

Volcanic Eruption: Two Updates from Goma (DRC)

Do you remember Nyiramwiza and Emmanuel?

Ten years ago, their village was attacked by an armed militia. Emmanuel, 10 at the time, was shot in the neck and paralyzed. His father and brother were both killed. Many difficult years passed. When we first met them, his mother had to carry her 20-year-old son on her back. We were able to get him a hand powered chair last year, and on Christmas Eve, 2020, they moved into a home of their own thanks to the generosity of a number of churches and friends.



Emmanuel and his mother (2020) ...and with his new handicap bike; mobile for the first time in 10 years!

May 22nd: Volcanic Eruption. All was well until Mt. Nyiragongo, overlooking the city of Goma erupted on May 22 destroying over 3,000 homes in its wake and leaving over 25,000 persons homeless. Their new home was in the direct path of the lava flow.



May 25, 2021: Amazing Event: In church today, Nyiramwiza went forward with praises! She fled from the eruption of Mt. Nyiragongo Saturday evening with Emmanuel on his bicycle and her goat, which she named Zawadi (gift) in tow. They made it to safety.

We had heard her house, like others in the neighborhood had been buried by lava... but her praise this morning in church was that the home was perfectly intact! The lava came right next to the house, went a short way down the road, then around the other side. They have been told they cannot live there for 3 months so the heat and gasses dissipate. But God has, for sure, cared for this widow and her son!



The lava flow stopped just a few feet from their new home

May 30th: Due to earthquakes over 400,000 people were ordered to evacuate Goma just days after the volcanic eruption. Nyiramwiza and Emmanuel were amongst those who evacuated the city (most on foot) after hundreds of post-volcanic earthquakes increased the risk of a more severe eruption including a possible limnic turnover of the lake. Emmanuel had been suffering with sores and fever before the evacuation and desperately needed medical care. His condition worsened after evacuating to a town called Sake on Thursday, May 27th. Nyiramwiza, his mother, tried to find transport back to Goma to no avail. According to OCHA, there were over 92,000 internally displaced people in that area.

Unable to contact them by phone, Pastor Damiri, Chaplain at HEAL Africa and our Sunday school supervisor, drove to the town of Sake to search for them and bring Emmanuel to the hospital. To our amazement he found him... how he found one person out of 92,000 can only be the grace of God! He brought them to HEAL Africa, and both ended up being hospitalized. We rejoice in God's amazing blessings in the midst of tragedy!



Pastor Damiri on Rescue Mission to Find Emmanuel

***Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.
Psalm 68:5***