an “industrial mine” as this type of mine includes rules for safe operation.

addition, the 112th regiment obliges the miners to work for them during a few hours each week. Gold mining in Fizi is big business. Our teams estimate the total weekly production of the south at 17 kg and that of the north (Minembwe area) at 6 kg. It appears that over 12,500 diggers are working under FARDC control, nearly 10,000 in the south of the territory. It should be noted that demilitarisation does not necessarily solve the issue of illegal taxation. Bearing in mind that in the south the soldiers charge the miners a tax of 500 FC (approximately \$0.50US) each day, they could earn up to \$5,000US/day from this type of taxation alone. Apart from the FARDC, the FDLR and Mai-Mai Yakutumba control half a dozen gold mines too. The FARDC's 112th regiment and Mai-Mai Yakutumba seem to have made some kind of arrangement at mining sites near the village of Ngalula. Whereas army officers operate numerous mining pits for their own benefit, Yakutumba collects taxes in the same area.”³

So to summarize, the Mai-Mai and the government army both exploit the miners and are currently fighting for control in Congo with serious implications for the people who live there. We must pray for them and especially for the Christian community under the care of Bishop Steven.

Famine continues in South Sudan

The second water well, for the village of Baau, has now been completed just before the rainy season, which would have made travel on rural roads virtually impossible severely hampered the heavy drilling truck that drilled the well (photo of the Luethwek well at right - photos for the Baau well have not yet been received). This project came to fruition after some delays and has had to be coordinated by clergy in the Diocese as Bishop Garang had to travel to the USA to attend a previously arranged course provided by a generous benefactor.



In South Sudan, the major health risks come from famine and lack of clean water. The major security risks vary. In Unity province and other regions, including the capital city of Juba, the most important security concern is civil strife between two major political groups. This, coupled with famine, has created internal displacement of people trying to move away from the fighting and to search for food.

This in turn adds stress to the already fragile food supply situation, including in Aweil where Bishop Garang is headquartered, and puts pressure on all local services. The water well project is incredibly important in helping to reduce these problems. It is hard for us to understand just how valuable these two wells are to the survival of the villages in which they have been dug. We are grateful to the generous funding from Voice of the Martyrs Canada⁴.

As was noted in the last Appeal, the Diocese of Aweil is classified by NGOs as being in food crisis, with Aweil East at the point of moving up to the emergency classification if adequate supplies from relief agencies are not received. Thanks to a generous donor, we have been able to send funding so

³ Analysis of the interactive **map** of artisanal mining areas in Eastern DR Congo' by Steven Spittaels & Filip Hilgert. (http://ipisresearch.be/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/20131113_Promines_analysis.pdf)

⁴ <https://www.vomcanada.com/>

that the clergy would be able to buy seed to grow adequate food to see them through the winter months. The funds arrived just at the start of the rainy season, when it was important to get the seed in the ground. Now the worry is whether there will be enough rain or whether there could be too much. Our prayers and intercessions are needed to ensure that this harvest is good.

Finally, as the province of Aweil borders the Republic of Sudan on its northern flank, there has been an increase in incursions across the border by Islamic militants. This might be caused by the general insecurity of so many villages or perhaps by the oil-driven politics of this region.

Cameroon: Fr. Alphonse the builder

I have written in past Appeals about several of the parishes and projects of this nascent Diocese but, when I translated his diocesan report for the Provincial Synod taking place this October, I was overwhelmed at the number of building projects Father Alphonse has on the go in Cameroon. He has assembled a diocese with a cathedral under construction, eight parishes, schools and trade training, and health centres. The remarkable thing is that he has done this with very little funding.

There is La Maison St. Gregoire, the mission office for the parish of Edéa; Ecole de Couture Ste Margaret Marie Alacoque, a sewing school which also provides income for the church; Ecole de Couture St. Agnes des Béatitudes which also provides some income for parish support; Centre de Santé St Raphael d'Edéa, a health centre under construction; Centre de Santé Nsimalen, another health centre under construction on Cathedral grounds; Ecole Maternelle et Primaire St Augustin, a school under development; Ecole Secondaire et College, another school - managed by the ACC in collaboration with the civic authorities in Edéa; and the Auto Ecole Ste Marthé, a small driving school.

Of course, some of these projects still need significant funding support for them to achieve success. But it is important to consider that every project listed entails local effort and sweat equity. Without Fr. Alphonse's paid work as chaplain to a hospital and local prison he could not have made this journey in the ACC. To the small amount he earns as chaplain is added the earnings of the two sewing schools at Yaoundé and Edéa and any surplus from the school projects. He has the ability to make small amounts stretch – you can see why we keep saying that even a small donation from us here in Canada is very welcome in Africa.

Perhaps a few words about the cultural context in which Father Alphonse works are in order. Living in Yaoundé, everyone, apart from the elite, is short of money, and many are in dire poverty. In 2000, the overall unemployment rate was 30% (includes those looking for work and those who have stopped looking) and 48% of the population was living below the poverty line.

This forces people to live precariously. For example, it is common to see motorcycles being driven through the city when they have no licence plates. Many of these are motorcycle taxis and if you are riding on one and fall off there is no insurance, no protection, and no legal rights for you. If you are in an automobile taxi which is not properly licensed or insured, the same thing applies. Drivers have no money and no way to pay for insurance which is expensive due to the high risk from so many uninsured drivers (a vicious circle).

Recently, Father Alphonse advised that the water and electricity to the cathedral, his home, and the new Nsimalen health centre had been cut off for non-payment of the account. I gained the impression from the internet research I undertook that, as most people are so short of money, they

only pay part of each bill when it comes due. They soon reach a point where that part is not enough. Then the power or the water is cut off, and they must collect pails of water from a neighbour until they have managed to save enough to pay more of the bill – but not likely all of it. Once Father Alphonse reaches this point, he will be able to get back to work plastering the wall of the health centre!⁵



The photo shows Father Alphonse with the building contractor. This man has been working without pay on the promise from Fr. Alphonse that he would be paid in due course. His efforts are showing good results as you can see from the concrete blocks behind him made from the raw materials which Father Alphonse has managed to buy. However, Father Alphonse has advised us that stores and suppliers do not always order the goods he needs. The reason is that he has placed orders so many times and then been unable to take the goods because he was unable to pay the bill.

Father Alphonse suggests that he might buy a concrete block maker for the church. It seems a very good idea but the cost of this machine is listed at US\$8,500. However, Father Alphonse has a contact who has quoted US\$3,500. Now, this amount is far beyond our Appeal budget, but if a parish would like to adopt this worthy project, please let me know.

Summary

There can be no doubt that the situation in South Sudan is very grave, as is the situation in Congo. But it can be overcome with our determination to provide the necessary food and water, safety and peace. As Malala Yousafzai told the United Nations, “one child, one pencil, one book, one teacher, can change the world” because the energy that this can release will allow people solve their own problems.

Projects centred on health and education have proven their value. Whether in Congo (health centres, primary and secondary schools, sewing machines, widow’s agriculture programmes) or Cameroon (sewing schools, health centres, primary schools) or South Sudan (the water well project with Voice of the Martyrs, food security for clergy) projects funded by our Appeal have all shown positive results. This is primarily because they show recipients that there are Christian folk out there who care about them, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**In Christ,
David+**

(Father David R. Marriott, SSC)

⁵ http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurren/cameroon/cameroon_economy.html

How to give support to these churches

There are no deductions from moneys received by the Appeal; the full dollar amount is sent to Cameroon, South Sudan or Congo. Any overheads are paid from gifts received for this purpose.

In Canada

The Parish of St. Bride

By  see <http://parishofstbride.webs.com/>

or

c/o 20895 Camwood Ave., Maple Ridge, BC V2X 2N9

The Parish of St. Columba,
c/o Box 894, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0

*Please make a note that the funds are for the Africa Appeal on the front of the cheque.
Tax receipts will be issued by the parishes.*

In the USA

The ACC Mission Fund, The Anglican Catholic Church, PO Box 5223, Athens, GA 30604

In Australia

Anglican Aid Abroad, PO Box 256, GRANGE, QLD 4051

Or

A safe and inexpensive way of sending your gift is to make a deposit at any WESTPAC BRANCH to our Account at Morningside: MISSIONARIES OF ST ANDREW – ANGLICAN AID ABROAD 034 058 58 0656 - or use the INTERNET.

If you need a receipt for tax purposes or acknowledgement in the newsletter, please write to tell us your name, details of the deposit and enclose a self-addressed envelope. If you intend the donation for a special project, please let us know, so we can designate it accordingly.

In the UK

Cheques should be made payable to “Anglican Catholic Church - Diocese of the United Kingdom” and marked on the back: “Missions – Cameroon, Congo or S. Sudan” as appropriate and sent to: Diocesan Treasurer, ACC Diocesan Office, St Nicholas House, 42-48 High Street, Lydd, Kent TN29 9AN