

## **German UEM churches support Congolese church with 50,000 euros**

Emergency aid for internally displaced persons after the rebel militia M23 seized the city of Goma in eastern Congo

**(Wuppertal/Goma, 4 February 2025).** The Evangelical Church of the Rhineland, the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, the Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) have pledged a total of 50,000 euros in emergency aid to the Baptist Church in Central Africa (Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique, CBCA) to support the emergency relief efforts for internally displaced persons in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo. The renewed displacement of hundreds of thousands of people was triggered by the conquest of the provincial capital of Goma in North Kivu by the rebel group M23 ("March 23 Movement") on January 27 of this year. The latest military escalation raises fears of war between the neighboring countries. The international community is therefore called upon to take all necessary measures to stop the ongoing atrocities.

### **War robs people of their livelihoods**

Since December 4, 2024, armed clashes in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have intensified, depriving the local population of their livelihoods. While the war was initially confined to the Beni, Masisi and Rutshuru regions, it quickly spread to new areas in Lubero in North Kivu province a month ago and to the Kalehe region in South Kivu province, 58 km southwest of the city of Goma, last week. These areas, which are characterized by war and insecurity, are home to 13 of the CBCA's 19 church districts.

According to the local church, which belongs to the UEM community, the entire population, including the parishioners in the affected church districts, is in need. At the end of January, there were 773 dead and 2,280 injured. It is reported that there are no longer any hospitals to treat the injured and no morgues to house the dead. There is a lack of medical personnel and medical equipment to help the many people suffering. The population is in urgent need of material assistance.

According to the United Nations, more than 500,000 new internally displaced persons have been registered in North Kivu province in the last four weeks. The majority of the civilian population, especially women and children, are living in difficult conditions in temporary shelters. People are severely traumatized by the loss of family members, the looting of family property or because they were left without protection and now have nothing to live on.

The Baptist church is trying to alleviate the despair and suffering of the people. In addition to the necessary pastoral care, the many challenges include the current difficulties in accessing food and medical care, as well as the overburdening of host families, who provide the refugees with water, sanitation and hygiene services. Furthermore, many people seek protection and safety in church facilities.

## **Planned emergency relief measures**

In order to save as many lives as quickly as possible, the CBCA church, together with its partner organizations, initially wants to support the affected population in meeting their most urgent basic needs. These include, among other things,

- Food for survival
- Provision of water tanks to supply clean water
- Provision of emergency shelters
- Provision of clothing and blankets
- Construction of latrines in refugee camps
- Non-food items and household items for self-sufficiency with hot meals
- Support for health facilities in the regions of Beni, Lubero, Rutshuru, Masisi and Kalehe by providing special hygiene kits for women and girls
- Strengthening the psychosocial rehabilitation of people who have been severely traumatized by the current wave of displacement.

Following this emergency aid, the further needs of the affected communities and church districts will be addressed.

## **Appeal for support**

The aim of the relief effort is to meet the basic needs of the displaced persons. Infectious diseases and malnutrition are to be contained and further deaths prevented. Particular attention is paid to the well-being of vulnerable people such as unaccompanied children, destitute elderly people, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and the physically disabled and chronically ill.

In addition, the church, as a servant of God, is fulfilling its mission to comfort and encourage people in this difficult time. The CBCA church asks for support in the form of prayers and donations.

Donation account: United Evangelical Mission, KD-Bank eG, IBAN DE 45 3506 0190 0009 0909 08. Reference: Goma relief

## **About „UEM“**

*The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Wuppertal, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal community of 39 members, including 32 Protestant churches in Africa and Asia as well as six Protestant churches and the v. Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel in Germany. The UEM consistently pursues a holistic understanding of mission. This includes improving the living conditions of suffering and disadvantaged people while respecting their personal dignity and taking their cultural context into account.*