



No Crib for a Bed

Christmas Appeal Script

This script has been to accompany the downloadable PowerPoint Presentation designed to introduce your church, community or group to our Christmas Appeal for 2025. You are very welcome to edit and adapt this talk as appropriate for your context. You will find other supporting resources at caid.ie/Christmas which will help you to fundraise, act and pray for displaced families in the Democratic Republic of Congo and beyond.



Slide 1:

An aspect of the Nativity story that many of us will be familiar with is that, according to the gospel of Luke, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable. Displaced by a governmental edict, Mary and Joseph are forced take on an incredibly dangerous journey for a heavily pregnant woman. And, because of this unprecedented movement of people, they are unable to find a suitable place in which their child will be born. It is this moment of vulnerability that inspired the beloved carol, 'Away in a Manger' and many images on Christmas cards. But have we allowed the reality of Mary and Joseph's experience to be lost to the softly lit, safe picture that is often painted at this time of year? Have we also resigned this frightening experience to the past, forgetting that many mothers and fathers around the world are welcoming their own children into the world under similar circumstances? Once such place where this story of displacement and child-birth is being repeated on a daily basis is the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Slide 2:

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, similar in size to Western Europe. The DRC has vast amounts of natural resources and arable land, extensive biodiversity, and the world's second largest rainforest. Yet, millions of people live in extreme poverty. Because decades of conflict and political instability have fuelled one of the world's largest, and now most urgent, humanitarian crises of our time.

Slide 3:

As a result of conflict, the DRC is among the five poorest nations in the world. It's estimated that more than 70% of the population lived on around £1.50 a day last year (World Bank). The UN reports that decades of violence have claimed the lives of 6 million people in the DRC since 1996. Courageous Congolese communities are facing unimaginable hardship. Homelessness, hunger, malnutrition, disease, trauma, sexual violence against women and extreme poverty are widespread. In this unrelenting, brutal and bloody environment, at least four babies out of every 100 born will tragically die before their first birthday (UNICEF). The survival of many of the most vulnerable members of society now rests on urgent humanitarian support.



Slide 4:

Violence between armed groups and government forces has left millions of families no option but to abandon their homes and livelihoods in search of safety. As waves of troops have pushed and plundered their way across the country, innocent civilians caught in the crossfire have been forced to relocate again and again. With remarkable resilience, these determined communities have repeatedly rebuilt their lives, all the while knowing that peace is fragile and safety temporary. Since November 2021, the resurgence of the M23, a powerful rebel paramilitary group, has dramatically increased the displacement of people and deepened an already dire humanitarian crisis. In early 2025, this violence intensified resulting in months of brutal fighting.

Slide 5:

Chance is a married mother of eight children living in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Originally from Minova, on the shores of Lake Kivu, Chance worked as a shopkeeper alongside raising her young family. In February 2025, deadly fighting terrorised the streets and homes of Minova. Soldiers looted all the stock from Chance's shop. With her business destroyed, Chance then witnessed her female neighbour being attacked by soldiers. Chance knew she and her children had to flee immediately to survive. This was the last time Chance saw her husband, who stayed behind in Minova. The last time eight children saw their father.

Chance courageously undertook the gruelling journey along with other women, who she describes as 'running with their children and luggage.' Chance's eldest children helped her by carrying saucepans, and jerrycans for storing drinking water. The family could only watch in terror as fighter jets on deadly missions screamed over their heads, and bombs fell indiscriminately around them – obliterating homes, shops and neighbourhoods where families like Chance's long dreamed of a peace that is yet to come. The family's trek in search of safety took its toll on everyone. **'While fleeing, my baby and other children all fell ill, even myself, because I had given birth by caesarean section.'** Chance, fiercely protecting her children, had eaten so little during the 50-mile journey to safety that by the time they reached their destination, her baby, Siborge, couldn't breastfeed. With stunting affecting almost half of all under-fives in the DRC, Chance now lives with the anxiety that her baby boy's development may have been affected by this early malnutrition.

Slide 6:

Chance found medical assistance and relative safety for her children in Katashola Camp for displaced people. But now in a temporary shelter, she has nothing of value and fears her husband is dead. Chance's children are hungry, and at grave risk of malnutrition and malaria. She tells us: 'Here in the camp, people need food, clothes, jerrycans, saucepans, blankets and mattresses.'

Slide 7:

The humanitarian emergency in the DRC is one of the largest global hunger crises of our time, with more than 27 million people in need of food. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of almost half of all deaths in children under five. With Christian Aid funding, our trusted partner, ECC-MERU, is making cash grants to those most in need of support – families like Chance's. Your donation this Christmas could make an immediate difference by funding cash grants that save lives. With your support, mothers like Chance could buy nutritious food, vital medicines and essential hygiene products to guard against deadly diseases such as cholera. A gift from you could fund emergency shelters for families in crisis, as well as cosy bedding and blankets to comfort traumatised children and babies.



Slide 8:

Though Chance is a brave and resourceful mother, she's running out of options – because of a situation that's heartbreakingly beyond her control. She says: 'I wish you could help me and my companions who are suffering like me. Please help us.' Together, we must support families to survive violence and poverty against all odds. We must pray that children whose young lives have been torn apart by conflict will one day know peace and comfort. Because when we give, act and pray together, we're united by hope. And with hope, a brighter future becomes possible

Slide 9: Let's take time to pray together for displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo and across the world.

A Prayer for Displaced Peoples

Prince of Peace,
As an infant you had no safe place to rest.
We pray to you today for all children
forced to flee violence in the Democratic
Republic of Congo, in Gaza and in many
other places across your world.
We lift to you families and communities
enduring instability and fear.
In this season of hopeful expectation, we
pray for those who do not know what
tomorrow will bring.
Challenge us, Lord, to live out your call to
seek peace and pursue it.
Heal our divisions and inspire us to act
with justice and love.
In your holy name we pray, amen.

