

PRAY POSTED ON APRIL 24, 2019

Pray for Dr. Bill Clemmer and other health workers in Eastern Congo providing care to Ebola patients in the midst of continuing violence.



BOB SANTILLI

Ann and Bill Clemmer reside in the town of Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the Congo-Rwanda border. They work with IM partners Heal Africa and IMA World Health. Bill regularly travels to Beni, where he leads an international team of doctors, nurses and technical personnel responding to the current Ebola crisis, the largest in Congo's history. Bill is leading the IMA World Health Ebola response in the region

This past week there were two armed attacks at IMA World Health-supported clinics in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. (The staff at these clinics are providing critical care to

people with Ebola, and this is the area where Bill Clemmer is working.) A doctor was killed in the attack on April 19th.

Bill is safe and unharmed, and is back in Goma with Ann. Please pray for them, as they process these events and this tragedy.

IMA World Health reports on its website –

Armed Attack Kills Doctor at IMA World Health-Supported Clinic in Congo's Ebola Zone

WASHINGTON—In second attack this week on an IMA World Health-supported health facility involved in the Ebola response, gunmen stormed a hospital today (Friday, April 19) in Butembo in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and opened fire, killing a doctor.

Around 2 p.m., armed individuals in civilian clothes burst into a conference room of The Clinic University Graben, a Catholic teaching hospital in Butembo at the epicenter of the Ebola zone. The hospital's Ebola outreach team was giving a report to Dr. Richard Mouzoko, a World Health Organization epidemiologist from Cameroon who is coordinating the Ebola response in the area.

The gunmen forced everyone on the floor, took their belongings and accused them of perpetuating false rumors about Ebola. When they departed, the intruders shot the doctor in the abdomen. They discharged their weapons as they went through the hospital, causing patients and staff to flee or go into hiding.

Dr. Mouzoko died of his wounds a short time later.

Ambassador Daniel Speckhard, president and CEO of Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health, condemned the attack.

"We are filled with shock and sorrow at this callous attack on health workers who risk their lives every day to treat people suffering from Ebola," he said. "We grieve the loss of our colleague. On this Good Friday, when the Christian world observes the death of Jesus, we offer our condolences to his family and our prayers for the safety of our IMA World Health colleagues and all our partners working in Congo under very difficult conditions."

Dr. William Clemmer, who is leading the IMA World Health Ebola response in the region, visited the hospital shortly after the attack and talked to staff, who expressed fear and discouragement.

"A lab technician told us, 'Ebola is not only killing its victims, but threatening our very way of life and crippling health services,'" he said. "As long as health care workers face threats to their very lives for associating or collaborating with the Ebola response, we face an uphill battle to bring this outbreak under control."

This marks at least the fourth attack on an IMA World Health-supported health facility involved in the Ebola response. Just four days earlier, an armed group attacked a nearby clinic, looted equipment and kidnapped a male nurse, who was released the next day. That clinic remains closed for the time being.

Ebola treatment facilities are increasingly becoming targets for violent attacks by groups who claim that Ebola is not real or that the disease is an invention of foreigners to decimate

the local population. Not only are health workers at risk but also local residents who cooperate with the Ebola response.

The attacks come as Ebola cases in Congo are surging. Last week, 103 new infections were reported, the highest since the outbreak was declared in August 2018. To date there have been 1,300 confirmed and probable cases, with 843 deaths, making this Ebola crisis the second-worst in history.