

What Are We Going to Do About This?

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[Congo in Crisis: Human Catastrophe Unfolds](#)

The situation in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is critical.

Thousands were fleeing as rebel forces advanced on the city of Goma in eastern DRC. Rebel soldiers were on the edge of the city as a fragile ceasefire held.

The crisis is rapidly unfolding into a humanitarian disaster on a huge scale. Reports of random killings, rape and other atrocities are widespread.

Right now, the situation in Goma is incredibly tense, with many Congolese upset at the inability of the United Nations peacekeeping force to protect them. The 17,000-strong force has been unable to halt the violence in a region that has been devastated by two civil wars.

The conflict in the Congo is one of the world's most under-reported catastrophes. In the past 12 years, an estimated 5 million people have died from malnutrition and disease spurred on by the conflict.

"I don't know what is going to happen," said one aid worker, "but I think that Goma is going to fall."

World Relief Responds

In the middle of the current crisis, World Relief is looking to get food and vital supplies into the hands of uprooted families, many of whom have fled their homes with nothing. At one location, children were trampled underfoot as panicked crowds surged forward, desperate for food.

"It is like the Bible says... the people are harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd," says Maurice Omollo, World Relief's Country Director. "We are working in a very unstable environment in which many of the people have been uprooted by war and the infrastructure has been destroyed."

In partnership with local churches in and around Goma, World Relief is preparing to provide targeted assistance to 3,000 families. Aid will include temporary shelter materials, cooking kits, blankets, clothing, and a month's supply of food, depending on the needs of each family.

While expatriate relief workers have been evacuated, many of World Relief's Congolese staff members have chosen to stay in Goma at this time – in spite of the danger – so they can help the most vulnerable.

You can help! Click [here](#) to provide vital aid to a family.

For every \$50 gift one household will receive a food kit, including rice, corn, flour and cooking oil—enough to help an entire family survive for a month.

Your [gift](#) of any amount enables World Relief and local churches at the scene to provide urgent aid to a family in distress.

Join us in praying for peace in the Congo. Please pray for aid workers and church members in this highly volatile and dangerous setting.

Resources

Congo Conflict Q&A: Click [here](#).

Learn More: Click [here](#) to view a slideshow from BBC.

Video: [Watch](#) the latest developments on BBC

Democratic Republic of the Congo

[\(More info at World Vision Web Site\)](#)

Who are the People?

The Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as Zaire, is made up of more than 200 ethnic groups. The country's official language is French, but 80 percent of the population speaks at least one of many other ethnic languages.

More than 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Many Congolese laborers work on farms, producing cassava, corn, bananas, rice, coffee, tea, palm oil, rubber, and cotton.

These crops are used for both subsistence and export. World Vision is working alongside many farmers to teach them new agricultural techniques that will increase harvests and help them better provide for their children.

Forty-eight percent of Congolese children have no access to schools or education of any sort. Many of them work on farms, or anywhere else they can find work to help generate an income for their families.

Some children have been kidnapped and enslaved by rebel soldiers fighting in civil war skirmishes throughout the country. Through child sponsorship, World Vision is working to provide clothing and school supplies that will enable more boys and girls to attend school and complete their education. Nearly 2



million children lack proper nutrition and three-fourths of Congolese people are undernourished, struggling to survive on an inadequate food supply.



What is it like to live there?

Country Statistics

Population	57.5 million
Land Mass	875,520 sq. miles
Life Expectancy	51 years
Infant Mortality Rate	129 / 1,000
Literacy Rate	67%
School Enrollment	N/A
Access to Safe Water	46%
Average Annual Income (GNI per capita)	US\$120

The Congolese people enjoy beautiful landscapes consisting of mountain ranges with volcanoes, lush tropical forests, rivers, and hundreds of lakes. With all these natural resources, the country could be one of the richest countries in southern Africa. However, due to government instability, the economy has suffered drastic decline since the mid-1980s.

The nation has a history of conflict and strife. In the late 19th century, King Leopold I of Belgium established the first colony in the region, calling it The Congo Free State. This name was changed to The Belgian Congo in 1908, and then again to The Republic of the Congo after the country gained independence in 1960. It became known as Zaire when a dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, assumed control in 1971. Upon his defeat by rebels in 1997 the country's official name became The Democratic Republic of Congo. Rebel forces still occupy parts of the country today.

For the last several years the population of the DRC has fluctuated due to political conflicts and ethnic cleansing in neighboring countries.

Your sponsorship is helping to ensure that children and families have access to food production assistance, medical care, clean water, and education, as well as biblically-based HIV prevention techniques and care and support for children orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS

How You Can Pray for Your Sponsored Child

- Pray that churches and families will respond to God's call to care for orphans and widows, especially those affected by the AIDS pandemic.
 - Pray that your sponsored child might respond to God's love and grace.
- Ask God to guide your sponsored child as he or she learns, grows, and moves toward a future full of hope and possibilities.
 - Pray for God to protect the health of your sponsored child and his or her family.