

# Brian and Jackie Chilvers

October 2022

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Following our update last month, the rains continued heavily for a few more weeks. Now it has been mostly dry for about 4 weeks and the roads in and out of Guinebor have dried up well, now all the cars here can navigate the route, meaning that we have been able to get out and about a bit more. We have enjoyed seeing more 'green', lovely clusters of dragonflies and pretty water lilies. Sadly though, for many people who live in or around Ndjamaena and further afield in Chad the situation has not improved much. The rivers have risen and continue to rise to unprecedented levels. Several hospital staff have had their homes flooded and badly damaged, they describe waters of 4 feet high in their homes.

As we anticipated the malaria season has been tough – those of you we met on home assignment will have heard us talk about how children are so often just carried in the late stages of the severe disease. We think of a day in September when there were 3 children being intensively cared for in Urgences, very ill, having seizures and needing oxygen. Sadly, one child died in the department, and one after having been stabilised and transferred to the ward. This was one of the worst days, but there were many more and the emotional toll is high. The number of children with complications from severe malnutrition admitted to hospital has been high throughout August and September. One day they filled 9 beds out of 10 on the children's ward. A new member of staff has started with the malnutrition and vaccination team, it was a welcome pair of hands especially when our experienced colleague was on leave. Now we hope we can spend time teaching and training her with the skills that are needed.

As we said last time Brian has started working one-to-one with a nurse. He has been encouraged to see good existing skills and knowledge, and they have especially focussed on assessing and treating children (her request). In November there will be a change of nurse, but Brian hopes she can continue to use her skills with increased confidence.



Thank you to those who have been praying for the political situation here in Chad, and for those of you who have checked in on us recently. You may have seen news that there have been some demonstrations with loss of life in the capital and other larger towns in Chad, in relation to the extension period of the transitional government and opposition parties being disappointed with the delay in the elections which had been hoped for. A curfew was put in place, meaning travel to work was a little challenging for some of our staff who normally leave before daylight, the curfew hours have now been shortened which has eased things. Things have been quiet and safe here, we stayed on site for a few days but have since visited town and the areas we generally frequent have been peaceful with business as usual.

Recently in our outpatient department it has been encouraging that some fathers have been present for vaccinations and interested in our messages about exclusive breastfeeding to promote the wellbeing of the baby, saying that they want this for their baby. It is hard to know if they influence the daily regimes much as they often are not in the same concession as the mother who may be more influenced by traditional ideas of giving babies water, but great that these dads are listening, as educating men who often control the access to healthcare is important in cultures such as Chad.

At the same time, we see women who are clearly quite disempowered – one mum who has been visiting malnutrition clinic with her child for about 8 months was clearly distressed last week. She has refugee status in neighbouring Cameroon having fled the Central African Republic. Now she is married here she has no refugee rights. Her husband has 2 other wives who each have several children and share a concession – they also share one cooking pot. She tells us that she is constantly disrespected due to her refugee status and her husband supports her less than others. She had no money for medication when she herself was ill, so she left her telephone (which her sister had given to her) with someone as a security for money to be able to buy malaria medication. Without her phone she had no way of contacting the husband to ask for the money. The staff here were able to make some calls and help her retrieve her phone. I always notice how this lady lacks self-esteem, head down and making little eye contact. I am grateful that she always finds a listening ear here in the clinic with our Chadian worker.

Working in a country which is now 2nd from the bottom on the human development index is never going to be easy. We see need, and we often wish for more drugs to be available or access to more resources. But sometimes an encouragement comes along. Yesterday Jackie was praying at the bedsides on the women's ward (a Wednesday morning routine) with the wife of patients who appeared to be Muslim was talking in Arabic for longer than usual. This was later translated – she wanted us to know that the news about Guinebor 2 hospital has spread far and wide. People know they can come here for care, and they know that we pray with them. She said they also know in whose name we pray!

In 1 Thessalonians 1:8 Paul said that 'Your lives are echoing the Master's Word...all over the place. The news of your faith in God is out' (The Message version). It is our prayer that the word about the work here, and the fact it is done in the name of Jesus would indeed be widespread, and that many people would find salvation in him as a result.



Please give thanks with us that our work isn't in vain! Even when we feel discouraged and are struggling with the conditions we see, people's lives are being touched by the work and prayers of the hospital.

Please continue to pray for those who are impacted by the flooding which has devastated their homes and family life.

Please continue to pray for peace and democracy in Chad, and that this can be established without further suffering, and that Chad can begin to develop better health and education systems and reduce poverty.

Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers. We have watched the news of the last few months with interest and realise that life in the UK must be different and challenging, which means we appreciate even more the financial support, prayer efforts and the time you take to encourage us.

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

