



# INSTITUT MEDICAL CHRETIEN DU KASAI

## Christian Medical Institute of the Kasai - Serving in Central Congo

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### A Periodic Newsletter

### Issue No. 41 January - March 2017



The current conflict in the Kasai has added new suffering and danger. Information for this newsletter comes from those living in Congo, from IMCK partners, and from international news sources. The Kamuina Nsapu insurgency arose in the Kasai, but has spread to other regions. By January 2017, 216,000 people had been displaced and more than 400 killed, according to humanitarian sources. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201703220739.html>

In the Kananga/Tshikaji area, where IMCK has two campuses, people are living amidst conflicts between undisciplined militia and undisciplined government military. Mass graves have been discovered in nearby areas. UN investigators have been killed. At military road barriers, citizens experience unpredictable harassment. Schools have closed for fear of conflict. Some IMCK staff have left the area. Regional famine and insecurity are insidious amidst conflict and government deterioration. Unless political issues of the DRC improve soon, people of Kasai are entering even more difficult times for fundamental common good.

Thomas Aquinas posits that there are three irreducible natural communities or societies: the family, the political common good, and the Church. When one does badly the others tend to try to absorb the responsibility of that particular society. Considering that ancient premise today in Congo, where the state is failing, the Church (witness the Catholic Bishops) is trying to act in surrogate as a moral voice and functional society. In the US, where families are failing, the state is trying to create safety nets to be the functional "family" for those without normal families. In the atheistic world, esp. communist countries like China, where there is no real Church presence, the state magnifies itself to be a kind of Church giving meaning to everything. Congo needs our prayers and aid. But the people of the Congo also look to those communities, state, Church and family, to help restore a good life with hope & joy. Submitted by Charlotte White

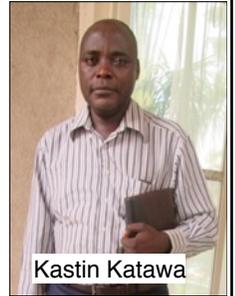
To help IMCK, contact Admin. Kastin Katawa at [kastinkatawa@gmail.com](mailto:kastinkatawa@gmail.com) and cc Bill Rule at [billnbethrule@comcast.net](mailto:billnbethrule@comcast.net). Donate directly this way:

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*I asked the new IMCK Administrator, Kastin Katawa, to describe the conflict in the Kasai and to recount how this is affecting IMCK. He responded this month with this organized response.*

#### The wars in Kasai and their impact on the operation of IMCK:

In July 2015, a dispute erupted over land between two villages in two different government sectors in the Kamuindu Sector and in the Dibatayi Sector of Dibaya. Many were wounded and others died. The wounded were brought by the government to the IMCK Good Shepherd Hospital, but those bills were not paid. Many people hid in the forest during this conflict. After three months, the government deputies and notables negotiated a peace.



Kastin Katawa

A year later in August, 2016, another dispute erupted in the same Dibaya territory in the Nsapu village. This started when the government disputed with Chief Kamuine Nsapu of Bajile Kasanga, coming to arrest him. He was not there and apparently they harassed or molested family members, escalating local response to conflict. This conflict has spread to the following provinces: Central Kasai, Tshikapa, Kamonia, Kasai Oriental, Limami, Wikong, and Sankuru.

In the context of this conflict, I address the impact of these two wars on IMCK, one of the major medical institutions of central Congo. Most of IMCK's revenue is from payments by patients receiving medical care and from tuition paid by the students in the medical programs. Expenses include costs of caring for the sick and the payment of 150 wage workers, [many of whom teach in the medical programs.] During this time, IMCK has served 1,304 patients, regardless of whether they could pay and including families of retired workers. We operate with the following partners: Congo Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church USA, Medical Benevolence Foundation, SANRU\* and Friends of IMCK.

Located 14 KM outside Kananga, IMCK receives patients from Kananga, surrounding villages and neighboring provinces. Since conflicts started in 2015, attendance of patients to the hospital has diminished due to the clashes between the government and the militia. All roads leading to Tshikaji are militarized, with barriers on many roads. The military make people pay in some way to pass the barriers. Passengers wearing red are arrested, since that is the color of Kamuine Nsapu. (Cont pg. 5 - Impact of War)

**IMCK Board needs to meet in May:** The IMCK Board, which meets twice a year, is composed of members of the Congo Presbyterian Church, The Congo Mennonite Church, The Presbyterian Church USA, and IMCK administrative members. The last Board meeting was held in Nov. 2016; attendees are listed on the last page. The newly elected Board Chairmans is Rev. Jean Tshidinda Mamba. Considering the conflict in the area and the fact that IMCK is serving so many people caught in this conflict, Administrator Kastin Katawa recently sent an email addressing the need for the next IMCK Board meeting to be in a secure place. Administrator Kastin Katawa preposed that, due to the conflict in the area and the urgent matters of IMCK, the Board meet in May in Kinshasa . IMCK must cover the expenses for those attending the meeting and Mr Katawa asks partners to consider this meeting place and help with meeting expenses. He writes, "We have a duty to ask all our partners for their support, even if the security conditions are scary...May God our Father bless and protect [us all.]" Submitted by Kastin Katawa

**ITM and ISTM News from Marcia Murray:** ITM is the high school and ISTM is the college at IMCK. Marcia teaches at ISTM, as a volunteer mission coworker with Presby. Church USA and Congo Presby. Church.



Marcia

**January 22:** The ITM choir performed their Christmas concert in the Chapel. The Christmas activities had been postponed, due to conflict in the area. Marcia Murray reports, "It was an absolutely GREAT concert. Suzanne Batena, ITM assistant principle, was/is the choir director."



ITM Choir in the Chapel

**February 7:** Mpoi Jacque, ISTM Academic Dean, is working as director, while Director Alexis Mayambi is in Kinshasa. Director Mpoi reminded students that they would have to complete their tuition payments in order to take their semester exams the last of February. This is always a difficult time for students, many of whom have paid only part of their tuition, as they scramble for family help to complete payments and also study to pass exams.

**February 9:** The government now has city buses, TRANSCOC, to serve Kananga and the surrounding area. The starting point for all bus "lines" is PAX (the IMCK Clinic in downtown Kananga.) Buses are kept in the Governor's mansion yard.

Buses go to the airport and back with stops at the markets and where people ask to be let out, with some bus stops along the way. Other buses go in the opposite direction past the big market and out to Ndesha (Mission). The one coming to Tshikaji serves the Nganza area, Nkonko (the market at the crossroad going to the airport) and Tshikaji. They started out with just 2 buses a day serving this area (morning and afternoon) but now have more. The cost has gone down to 700Fc/trip. All buses are crowded with standing room only. Bus rides are much safer and cheaper than a motorcycle. Motorcycles are stopped by road blocks and not only the drivers but the passengers are checked for IDs and have to pay a fee. For extra cash, bus passengers can load things to sell in Kananga (charcoal, corn, fruit, etc.) without fear of it being taken from them before they reach town.



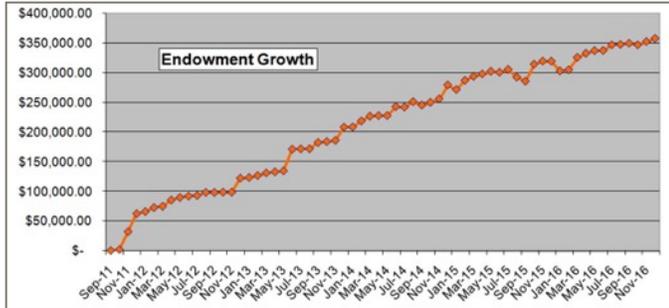
**March 8:** Final ISTM exams for first semester finished on March 2nd. We then had makeup exams the next two days. There are generally NO makeup exams for the first semester. However, so many students paid late or could not get out to Tshikaji for their exams that they had to give makeup exams on 2 different days. Usually, classes would have started March 6th, but it now looks like they won't start until the 13th. Things have been relatively calm here in Tshikaji. However, there are always rumors of "wars" all around us. Not all rumors are false, as both PAX and Good Shepherd Hospital keep getting new cases of bullet wounds, etc. ITM and ISTM continue to function as do schools in Kananga (not all but most of them, esp. the high schools and the universities). In the villages, most schools are not functioning, not even the primary and high school on Tshikaji station. People are harassed by both the militia/rebels and the soldiers, and no one knows when or where fighting will break out. Peoples' fields are often not getting planted and those that are planted are not always able to be protected. People should be planting their second crop now. The coming dry season will be difficult for those in the villages who depend upon their crops to see them through those months. Prices are already high and will go higher.

**March 9:** Late afternoon, shots were heard on the Tshikaji campus and residents and students took shelter and locked doors. Within hours, the place appeared calm and people returned to work and school and to the hospital the next morning.

**March 14:** ITM continues to function more or less normally. ISTM classes started second semester yesterday. ISTM classes start later (10 rather than 8 a.m.) This [start time] will probably continue, as it is safer to come by bus than motorcycle and the majority of the faculty and students come from Kananga. Other schools in the area (primary/secondary) are not functioning. Church was packed on Sunday and with 6 choirs ran overtime, in spite of Pastor Kabue's attempts to keep the services [to 2 hours.] He and his wife were there. As long as there is no active fighting, market days continue. If people want to eat, they still have to work. Even the charcoal sellers continue to come with bicycles loaded. Even with threat of death or payment demanded by soldiers, they try to make money to feed the family. But prices keep going up. Before traveling on the road, people call on phones to learn which roads are the calmest.

## IMCK Endowment Fund Progress

Much has happened since we gave you a full report on the IMCK Endowment Fund last February. A year ago, the Endowment had just topped the \$300,000 mark and was still hovering around that number as the market was going through a roller-coaster ride. As of February 28 this year, it was beginning to see \$400,000 just over the horizon, as it stood with a value of \$391,704.83!



During that time, Friends of IMCK, went through a period of discouragement when new donations had dropped and appreciation from our investments was in negative territory during some months. With much prayer and reflection, we came to the realization that the long-term nature of an endowment translates simply to "long-term delay" in the minds of many people, and that we needed an alliance with a project of more immediate and urgent need in order to attract more interest.

This led us to undertake the project of raising money for the PAX Women's Center renovation...but with the stipulation that 25% of all these donations would go into the Endowment to help underwrite the ongoing costs of operating the Women's Center at a higher level and quality of service -- indefinitely. As of February 28, that effort has added \$7,635.76 to the Endowment while enabling us to send \$10,000 to the PAX construction account, and we are now well on our way toward a second \$10,000 with almost \$9,500 in hand!

We have also become active on social media with an on-line appeal through GoFundMe that we hope will reach out to a younger audience and expand our donor database beyond the traditional church-related groups & individuals. And we have significantly reduced the average age of our Board of Directors with the recent additions of Thom McCutchen and Barbara Sague. We have also welcomed the wisdom of Bill Simmons as he has recently been actively sharing his advice and observations with the Board.

In the past year, the value of the Endowment's holdings in mutual funds, not counting the new donations, has increased by almost \$53,000 -- a growth of over 16% in a very topsy-turvy market! All in all, we think things are looking up for 2017 and we are more hopeful than ever that many of you, our faithful readers, will be able to join further in the effort to put IMCK on a more permanent financial footing through the Endowment.

Submitted by Bill Rule of FIMCK

**Renovation at PAX:** For over three years, Antonio Martinez has been living in Congo, supervising renovation of the large IMCK PAX Clinic in Kananga and also working for other non-governmental programs to build rural health centers. Here are paraphrases of some messages from Antonio, who writes from Kinshasa, where he has been expecting to return to Kananga and resume work in many DRC locations:

**March 16:** The situation in Kasai is extremely unstable at the moment. There is an on going insurgency, which has been taking place since September. None of my job sites in the province are operational for the present, and I have instructed all my workers to stay home with their families. The lab at PAX is complete. The lab refrigerator has arrived in Kananga and I will soon install it. The PAX new Dental Clinic is operational. Funding has arrived to complete the solar installations at PAX. The Women's Center is about 81% complete and thanks for the funds to complete it. These funds are from MPPC, Catonsville Presbyterian Church, Friends of IMCK and Medical Benevolence Foundation. There are plumbing repairs needed at the Good Shepherd Hospital and some renovation needs at the Tshikaji Guest house; I will attend to these on my return to Kananga.

**March 27:** Antonio reports that he has been advised against going to Kananga, since security is getting worse. He says his Kananga friends say things are "calming down", so hopefully he will return to Kananga in early to mid April. He concludes with this comment about safety and work in Kananga, "The problem is that it jumps off at any moment."



While renovating PAX Clinic, Antonio has also paid a person to plant grass and bushes on the PAX campus.

**A patient coming to IMCK:** Medi Tshibangu Melanie, 30 years old, was received at the IMCK PAX Clinic Jan. 23, 2017 in labor. She was accompanied by her 4 children. They had started their journey in Kinshasa, far to the west. They entered a vehicle to come to the Kasai, to seek treatment, at the urging of her in-laws. Her childhood home was Bipemba in the province of Kasai-Oriental. The pangs of childbirth surprised her 30 km out of Kananga, where the vehicle had broken down. She walked with the children to PAX. Destitute of resources and abandoned, she sought refuge at the PAX where she gave birth to a child. Two days later, the other children became ill. PAX has taken care of her and the children within the framework of charity. Submitted by Dr. Serge Makolo



**Dr. Serge Makolo - Medical Director of IMCK :**

Dr. Serge, the Medical Director of IMCK, has been voted by the IMCK Board to assume the Directorship of IMCK in May of 2017, following the leadership of Alexis Mayambi Nzamba.

Dr. Serge was born in Kinshasa. He graduated from the medical school of the University of Lubumbashi. He also has a degree as a Public Health Specialist. He also trained in research at the University Libre of Bruxelles and the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. He is married and has four children.

His medical experience before coming to IMCK includes working at Bilomba as a physician and as Medical Director of the Bilomba General Reference Hospital and as the physician of the Bilomba Health Zone. When I wrote to ask him about himself, he responded that it was previously his “dream to one day be part of the staff of the IMCK.” He states that he strives to help IMCK to be an organization with good structures, management bodies, and healthcare services in line with international standards and for IMCK to have a reputation that is a model to follow and a reference across the DRC.

Submitted by Dr. Serge after an interview by C. White



Dr. Serge Makolo

**New IMCK Chaplain:**

Rev. Elie Ngongo Makaka, the new Chaplain at IMCK, was born in 1966 on the Mennonite station of Bargain. In 1992, he graduated in theology from the Protestant



Rev. Ngongo and his wife Chantal

Faculty of Kinshasa and then completed his bachelor’s degree in Theology at the Protestant University of Congo. He later completed seminars in family pastoral care, computer science, and conflict management. He was consecrated a Mennonite pastor in 2000 and has served the Mennonite church in teaching theology and as pastor at Ilebo. In 2015, the Congo Mennonite Church and the IMCK Board asked him to serve as chaplain at IMCK. He is married to Chantal Minginda Ngongo. They are the parents of six boys, three of whom completed education and are employed. They had a seventh child, a girl, who lived two months, but then died.

Rev. Ngongo wrote a proposal for a 3-day retreat in May for students and faculty saying, “Considering the role of our institution as a witness to Christ in medical education and quality care, IMCK needs to organize a retreat for the ITM nursing and lab tech students and faculty.” To pay for food, handouts, speakers and transportation of a few, he needs funds. If you are interested in helping to fund this, contact Rev. Ngongo or IMCK Administrator Kastin Katawa or C. White. Submitted by Rev. Ngongo after an interview by Charlotte White

**Nutrition Center:** Second year ITM nursing students work at the IMCK nutrition center on Tue. and Thurs., 3rd year students come on Mon., Wed, and Fri. and assigned 4th year students stay for the whole week at a time. Students weigh the children before the meals and chart their general health. They help with feeding, cooking, cleaning the grounds and buildings. They also take food to those undernourished children, who are in the hospital pediatric ward. Mamu Kenabuila Nshindi cooks and takes care of the center with the nurse assigned to the center.



Marcia writes in February, “On our visit there in February we were shown how low the stock of food is at the center.” The child being weighed (see photo) has a mother in the next room with a newborn baby. The child below is with its grandmother, for the mother died four months ago. That child was in the hospital for two weeks before being brought to the nutrition center.



The nutrition center always operates at a loss, since these are children of the poorest and more dire circumstances. Donations are constantly needed for this center. Submitted by Marcia Murray with additional comments by Charlotte White

**Medical staff & students at IMCK:** This March, the 30 medical students were withdrawn from IMCK and returned to Kinshasa. This was due to the area conflict and because a number of the IMCK medical doctors have departed from IMCK in the past few months. Dr. Pepe Banza Kalenga, Medical Director of Education at IMCK, departed to Kinshasa in November due to the conflict. Dr. Jean Mukendi departed to pursue a residency in OB/GYN. Dr. Jean Jacques Mulalu recently left to do a residency in public health in Lubumbashi. Those still providing medical care at IMCK: Dr. Serge Makolo, Internal Medicine Dr. Alex Mvita, Pediatrics Dr. Papy Ntumba, Internal Medicine Dr. Roger Kapembu, Ophthalmology Dr. John Fletcher, Surgery Dr. Kabasele, recently retired but still doing dentistry Several physicians are still there completing a residency.

Submitted by Dr Serge Makolo and Admin. Kastin Katawa

**Cont'd - Impact of war in Kasai:** So Tshikaji is at the center of conflict. Those wounded, including many innocent people, are brought to the IMCK Good Shepherd Hospital. But when they leave, no bill is paid. Our records show that at least 107 in this conflict have been brought to our hospital with at least \$13,894 unpaid. PAX, our other campus in Kananga, is located across from the city police station and is experiencing the same repercussions. People fear being caught in clashes. The 13 year old daughter of one of our nurses was caught in gun shots there and shot in the abdomen on March 11. All these events have had the following affects on IMCK: 1) A reduced number of patients coming to IMCK, especially those that pay their bills. 2) The departure of some of our physicians and other staff, who may be from other regions and fear for the safety of their families. 3) The threat to our schools, ITM and ISTM, of closing. 4) Prevention of certain training sessions in our facilities by partners, due to safety. 5) Costs of transportation out to Tshikaji have doubled. IMCK is on a slippery slope, given the socio-economic crisis, the burden of free care of war casualties, and barriers to coming to our hospital. Our revenues are reduced and IMCK is in arrears of almost \$129,000 payment for staff salaries. IMCK also owes over \$41,000 to the government for social security benefits and \$54,527 for retired workers. Also, IMCK has debts of \$19,000 for drugs, radiology and lab supplies. We have a great deal of government pressure to pay our debts. To conclude, we would like to thank every person or organization of goodwill, for helping us in this crisis and we ask our Father Almighty God to bless you. Submitted by Kastin Katawa, IMCK Administrator

**Keep up with USA/Congo Partnerships & News:**  
IMCK info is at [www.imck.org](http://www.imck.org) & MBF info is at [www.mbfoundation.org](http://www.mbfoundation.org) . PCUSA sites have Congo & IMCK info at <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global-democratic-republic-congo/> Read about Congo Mission Network at <http://www.congopartners.org/> & <https://www.facebook.com/CongoMissionNetwork>. Helping Hands [www.congohelpinghands.org/](http://www.congohelpinghands.org/) & Rivers of the World Congo [www.row.org](http://www.row.org) work in Congo. To join Congo Connections, write Annette [anbwash@centurylink.net](mailto:anbwash@centurylink.net) . Go to <http://www.enoughproject.org/> to learn about conflict minerals in Congo. **Learn; read; act! Be involved.**

**Board Members of IMCK at the Nov. 2016 meeting:**  
Dr. Larry Sthresley - PCUSA Rep; Chairman of Board  
Mr. Jeff Boyd - PCUSA Representative  
Rev. Joly Birakara Ilowa - CMCO Rep (Mennonite)  
Mr. Albert Mputu Kabasela- CPC Representative  
Fr Laurent Kamizelo Kianza - CMCO Representative  
Rev. Jean Tshidinda Mamba - CPC Representative  
Rev. Medard Shamuimba Mbombo -CMCO Representative  
Rev. Tshihamba Mulamba - CPC Representative  
Mr. Jack Muthui - MBF Representative  
Dr. Gaspard Muhuma - CMCO Representative  
Mr. Simon Ntumba Tshitenge- CPC Representative  
Dr. Eugenie Misenga Kangoji- State Representative  
Rev. Mboyamba Kabala- IMCK Representative  
Mr. Alexis Mayambi Nzamba - IMCK Rep./Legal Rep.  
**Current IMCK Administration:**  
IMCK Director - Pharmacist Alexis Mayambi Nzamba  
IMCK Administrator - Kastin Katawa Ntumba

**IMCK is a Christian primary health care facility and medical education center. Its services are centered at the Good Shepherd Hospital, a 120 bed facility, & at PAX Clinic, with 20 beds. General medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, pediatrics, gyn/obstetrics, dental services, radiology and lab services are provided. This faith based organization has been in operation for over 60 yrs.**

**FIVE WAYS to make a donation to IMCK:**

To give to **IMCK ENDOWMENT**, go to <https://mbfoundation.org/friends-imck-endowment-fund/> & follow directions. Or write a check to Friends of IMCK & write "For Endowment" on the memo line. Donations can be made in honor of or in memory of someone. Send to Medical Benevolence Foundation, PO Box 96877, Washington, DC 20090. Friends of IMCK is part of MBF.

To give through the **MEDICAL BENEVOLENCE FOUNDATION**, a validated mission support group of many Presbyterian Organizations, go to <https://mbfoundation.org/donate-now/>. Designate at the web site at the special instruction section "For IMCK Congo." Or send a check to Medical Benevolence Foundation, PO Box 96877, Washington, DC 2009. Write IMCK, Congo on the memo line.

To give through **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, USA** (PCUSA), go to <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/E320202/>. Or write a check to Presbyterian Church USA; send to PCUSA, Individual Remittance Processing, PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. Put "ECO#320202 - IMCK" on the check. Give in honor or memory of someone, if desired.

To give through **RIVERS OF THE WORLD-CONGO**, make checks payable to ROW-Congo & write FOR IMCK. Send to 3640 Hewatt Court, Snellville, GA 30039. Or go to [www.row.org](http://www.row.org) & donate. Follow instructions to designate the gift to Congo-Kasai / IMCK. Give in honor or memory of someone, if desired.

To give **DIRECTLY TO IMCK**, consult Alexis Mayambi at [mayambi@yahoo.fr](mailto:mayambi@yahoo.fr) or Kastin Katawa at [kastinkatawa@gmail.com](mailto:kastinkatawa@gmail.com) about how to wire money directly from your bank account to the IMCK BCDC bank account in Congo. or the Congo Presbyterian Church account.

**Newsletter Matters:** Contributors this month: Admin. Kastin Katawa, Rev. Elie Ngongo Makaka, Dr. Serge Makolo, Antonio Martinez, Marcia Murray, Bill Rule, and Charlotte White. To add/remove a name from the mailing list, write [CRuleWhite@gmail.com](mailto:CRuleWhite@gmail.com). We welcome your contributions!