



17th August 2003

Mulongo Update

The recent news from Shaba is not encouraging. The Mayi-Mayi have advanced into Manono (the main town of the region). This unruly group of teenagers and young adult males have been conducting a gorilla war throughout the region for the past 4 years. They are fighting against the rebel forces from the east but without any semblance of a chain of command each separate group descends on an area and terrorise the local population for its own ends. Stories of cannibalism are just too common to be thought fictitious.



The hospital is still situated at the war front line with control being exercised from the eastern regions though the troops have to a large extent pulled out. However, with the advancing Mayi-Mayi warriors it is possible that the troops from Rwanda etc may be sent back into the area. This would almost be the worst scenario and certainly lead to further bloodshed and destruction of property.



Hospital:

The buildings are still intact and the local staff are seeing a relatively small number of patients each day. The tuberculosis and leprosy work are both almost non-existent and surgery is impossible at this time. The recent cholera epidemic is now abated.

Reopening:

It is currently planned that the hospital will return to mission hands in mid September. At that time the re-equipment and re-supply of the hospital will commence. Contact has been made to purchase drugs via GOAL in Goma and transported to Manono and on by road to Mulongo. Surgical equipment is being collected in Ireland at present and will be shipped via container as soon as it is completed. Various other supplies are ordered from Lubumbashi in southern Katanga and will be delivered by road transport once the security situation is more stable.



Trips:

Dr David McAdam is due to travel to Mulongo (from his base in Zambia) for six weeks during September. Dr Graham Fry and Murray Stevenson (carpenter now Pastor living in New Zealand) are planning to revisit early in November. Murray will deal with the practical requirements of reinstating the generator and solar panels while Graham will deal with the medical needs.

Airport:

The airstrip has been cleared by the local population and is now said to be functional. To date, no plane has ventured to land but we anticipate that this will occur within a few months. Air transport in and out of Mulongo is an essential part of ensuring the future development of the region.

Prayer Needs:

- Swift end to hostilities throughout the region
- Easy non-confrontational changeover of the hospital back to the mission staff
- The return of sufficient staff (both local and ex-pat)
- The re-establishment of the Christian witness through the work of the hospital