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DRC: Bishop of Goma describes church growth amid conflict

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Bishop Martin Gordon

Photo Credit: Church Mission Society

Related Categories: Archdeaconry of Goma, Bishop Martin Gordon, conflict, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Goma Call for Peace, Rwanda, sexual violence, war

A year on from the invasion of Goma in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo by Rwandan-backed M23 rebels, the Rt Revd Martin Gordon (Bishop of Goma in the Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo) has spoken about church growth in a region suffering ongoing conflict.

The invasion in late January 2025 left more than 3,000 people dead and around 700,000 displaced. It also led to a spate of summary executions, a rise in sexual violence and kidnappings, and the closure of banks, courts and the airport.

Commenting in an interview given to the [Church Mission Society](#), Bishop Martin said that despite ongoing challenges in the region, the Church has continued its work of witness and care. 'There were parishes that we had been unable to reach for three years, but this year we have been able to visit and encourage people that they are not forgotten,' he said.

He added that churches and individuals around the world have shown significant generosity. 'When the situation was at its toughest, we were able to give a cash gift to each of our staff and clergy, and even our teachers, who had not been paid for six months because of the closure of the banks. At Christmas, we were also able to support 200 families with a gift of a chicken and a sack of rice to celebrate.'

Bishop Martin said churches had become centres of peace, support and hope during the conflict. 'The Church is the one institution that is still trusted in DRC. It is at the heart of every village and community. When war came, people looked to the churches for every kind of help, as well as for hope. They were used as shelters and distribution centres, and we saw increased attendance in many parishes.'

He said this had been accompanied by renewed spiritual interest. 'We have seen people hungrier than ever for the basic truths of the Christian faith. As I have visited churches in the Archdeaconry of Goma, we have seen a growing number of candidates for baptism and confirmation.'

According to Bishop Martin, church attendance in the archdeaconry doubled during 2025. More than 250 people were confirmed in October and November, and during summer missions in secondary schools, more than 6,000 children gathered to hear about Jesus, with over 1,000 responding in faith.

In Kibumba, a town north of Goma in the territory of Nyiragongo, long-standing plans to plant a church were previously prevented by fighting between M23 factions and government forces. Bishop Gordon explained that improved access later in 2025 made new developments possible.

'Within the space of ten days, we appointed an evangelist, built a 12m by 8m wooden church with the generosity of a UK parish, and held a two-day evangelism campaign attended by more than 4,000 people, with nearly 900 becoming Christians,' he said.

The following Sunday, he added, the new church was full, requiring chairs to be borrowed from neighbouring buildings. The area is predominantly Kinyarwanda-speaking, and the diocese has recently completed a translation of the catechism into the local language to support discipleship.

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, Bishop Martin helped to launch the *Goma Call for Peace*, a global petition supported by the Anglican Communion, which has gathered nearly 500,000 signatures and called on the international community to respond to the crisis.

'Times are incredibly hard in Goma right now,' Bishop Gordon said. 'The 2025 invasion adds another layer of trauma to more than 30 years of conflict. Many still struggle to make ends meet. But amid the suffering, we continue to testify to God's faithfulness and put our trust in him as the one who will ultimately bring about peace.'

Following on from the *Goma Call for Peace*, the Anglican Communion is working with other churches to advocate for peace and aid in the region. Bishop Gordon's message of hope in the darkest places demonstrates the role of the Church in giving the gift of peace, in whatever way it can.

Advocacy and Prayer for Peace in Goma

The Anglican Communion Office continues to work with Anglicans around the world to encourage advocacy for the situation in DRC. Here are some important advocacy points in representing the issue to

a local government representative or praying for the situation:

- Humanitarian aid is needed: Press for Goma airport and banks to be reopened to allow humanitarian aid into the conflict region.
- Diplomacy and peace-building: Press for a halt to violence, which is undermining peace agreements and resolutions, and respect for the ceasefire. The Presidents of DRC and Rwanda signed the Washington Accords in December 2025, but it was quickly violated when the M23 group took the town of Uvira. The Church in DRC believes that peaceful and diplomatic means are the only way to end the conflict, which has already caused untold suffering.
- Dialogue: Progress on dialogue hosted by Qatar between the DRC and the M23 armed group is vital.
- Withdrawal of all foreign troops from DRC.
- Support for community dialogues aimed at strengthening community cohesion, including faith-led Peace Huts.

[Read about *The Goma Call for Peace*.](#)

[Visit *The Goma Call for Peace* website.](#)

[This article was sourced from the Church Mission Society.](#)