

Brian and Jackie Chilvers

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Thank you to all those of you who have sent greetings and messages of support following our arrival in Chad on 25th March. It gave us so much encouragement and was a joy to receive so many messages. Following our arrival, we were required to spend a week in quarantine ahead of a negative covid test, this was a really good chance to settle into our home. We received a warm welcome from the residents at Guinebor II hospital and we were well looked after. We really thought that our hope of writing this newsletter from Chad would come to fruition...

...However as many of you will be aware, due to political instability in Chad the British Foreign Office advised that all British Nationals leave the country. BMS worked quickly with them to assess the situation, and we subsequently left Chad and arrived in the UK a few days ago. Having been in country less than a month this was devastating news for us, but we are grateful for all the hard work of the BMS staff in the UK and the leadership team at Guinebor II to help us, and other British BMS mission personnel leave quickly and safely. We can testify to the support of the British Embassy staff in neighbouring Cameroon in assisting with some emergency travel documentation that was needed. We are a bit shell-shocked at our sudden departure, and are grateful to be isolating for a few days before thinking about what the next few weeks might look like for us.

Our departure was made all the harder as we felt that we had experienced answers to prayer and were experiencing the 'good' early days of transition.

We had been very worried about arriving in Chad during the very hottest season. However, our arrival was accompanied by a wind which reduced the temperatures by a few degrees (and also taught us a valuable lesson about not leaving the doors and windows wide open all night to enjoy the 'nice breeze' which also brought a bucketful of sand into the house!).



After a week the temperatures gradually rose into the 40's but we felt like we were acclimatising pretty well. Now, in contrast of course we are wearing several layers of mainly borrowed clothing and Jackie is never far from a blanket!

Additionally, there is always something to 'do' to feel useful at a hospital- Brian was called upon most days to put plasters on fractured limbs as soon as we were out of isolation, while Jackie was beginning work on a safeguarding policy, learning malnutrition protocols as well working hard on how to shop at the market in arabic and practising driving (on the wrong side of the car, on the wrong side of the road in a town where rules are not rules!).

We have really enjoyed having a proper routine, for the first time in many months. It's good to be able to pray with the rest of the staff before the start of the 7am workday, and we had enjoyed the induction period of visiting the relevant departments in the hospital and getting to know the Chadian staff. Of course, our French is still developing, and the Chadian accent is tricky to understand. But the Chadian staff are very patient with us and we could generally make ourselves understood and understand what was being said to us too.

In such a sort time we have seen so much at the hospital – severe malnutrition, TB, Malaria, amputations, chronic disease, and severe malignant tumours. Many of the patients attend for treatment very late, often too late. This is so incredibly saddening and we have a lot of work to do in helping us learn about and accept the complex reasons for this.

From our house in the compound we can't see much outside – but we can hear the calls to prayer from the surrounding mosques several times a day. This is a good reminder each day of why we are called to work in Chad – not just to share our nursing experience, but to share the love and good news of Jesus. We hope we don't 'tune out' of the sound completely as many of our Muslim neighbours outside of the compound have yet to hear the gospel, so it feels important to be reminded of this on a regular basis, especially once the demands of our nursing work increase.

When we arrived in Chad we knew it was a fragile country. The last days have demonstrated the truth of this. But we are all too aware, that while we have been evacuated to safety and relative wealth in the UK, for the people of Chad the days ahead continue to hold much daily uncertainty as individuals and as a general population.

We are thankful your all your prayers and support, they really have meant so much and helped in the area of climate, language, travel etc.

Please give thanks that the UK BMS mission personnel have arrived safely back to the UK.

Please pray for BMS staff and leaders as they continue to assess the risk and make decisions about the return of mission personnel in the coming days and weeks.

Please pray for those international staff remaining at Guinebor II and for the continued smooth operations of the hospital while mission personnel are absent at such short notice.

Please pray for us to be able to use this time in the UK fruitfully.

Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers. It was devastating to have to leave Chad so soon after arriving. But we can be assured that “God works for the good of those who love him and who have been called according to his purpose”.

If you would like to support Brian and Jackie Chilvers by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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