



Dunn's Do'ins Congo MPH Mission



Should We Stay, or Should We Go?

(and other Christmas Greetings)

Firstly, we greet you dear readers with prayers for the love of the Newborn King to bring Hope, Peace, Love and Joy to each of your families.

As you know, when we returned to Congo in late October, we were unsure of the stability of the government and what sorts of turmoil we should expect. We arrived to find the country pretty much the way we left it in June. As in most countries in Africa, life continues to go on. The people adapt because they need to work and eat. The Congolese are, and have always been, very resilient and live to survive each day. Life for expats here, at this time, can be a bit different. Is it because we are “outsiders”, or simply because we have better resources to sift through the rumors and truth? I can't say for sure.

Let us fill you in on what we know, or at least what we think we know. November passed without elections for a new president and government. No surprise to us. On 19 nov, the other party presented the government with a “Yellow Card”. This is a soccer term designating that a player has obtained a penalty warning. This is to be followed up with a “Red Card”, or ejection notice, on 19 dec the final day of legal reign, if there is no change in power. There have been negotiations and discussions going on between the reigning powers, the other party, and some select outside facilitators to come up with a reasonable transition of power and proposals of fair elections. The outcome of some of these talks have led to some high up officials, not highest, stepping down so that a bipartisan interim government can work with the current president to come up with plans for fair elections in April 2018. Not ideal, or democratic, but at least a bit peaceful. Those who are anti current gov't do not care for this and still plan on voicing , or showing, their opinions this weekend. Please keep Congo in prayer for the 19th and 20th.

So what does this mean for us? The US Embassy has removed all non-essential personnel, and families of essential personnel for this weekend, until it is proven safe to return. US citizens are allowed to make their own decisions. Many NGOs have removed their non-national workers for an early holiday. Many mission organizations have removed their missionaries. There are, however, a few mission organizations which have decided to remain. There are other individuals, mostly without a major organization or mission covering, who are remaining put. So what have we, the Dunns, decided?...

Our final guest leaves us Saturday morning. As our “home” will be empty, we have rooms to offer to

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those who might want to gather as a community to offer strength in numbers. We have decided to put our employees, except sentries (guards, glorified at that) on early holiday beginning Saturday noon, 17 dec. Cindy and I have stocked the pantry with food. We have plenty of water to last for many days. We have plenty of fuel for the generator and propane for the stove. We will hunker down and wait out whatever may occur. We have our “bug out bags” packed. We have purchased visas, at our own expense, to the neighboring country across the river, Rep of Congo, which is obtainable by ferry should we need to flee. (The airport is 30 Km (19 miles) away, which can take 30 minutes to 3 hours to get to during normal circumstances. If there is chaos, the airport will be unreachable.) The ferry is 8 Km (5 miles) away and close to the US Embassy.

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What are we really expecting?... We know the general population wants a change in power, so there will be some chaos and death. Most of this will happen in areas quite out of our reach. We expect a show of force over the next couple of days from the government. They have the resources which the population does not. We expect the majority of the population, as well as us and those like us, to stay behind our protective walls and not be roaming the streets. The ones on the street will be looking for, or causing, trouble. Having a military camp one block away, we

expect a tank to be parked in front of our gate any day now. (This does not alarm us, and actually makes us feel a bit more secure.?) Here’s the breakdown: Sunday 18 dec should be calm. Monday 19 dec will have some ruckus. Tuesday 20 dec will have more trouble in isolated areas, again away from us. Wednesday will probably quiet down, as folks assess the situation. By Thursday, people will need to eat, get back to work and prepare for Christmas! This could be our naïve, or wishful, thinking. But this is kind of our take.

We are writing this asking you to pray for us and the Democratic Republic of Congo. How can you pray?

- Pray for us, our friends and colleagues. That we may remain safe. That we may have wisdom in all situations.
- Pray for the Congolese people. They know they want change, but they really don’t know what kind of change they want. They don’t know what is really available to them.
- Pray that God will have His mighty hand in the situations coming this weekend and early next week.
- To be honest, we would ask for the heavens to open up in tremendous rains on Monday and Tuesday. Rain always keeps demonstrations from happening and douses the hot tempers. This saves lives and property.
- Pray for a peaceful compromise

We will try to update you, as we can. Internet and phones may go down. Yes, we are concerned. I don’t think we are exactly afraid. We are not panicking. We know that we are in God’s will and that He intends to use us during this season. God is in control, always.

Should all of this pass and Christmas comes as the calendar schedules, we will be hosting our 7th annual Dunn’s Christmas Potluck here at MPH Guesthouse for the mission community in remaining in town. We are expecting about 40+ people.

We wish each of you a very Merry Christmas! May the gift found in the manger wrapped in cloth be the most precious present in your families.

Love and Blessings,
 Clay and Cindy Dunn
 Serving Him and His in the D R Congo