

**URGENT NEWS RELEASE**

## Special Report

# Volcano Tragedy!

**Even though the eruptions have stopped --  
hundreds still homeless, hungry and lost!**

GOMA, CONGO - For the first time in 25 years, the Nyiragongo volcano exploded on January 18th, sending millions of tons of molten lava spewing into the city of Goma destroying everything in its path. Scores of men, women and children were instantly killed as a result of the volcanic debris that fell on shops, churches, schools and homes. The same people who endured incredible hardships brought on by years of war -- were forced to flee their homes due to the fire and toxic gases of the volcano. More than 300,000 people evacuated Goma -- one of the Congo's largest cities -- with tens of thousands of those whose homes were destroyed being forced to set up refugee camps in neighboring Rwanda. "Most of these people have lost everything," one reporter noted as he witnessed the stream of people leaving the region. "Some are even saying that they have lost hope."

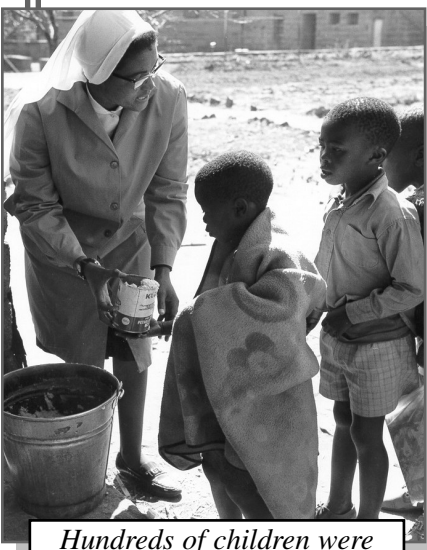
But while nearly two months have now passed since the last eruption, thousands of Congolese people are still forced to live without food, shelter or other basic living necessities. And despite the time that has passed, the Missionaries of Africa continue to appeal for help for those whose lives have been torn apart by the volcano.

"The reporters and television cameras have left," explains Fr. Richard Roy, "but there are still thousands of people who are homeless . . . people who have lost everything they owned." Fr. Roy lived in central Africa for nine years before returning to direct the Missionaries of Africa's Washington, DC, office.

"Yes, emergency supplies have arrived in Goma, but there is still so much more that needs to be done," Fr. Roy said. "Many people don't understand the enormity of the crisis. Nearly half a million men, women and children have been affected by this tragedy . . . that's a lot of people who are suffering! Something this big requires more than just a plane-load of supplies. The people of Goma are going to need our help for quite some time. Their world was nearly destroyed . . . you can't replace that in a short amount of time." Although many relief organizations are still actively working in Goma, during the months ahead the Missionaries of Africa will continue to do what they can to provide food, water, building materials and other items for those hardest hit by the volcano tragedy.



*Hot molten lava makes its way toward homes.*



*Hundreds of children were separated from their families!*

More than 300,000 people living in central Congo were affected by the volcano! Many of them still need your help. Any gift you send will help provide emergency relief to those who are suffering. Please use the enclosed envelope to send your donation or mail your gift to: Missionaries of Africa • 1622 21st Street, NW • Washington, DC 20009

**URGENT!**

## **Missions destroyed by Goma Volcano!**

### **Witnesses describe buildings in flames**

GOMA, CONGO - Sometimes missionaries must endure some of the same crises as those which confront the people they serve. That was the situation on January 18 when the Nyiragongo volcano that claimed more than 30,000 homes in Goma, Congo -- also destroyed some of the buildings and facilities used by the Missionaries of Africa working in the Goma region.

Molten lava flowing from the volcano destroyed one of the houses used as a residence by the missionaries as well as other buildings that served as work and training areas. Of the training facilities that were destroyed was a rehabilitation center for the handicapped.

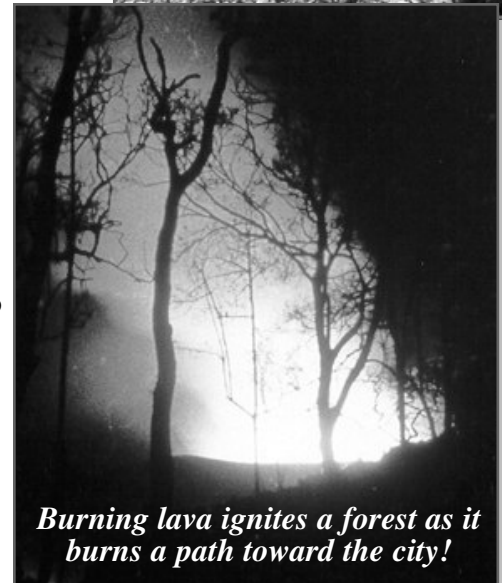
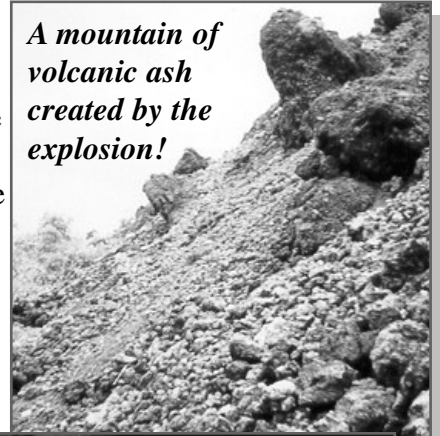
"The center for the handicapped was built right on the mission compound," explains Fr. Richard Roy. Fr. Roy is director of the Missionaries of Africa's Washington, DC, office. "There was a church right next to the mission as well. I've seen reports from witnesses who saw the church and all of the other buildings engulfed in flames from the red hot lava."

"One of the most disparaging things is that the people of Goma gave so much of themselves to get these facilities built," he continues. "They didn't just give whatever money they had to build these places -- without a doubt, they also made the bricks by hand and hammered the timbers and boards together themselves. Now all of that is gone."

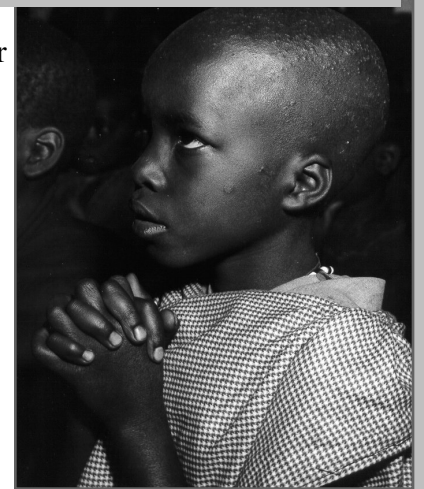
"I'm sure that our missionaries working in Goma will try to rebuild the facilities," Fr. Roy explained further, "but right now the most important thing is helping the Congolese people survive. Even though it's been a couple of months since the eruption, hundreds of thousands of people in Goma still don't have food to eat, water to drink, a decent place to sleep or even a simple shelter to protect them from the rains as the rainy season begins. That's what is foremost in the minds of our missionaries working there!"

"They're not asking for anything for themselves! The only thing our missionaries are saying is that this is an incredible crisis . . . that these poor people have lost everything! They have nowhere to grow food in the months ahead . . . even the lake has been polluted with sulfur from the volcano -- so there are no fish! They need help buying food, water, building materials, blankets. And with each report, I'm praying that our benefactors will continue giving whatever donations they possibly can to help these people to survive! If we don't help them now, it won't matter how many new facilities we build in the future."

*A mountain of volcanic ash created by the explosion!*



*Burning lava ignites a forest as it burns a path toward the city!*



The crisis created by the volcanic eruption in Goma continues. Hundreds of thousands of people still need our help! Your gift will provide basic living necessities such as food, water and temporary shelters. Please use the enclosed reply envelope to send your donation. Thank you for whatever you can do during this crisis.