

### FOOD FOR PATIENTS HEALING ARTS EMERGENCY FUND DISTRIBUTION

As of November 25, we have received over \$4,500 in donations for HEALing Art's Emergency Fund! These funds have allowed us to supplement medical bills for impoverished patients. You heard about Gulula, from the Congo Action Update 2, who had the grenade burn her face. We are happy to report she is healing at home! In this third Congo Action Update, you will hear the stories of Heri and Papa Kakuru. The largest portion of the donation has been used for much-needed dietary provisions for HEAL Africa patients. Annifa, Chelsie and Cristina met with Jonathan, who is in charge of nutrition sourcing, and Pastor Samuel, one of the hospital chaplains. Since the patients had only received flour, beans, oil and salt this month, Jonathan's recommendation was that we use our funds to purchase large amounts of rice, sugar, beans and leafy vegetables for the patients. Patients' recovery time is often slowed by insufficient nutrients in their diet, and the hospital staff expressed their gratitude to HEALing Arts and our partners for this infusion of food for patients.

Today we, and several of the HEALing Arts Mamas, walked to each room and gave the food to victims of: rape, burn, gunshot and knife wounds, and other patients of all kinds. They sang and smiled wide as they received the food! The stories are endless. One mother of six whose home was invaded by FARDC soldiers in a poor neighborhood of Goma. The soldiers demanded all her money, and when they discovered that she had none, they stabbed her in the chest near the heart. This mother is pregnant. She has been at the hospital since October 29<sup>th</sup>, the day of the attacks in Goma, and her mother is her caretaker. Her face shows decades of suffering accentuated by the recent anguish of trying to find food for her suffering daughter. Although the young mama lost weight at the beginning, she is slowly starting to regain strength and is very happy that her baby was not affected by the knife wound. People like this vulnerable mother have now received enough food to get them through the next several days. Currently, we have around 300 patients at the hospital. The few days surrounding the



*Heal Africa Staff and Volunteers help with food distribution.*

violence brought in over 44 gunshot victims and knife stabbings, in addition to the regular volume of emergencies at HEAL Africa. We are seeing a dramatic increase in the number of young rape victims. In September, we treated 24 female rape victims of the age of 18 or under, 33 girls in October and another 32 through the middle of November. The majority of rape cases we have received have been minors, even girls under the age of 4.

### PAPA KAKURU (PRINCE AGAKAN'S DAD)

Kakuru is the father of 6 children, 5 boys and 1 girl. For years, he has been unable to find a job in war-torn North Kivu, so he and his wife survive by selling water from their water tap whenever the city water works.



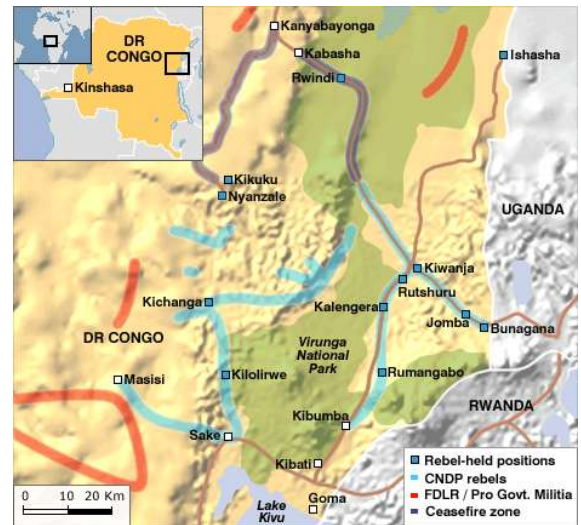
They are fortunate enough to be one of the few in the impoverished, commercial district of Birere to have a water tap, since the lake is not nearby enough to fetch water easily. Birere is the neighborhood where all the planes crash in Goma, since it was built upon a portion of the previous airport runway before the volcano of 2002. For years, Kakuru's family has lived in poverty financially, but not in spirit. The grandmother has taught all her grandchildren to sing in church. Now 4 of his boys have their own musical band, called Maisha Soul, through which they compose and perform songs expressing their ideas of peace, collaboration and ending the war. His children are the pride and joy of Kakuru, who was at

home with them the night of the shootings in Goma, October 29<sup>th</sup>, which were especially bad in this neighborhood. A stray bullet pierced through their thin plank walls and entered his right knee. Due to the severity of the fighting, and even though he was in a lot of pain, they were unable to get their father to HEAL Africa until the following evening. A difficult and risky process, the bullet was finally removed a few days ago, after a couple surgeries. He has been recovering well and his whole family is grateful for the support they have received. Prince Agakhan and his brothers, to express their appreciation, have written a song about HEALing Arts, which you will soon be able to hear!

## HOW SAFE IS GOMA TODAY?

Security in the city of Goma has stabilized finally, which we are very thankful for! However, in the surrounding villages in North Kivu, violence continues uninhibited. General Nkunda's CNDP forces still control the region as they wish, and they displace the vulnerable from the portions of land that they desire for their own purposes. Their exploitation of the land, its resources and people continues to build up their military and political strength, which is also actively supported by Rwanda, who has been accused of intentions to take over this region. As time goes by, people get even more weary and tired from lack of peace and food. They long for a time when the world will truly respond and

help them end this devastating war. The UN continues to be reticent towards sending more troops, which enables the rebel forces to secure their power even more surely in the areas they control. It also increases the number of number of girls that are raped. The number of boys forced to become child soldiers for CNDP only grows. Families continue fleeing, having lost the little they had worked so hard to build up. Even in refugee camps, the people find no peace, since the rebel armies are closer than 1 KM away than the Kibati camps. It is imperative that the UN respond with action that is lasting and changing in this region.



Conflict Map of North Kivu, BBC

## HERI RUKANYIKA - MALE VICTIMS OF RAPE

Heri is a young man who comes from Kiwanja, north of Goma, next to Ruthsuru. A poor bean seller at the local market, Heri had already seen his fair share of trouble and pain. The war had left him a widower, caring for his two children, mother and two younger siblings. However, it was not until that fateful Wednesday, October 29 when his world truly fell apart.

He was out in the fields when he heard of the fighting breaking out in town. Immediately, he ran home with two of his brothers, and they saw that Rwandan soldiers with the CNDP army of General Nkunda had already arrived at his house. As they approached, he heard the tall soldiers yelling in Rwandese "There they are! They are inside!" A split second later, they launched a large grenade into his home and the explosive destroyed his house. His mother, two children and younger brother were inside; all of them died. Heri and his brothers turned around to flee, but they were instantly surrounded by soldiers on all sides as

they tried to run. Bullets went off everywhere and both of his brothers fell dead. Heri threw himself down next to them, acting as if he had died as well, but they were not deceived. They attacked him and beat him wildly, banging his head against the rocks, gauging his forehead. Finally, they raped him with a knife, leaving him for dead. All Heri could think about were his two dead sons. Tungane was only 7, he had just begun school and wanted to become a priest because he loved God and little 4 year old Bulenba, who had been happily playing inside their house that same morning.

A lone moto driver who was also escaping heard his cries for help and picked him up. Heri remembers little but that he was transferred once or twice to other vehicles and found himself at the HEAL Africa hospital on Friday night.

He has received treatment and surgery, but he could not afford to pay for it, having lost all he had in the war. HEALing Arts' Emergency Fund paid his bill. Despite his deep suffering, he is beginning to look towards his future as he regains his strength. Heri returned home two weeks ago, saying he was ready to return home and begin the mourning process for the loss of his entire family. He also expressed that he is immensely grateful for the help of those who provided the funds for his medical treatment.

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HEAL Africa's mission is to provide holistic care for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo: training health professionals, strengthening social activists and providing physical, spiritual and social healing. HEAL Africa operates out of Goma but actively works in the warring rural areas of North Kivu and Maniema, reaching and serving hundreds of thousands of people who would otherwise have no medical care.



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