



Anglican Bishop describes terror in Goma and issues “Goma Call for Peace”

The Anglican Bishop of Goma has said people are “terrified in their homes” as fighting in the DRC city continues to escalate. The Rt Revd Martin Gordon, who has recently evacuated Goma along with other peace advocates, has shared “*The Goma Call for Peace*” urging the international community to act immediately and decisively for peace in Eastern DRC.

Bishop Martin has described the situation in the city of Goma as having “... no power and in many areas no water. The M23 seems to have control of large parts of the city. The Congolese army are resisting in other areas. Civilians are being caught in the crossfire. Bodies are lying in the streets. 4000 prisoners have escaped. The IDP camps have emptied as people flee to the city centre and churches are filling as places of refuge. Hospitals are overwhelmed. The price of basic food has doubled. Most people are terrified in their homes. Many are asking why they are being forgotten. The region is at a turning point and needs the international community to act immediately and decisively.”

The Rt Revd Martin Gordon, an ordained Church of England priest, has been serving as the bishop for the Diocese of Goma, in the Anglican Church of the Congo (Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo). He became bishop of Goma in 2023, and his family relocated to Goma after serving in the UK for many years. During his ministry, Bishop Martin has been working on peace advocacy and reconciliation work with other faith groups and UN bodies.

In recent days, Bishop Martin has evacuated Goma, as fighting in the city has escalated. Rebels from the Rwanda-backed M23 have been fighting for control and captured much of the eastern city of Goma. Conflict between the M23 and DR Congo’s army has intensified since the start of the year, with rebels taking control of more territory and Rwandan Defence Forces increasingly involved.

This week, Bishop Martin issued “*The Goma Call To Peace*” to the International Community, urging for people to pray for Goma and the ongoing peace work on the ground, to see an immediate cessation of fighting and for there to be a rapid humanitarian response.

The Call is backed by the Most Revd Ande Georges Titre, the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of the Congo who said: *“I pray incessantly for our brothers and sisters in Goma who know so well the pain of conflict. With Bishop Martin, I call for the international community to act and I add my support the ‘Goma Call for Peace’. Immediate aid is desperately needed for those suffering most and our cries for peace need finally to be heard and acted upon. We have suffered for far too long. We put our hope in Christ and trust in the swift response of the international community.”*

The Archbishop of Southern Africa, The Most Revd Thabo Makgoba has backed the call for peace saying: *“We are at a moment when we can choose to come together in the pursuit of peace, or the international community can turn away and allow the suffering of the innocent. I join my brothers and sisters in supporting the Goma call for Peace.”*

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office, The Rt Revd Anthony Poggio



said: *“The rising conflict in Goma is causing a growing humanitarian crisis, causing loss of life, violence and trauma. We pray for all those affected by the conflict and for the work of the church and other peace keeping agencies in the region. May the churches of the Anglican Communion around the world do all that they can to respond and urge our international leaders to work for peace and stability.”*

At the time of writing, there have reportedly been at least 17 foreign peacekeepers have been killed in GOMA. Thousands have been newly displaced in the last few days.

The fighting is occurring against a backdrop of conflict in the mineral-rich region over the last 30 years. Various armed groups have competed with the central authorities for power and control of the potential fortune in this vast nation.

This conflict has already taken over 6 million lives, created 1 million refugees, 6.5 million displaced, and inflicted unimaginable suffering on thousands of women through sexual violence.

The Goma Call for Peace issued on January 28 reads:

Call from the Bishop of Goma for the international community to act immediately and decisively for peace in eastern DRC

With the escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC following Sunday's incursion of Rwandan troops into Congolese sovereign territory on the Goma/Rubavu border, and mindful of the subsequent humanitarian and security risks in the region, the international community must act now.

In solidarity with those suffering in Goma and across eastern DRC, we call for:

1. The immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities and respect of the existing ceasefire agreement.
2. The protection of the civilian population and an urgent humanitarian response including the restoration of power and water to the city.
3. The withdrawal of those external forces from DRC soil which are in clear violation of DRC's territorial sovereignty. This includes the M23 and the RDF.
4. A resumption of dialogue in good faith between Kigali and Kinshasa believing that peaceful and diplomatic means are the only way to end the conflict which has already caused untold suffering.
5. The international community to invest every effort and to consider using all possible means to bring peace to eastern DRC. People in the region want only peace.

Read the story on the Anglican Communion News Service [here](#)

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