



# THE **Voice** OF THE **Martyrs**

October 2024

**DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC  
OF THE CONGO**

**After the  
Massacre  
Rescued from  
the Flames**



"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." Heb 13:3

*“The Lord has not  
forgotten His people.”*

*—Survivor of an attack on  
Tchabi village.*

## AFRICA

Democratic  
Republic of  
Congo



**Mark 10:13-16 - KJV**

*13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*



## “I hold you in my heart”

Gatherings of Christians are a preview of heaven, where we will live with each other and our Lord for all eternity. We have come to appreciate the depth, beauty and wisdom of the Apostle Paul’s statement in Philippians 1:7, where he tells other Believers, “because I have you in my heart;”

In Scripture, the phrase “in our hearts” is used in reference to our most significant commitments, purposes and beliefs. Our most deeply held values are said to be “firmly established” in our hearts (1 Corinthians 7:37). As we seek to understand one another, we are encouraged to focus on what is “in the heart,” in contrast with worldly people who “boast about outward appearance” (2 Corinthians 5:12). The Apostle Paul explains in Romans 10:8 that “the word of faith” is “in your heart” if you are a Believer, while people who resist and reject God have gone “astray in their heart” (Hebrews 3:10).

Our primary concern is to enthrone Christ in our hearts, and as true Believers we are empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to worship and serve God through faith in Christ. Our hearts are a dwelling — indeed a temple — of God’s Spirit. But Paul’s phrasing in Philippians 1:7 teaches

us that not only God is meant to occupy this place. Christ instructs us to love other Believers so profoundly that it must aspire to match the love He has for us (John 13:34) and, astonishingly, to reflect the love that exists between members of the Trinity (John 17:11).

Our intention in this month’s newsletter is to provide a way for you to hold Kimboti and her children in your heart. In the remainder of Philippians 1:7, Paul explains that the fellow Christians he holds in his heart are “partakers” in both his persecution and in his Gospel work. I pray that this newsletter will encourage and facilitate that kind of relationship between Believers around the world and those who suffer today in the DRC. As we partake in their suffering, we will also share in the joy of their eternally significant victories.

*Ashley*

**About the cover:** *Kimboti thought she and her children would be killed after Islamists bound her hands and marched them deep into the jungle.*

**Please pray about giving to the Persecuted Church.** Our brothers and sisters in Christ need encouragement. Most of them no longer have access to a Bible. Help us get Bible’s into the hands of Christians in Africa.

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# Returning to Tchabi



Most of Tchabi's residents are beginning to return to the mountaintop village to rebuild their lives.

# N one in Tchabi expected trouble from Islamists.

“We thought that we had a paradise on earth here,” said a doctor who worked at Tchabi’s hospital. The hospital, along with a Christian school, a church and a runway, had all been built by missionaries who arrived at the mountaintop location in 1976.

Over the decades, Tchabi had been a peaceful oasis in an unstable region. It remained relatively secure throughout various violent conflicts, including a civil war that raged across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the 1990s.

But Tchabi’s peace was shattered in early 2019 when militants from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a violent Islamist group, emerged from the jungle to assault and abduct local Christians.

“They took 40 people the first time, including four doctors and two staff,” said Lau Babam, Tchabi’s village chief. “They spent two months in the bush, and then they let them go.” But some of those abducted, he said, are still missing.

Later in 2019, the ADF attacked again, causing even more death and destruction.

“The second time they came with a vision to destroy things, to kill people, to burn things down,” said Babam, who was away from the village at the time of the attack. “Everything they just destroyed,” he said. The militants killed Babam’s wife and six of his grandchildren, vandalized his house and destroyed the baptistry inside the village church.

A doctor who survived the attack witnessed some of the final, courageous words of the school’s Christian

principal. The militants, he recalled, said, “We want you to be gone because the Christians are our enemies.” But the principal was unmoved. “He said his faith in Christ will never change,” the doctor recalled. “That is why they killed him.”

Many people fled Tchabi after the second attack, but not everyone. And on the night of 30 May, 2021, the ADF launched another devastating assault on those who remained in the village.

“They came in with machetes,” Babam said. “Some had guns, but a lot just had machetes. They would shoot somebody or cut them, and then they would burn them.”

Some of the villagers, including a woman named Gertrude, fled in the darkness. “We heard gunshots in the night,” she said. “We didn’t know who it was, and we ran into the forest.”

She later learned that many of her friends had been killed. “Our things had been carried off, and the homes were burned,” she said. The ADF had killed 10 members of Gertrude’s family, including her parents. In total, 182 people were killed in and around Tchabi.

The militants also took hostages with them back into the jungle. Babam said about 30 people are still missing. Before they disappeared into the jungle, the ADF fighters desecrated Tchabi’s church building by smashing everything inside and covering the walls with excrement. They also destroyed the school, looted the hospital and burned many homes and buildings.

In the aftermath of the attack, the Congolese

▼ In a violent campaign to establish an Islamic caliphate in the region, the ADF has kidnapped and killed many Congolese, destroying their homes and churches.





▲ In August 2023, Front-Line Workers delivered a shipment of Bibles to Tchabi. More than 100 villagers received a Bible that day, a welcome gift to those who had lost nearly all of their possessions, including their Bibles, in the attack.

government and the United Nations (U.N.) deployed soldiers to protect the village, but it remained mostly uninhabited for the next two years.

Once the soldiers had sufficiently secured the area, Tchabi's residents began to return. Some set up temporary shelters on the primitive runway, since nothing remained but the gutted shells of their burned homes.

In August 2023, Front-Line Workers delivered a shipment of Bibles to Tchabi, landing on the rough runway that hadn't been used in three years. At one end of the runway was a large camp of U.N. peacekeeping forces, while at the other end was a mass grave where many of the villagers had been buried after the ADF attacks.

After the pilot ensured the feasibility of landing a 10-passenger plane on the runway, he transported a group of Front-Line Workers and a cargo of Bibles to the remote village. Volunteers who helped unload and carry the boxes of Bibles turned the short walk to Tchabi's church into a joyous parade.

Waiting inside the church were 103 villagers who had received two days of spiritual care for grief and emotional wounds caused by the deadly attacks. Everyone in attendance had lost relatives in the attacks. And they had also lost nearly all of their material possessions, including their Bibles, when they fled Tchabi.

Before receiving their Bibles, some of the villagers re-enacted what had happened to them in a short drama they



created as part of their healing process. As the re-enactment began, villagers acting as the militants pounded on the church walls and then rushed into the building brandishing stick "guns" and grabbing "hostages." Later, one of the actors returned carrying a backpack full of sheets of paper labelled with words like "trauma," "loss" and "unforgiveness." Another actor, representing Christ, then removed the weighty words from her back.

In addition to re-enacting the attacks, most survivors drew pictures of what they had experienced. One drew a picture of a pastor being killed inside a church.

"Many are struggling with the fact that when the attack took place, they actually saw with their own eyes their parents being killed, being slaughtered," said Hedeli, a Christian counsellor who travelled to Tchabi to minister to those traumatized by the attack. "But they are finding healing to their heart wounds when they are able to actually draw what has happened," she said. "Art is being used to help bring healing as they draw out what they experienced and how they experienced it."

Gertrude drew a picture of her family fleeing for their lives. She had stayed in the jungle for days before taking refuge in a neighbouring country, but she found no peace there either. "There was anger, there was pain and we weren't able to speak," she said. "There were bad dreams, no appetite. In our dreams we would just dream of running and people being killed, butchered."

Gertrude was hesitant to return to Tchabi. She said even small decisions were difficult because of her constant fear. "It has been challenging just to kind of rebuild my life," she said. "For example, I really need to buy plates. But if I go and buy these

**“Pray that we will be able to forgive, and that faith will come, and that we won’t have to worry about something like that happening again.”**

plates, I am constantly thinking, ‘Ah, maybe I will buy them and then the ADF will come.’”

She requests prayer as she continues the healing process. “Pray that we will be able to forgive and that faith will come, and that we won’t have to worry about something like that happening again,” she said.

Babam said forgiveness has had a great effect on his spiritual healing. “It touched my heart knowing how to forgive our enemies,” he said, reflecting on the teaching he received from Hedeli’s ministry.

After Babam received his new Bible, he presented several Bibles to the soldiers and police officers who now protect Tchabi. He said that the arrival of the plane, the new Bibles and the counselling he received have given him hope.

“Your presence is very encouraging,” he told a Front-Line Worker, adding that he was grateful for the care that he and other Tchabi villagers had received through the ministry.

Another survivor of the attacks reinforced Babam’s gratitude with a hopeful declaration of God’s goodness: “The Lord,” he said, “has not forgotten His people.” ■

▼ Gertrude and others who endured the attack, recently turned their experiences into drawings or theatrical skits. The activities helped them process their trauma and move toward spiritual and emotional restoration.



▲ Government soldiers remain in the northeastern DRC to guard against Islamist attacks.

## WHO ARE THE ALLIED DEMOCRATIC FORCES (ADF)?

The ADF was established in the late 1990s as a rebel group fighting to overthrow the Ugandan government. But over time, the rebels moved across the border into the northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), hiding in the dense jungles of North Kivu and Ituri provinces.

In 2018, the ADF pledged its allegiance to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) and openly declared its goal to eradicate Christians and establish Islamic law in the region. Since that time, ADF militants have regularly emerged from their jungle hideouts to attack and kill Christians. The Islamists have killed and abducted thousands of Congolese in recent years.

Although 90% of people in the DRC identify as Christians, church leaders view Islam as a growing threat. “If the church is not strengthened, Islam will be everywhere,” said a pastor who trains and sends Congolese missionaries throughout the country.

In addition to the ADF, whose attacks against Christians are focused primarily in the northeastern part of the country, more than 100 other armed groups operate in the DRC.

# FREED

*from Captivity*



# FREED

*from Fear*

**K**imboti's 6-year-old son doesn't like to leave her side. Sometimes he talks to her about what happened, but other times he just begins to cry as he is overwhelmed with fear. Like Kimboti, he is haunted by memories of the day Islamists forced his family from their home.

"He witnessed the butchering," said Kimboti, who lives with her family in a camp for internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). "Fear is constantly there."

One summer afternoon in 2022, militants from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamic terrorist group, attacked their village. Kimboti was at home with her eight children while her husband was away working in the fields. When the attack began, she and her children ran for their lives, but they and a pregnant neighbour were caught before they could reach cover. The militants then bound their hands and marched them into the jungle.

"I started praying right away," Kimboti said. "In my prayers I felt the peace of God."

Hoping to convey that same peace to her children, she prayed aloud with them even as the terrorists listened. Although she believed they would all be killed, she knew death meant they would be with Jesus Christ.

After arriving at a grass hut deep in the jungle, the captives were stripped of their clothes and confined to the hut, which was guarded by men with guns, clubs and machetes. They were deprived of food and water for the duration of their captivity, and Kimboti had no way of knowing if her husband had survived the attack.

She soon became aware of an argument between the militants about the fate of the captives. When one man expressed misgivings about killing young children and a pregnant woman, the other militants sneered at him and suggested killing him instead.





Kimboti prayed for her captors, and late on the second day of captivity she saw her prayers answered. One evening, while most of the militants were at one of the five daily prayer times required in Islam, a guard came to release them. He showed them a path that would lead to the refugee camp and told them to run.

Kimboti believes that as she prayed, God changed her captor's heart. She knows that the man's act of mercy might have resulted in dire consequences for him. "I just prayed blessings over him and that God would watch over his life wherever he is," she said.

The freed captives ran for hours, with older children carrying younger siblings, past the bodies of those the ADF had killed. They heard the militants shouting and hunting them on foot through the jungle. Naked, exhausted from lack of food and water, and bearing cuts and scrapes from their travel through the brush, they finally stumbled into the refugee camp.

▲ Kimboti and her children live in a two-room shelter in the DRC, within a camp for internally displaced people. She breeds rabbits to help feed her family and to sell to others for income.

"As soon as we reached the refugee camp, the ladies welcomed us with blankets and gave us some clothes," Kimboti said. Soon afterward, she was reunited with her husband, who had fled to the refugee camp during the attack hoping to find the rest of his family. "I felt just incredible joy," Kimboti recalled.

The local church community, with support from the global body of Christ, has helped displaced Christians in the camp in practical and profound ways.

Soon after arriving at the camp, Kimboti was invited by the local church to meet with eight Christians who had survived similar attacks. The group met for several days to pray together,



hear biblical teaching, share their experiences and learn spiritually and emotionally healthy ways to cope with their fear and loss. The first day they met, participants were encouraged to share their stories.

“I actually didn’t speak that day,” Kimboti said. “I just listened. Listening to other people share their stories helped me.” After hearing the stories of others, she said, she could see how God had protected and cared for them during their captivity.

Grateful for the opportunity to meet with others who understood her suffering and helped her fix her eyes on God, Kimboti now encourages other survivors to seek the kind of care she found in the church. “Over those days, my heart calmed down, my anxiety came down,” she said. “Even after the first day, God started helping me through.” She said she would like for the church to be able to provide similar help for children who struggle with fear from their traumatic experiences.

“The church has been very welcoming and supportive,” Kimboti said. She also expressed gratitude for all the others who have provided aid to the DRC’s displaced Christians. “Thank you very much,” she said. “I am praising the Lord.”

The children currently have no access to education, and medical help is limited, but Kimboti dreams of a day when her family can acquire some land and build a home again. In the meantime, she has taken steps toward building a more normal life for her family, breeding rabbits that she can use to feed her own family and sell to other families for income.

“I am very grateful because God has watched over us,” she said. “His love has been demonstrated to us.” ■

◀ After her abduction, Kimboti suffered from anxiety. But meeting with other Christians who had also endured great hardships helped restore peace and an eternal perspective.

# GRACE *Amid the Ashes*



**O**n the evening the rebels attacked Divine's village, in June 2022, she and her parents were attending a prayer meeting at their village church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Divine, thought to now be 8 years old, had moved to the village on the shores of Lake Albert with her parents a year earlier; her father worked as a fisherman on the lake. As committed Christians, the family soon became active members in their local church, despite the constant threat from rebel fighters.

During the prayer meeting that June evening, the congregation heard the commotion of insurgents firing guns

▲ Divine endured six surgeries and remained bedridden for months after being severely burned in an attack on her church. But as soon as she was physically able, she started attending the hospital's daily chapel services.

and rounding up villagers. Then the attackers began setting fire to buildings throughout the village ... including the church.

"I remember fuel being poured and the flames coming closer," Divine later told one of her doctors.

The morning after the attack, a woman searching through the ashes of the church discovered the bodies of Divine's parents. Then — shocked to see the seemingly lifeless body of



▲ Physical therapy is a regular part of Divine's treatment to help her skin heal.

a badly burned young girl — the woman found Divine, unconscious but still breathing.

She rushed the child to the nearest medical care. Not knowing the girl's name, she called her "Divine Grace" because she considered it a miracle that she was alive. None of the other survivors knew how to contact Divine's extended family, and no one came to claim her.

Divine's burns extended from her chin to below her waist, covering 48% of her body. With limited medical care available in that part of the DRC, one of the world's poorest countries, church leaders sought a specialized doctor to care for her burns.

A Christian paediatric surgeon, Dr. Justin Mandaboy, volunteered his services. "When I saw her, I don't know, but God gave me faith to trust," he said. "I knew there wasn't any other place where she would be able to be helped."

Having interned with a burn unit in Canada, he said children with burns to 50% of their body usually don't survive. He told church leaders that Divine would require multiple surgeries and that the healing process would take years.

But her spiritual family did not abandon her. And when area church leaders sought volunteers to care for Divine, a mother of two stepped forward to help. "I felt mercy," said Lina. "I felt compassion in my spirit to come help. I was just feeling like that is like a child of mine and I would have mercy on her. I would want someone to take care of my children the same way."

While enduring the loss of her parents, six surgeries and countless hours of painful wound care and physical





## “Throughout the whole process, that same spirit of joy and peace has remained.”

therapy, Divine has found strength in the Lord. During her hospitalization, she joined chapel services to pray every morning. And every day that she could, she sang worship songs.

“From the time I met Divine, she had joy and peace,” said Lina, who stayed with Divine throughout her hospitalization and has cared for her ever since. “That hasn’t changed. Throughout the whole process, that same spirit of joy and peace has remained.”

Divine made a similar impression on her doctor. “She has an inner strength; that is how we express it,” said Dr. Mandaboy. “I have a lot of faith for her in the future, her life.”

The doctor said Divine will continue to require procedures to loosen her scar tissue. But he said the joy, courage and foundation in Christ she received from her parents have carried her through everything she has faced so far.

“She is a very positive little girl,” he said. “It is pretty easy to treat her because she is courageous, and she has a lot of strength.”

Though Divine skipped away singing joyfully after a recent checkup, Dr. Mandaboy knows her inner wounds still need healing. She doesn’t seem to remember details of her life before the fire, even her given name. But her attitude, he said, gives her a favourable long-term prognosis.

“The family was in Jesus,” Dr. Mandaboy said. “Because of her age, what she was saying from the Bible and going in the morning to pray, that is someone who had discipleship when she was at home.” ■

◀ Divine’s doctors are giving her math and reading assignments to work on until she is well enough to return to school.

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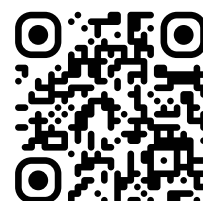


The Voice of the Martyrs  
Die Stem van die Martelare

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# Prayer Diary<sup>®</sup>

October/November 2024

## OCTOBER 2024

S	13	SYRIA	Pray that Christians will not lose heart amid the civil war that has disrupted their lives for more than two decades.
M	14	ALGERIA	Pray that Bibles confiscated by government officials will be replaced tenfold!
T	15	TURKMENISTAN	Pray that imprisoned pastors and their families will experience the joy of their salvation amid suffering.
W	16	UZBEKISTAN	Pray for the protection and care of Christian women suffering abuse and rejection from unbelieving husbands.
T	17	ETHIOPIA	Pray for Christian widows whose husbands were killed because of their faithful witness.
F	18	CAMEROON	Pray for the strength of Front-Line Workers who minister to those affected by Islamist attacks.
S	19	JORDAN	Pray that Christians who have lost jobs because of their faith will trust in God's provision.
S	20	TANZANIA	Ask the Lord to bless the work of missionaries working among remote tribal peoples.
M	21	COMOROS	Pray for Front-Line Workers who are preparing Comorian Christians to share the Gospel.
T	22	VIETNAM	Pray for Christians who are being denied medical care and educational opportunities for following Christ.
W	23	SRI LANKA	Sri Lanka suffered a brutal civil war. Pray that the unity of Christian Believers will be a shining witness.
T	24	MALAYSIA	Pray that permits will be approved for new church buildings where Christians can meet openly.
F	25	SAUDI ARABIA	Pray that those interested in learning about Christ will not be deterred by fear.
S	26	MALI	Pray that Islamic extremists will turn to the Lord after seeing his love demonstrated through the body of Christ.
S	27	KYRGYZSTAN	Pray that local churches will be well equipped to minister to those who have lost jobs and turned to migrant work.
M	28	SUDAN	Pray that Christian converts from Islam will share the Gospel with their families without fear of rejection.
T	29	BHUTAN	Many Bhutanese churches meet in secret. Pray that they will find ways to be salt and light in their communities.
W	30	TAJKISTAN	Praise God for Front-Line Workers who are boldly sharing the Gospel with Muslims! Pray for eternal fruit.
T	31	COLOMBIA	Pray for Andres in his desire to "take the Gospel to the difficult areas where nobody else wants to go."

## NOVEMBER 2024

F	1	NIGER	Pray that Christians living in rural areas will have access to Bibles.
S	2	INDONESIA	Pray that Gabriel and Noni, the only Christians in their village, will continue to stand firm in faith.
S	3	ERITREA	Pray for Christians who have been released from prison, as many are blacklisted by the government.
M	4	YEMEN	Pray that Christians accused of proselytism and blasphemy after leaving Islam will be filled with peace.
T	5	CUBA	Pray that Christian leaders will rely on the Holy Spirit when they are called in for questioning.
W	6	PAKISTAN	Pray that blasphemy laws, which have been used to persecute Christians, will be revoked.
T	7	UGANDA	Pray that distributions of audio and print Bibles will reach Christians in areas with a heavy Muslim influence.
F	8	SOUTHERN MEXICO	Pray that God's Word will be available in every indigenous language.
S	9	NORTH KOREA	Pray for the success of Bible-smuggling efforts in North Korea.
S	10	INDIA	Pray for Sukbait who occasionally sees the men who killed her husband.
M	11	TURKEY	Ask God for a breakthrough that will lead to many Turks turning to Christ.
T	12	NIGERIA	Pray for Pastor Mutum who has received multiple death threats because of his Christian witness.
W	13	BRUNEI	Bibles in the Malay language are illegal and are confiscated if found. Pray that Christians will have access to Bibles.
T	14	LIBYA	Some Christians are likely in prison because of their faith. Pray that they will sense God's presence and comfort.
F	15	PHILIPPINES	Praise God that graduates of Bible schools on Mindanao have boldly returned to their communities to share the Gospel.
S	16	MOROCCO	Pray that underground church fellowships will remain undetected by government authorities.