



KRB Update #2190 – Arrival Pointe-Noire

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Greetings from the nation of the Republic of Congo – port of Pointe-Noire – Mercy Ships and my first time in this nation and this region of Africa. Our sail went well from the Canary Islands (about 3,600 miles/5,800 kilometers), though it was long time for this crew to be at sea. I did ok, no seasickness but often had headaches by the end of the day as my office is located in the bow (front of the ship and so it moves a lot – imagine your monitor and surroundings moving as we roll from side to side). There was much I was still working on with the team in country and for this field service. Besides a great Arrival Ceremony provided by the host government, a great highlight was having Don & Deyon Stephens on the dock for our arrival. This is the first time in Africa they have been able to see the *Africa Mercy* come into the harbor and dock.

The history of the Republic of the Congo has been marked by French colonization, a transition to independence, Marxist-Leninism, and a transition to a market-oriented economy in the 1990s. On 30 April 1891, the French named their Congolese territory “Colony of French Congo.” During Nazi occupation of France during WWII, Congo became the capital of Free France from 1940-1943. In 1944, France hosted the Conference of Brazzaville in which many French colonial policies were reformed. Brazzaville gained autonomy on 28 November 1958 and officially became the Republic of Congo. After many turbulent years bolstered by Marxist/Leninist ideas and the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the 1990s, the Republic of Congo transitioned to a multi-party democracy and a market oriented economy. In 1997, Congo’s march towards economic development and democracy was halted as Congo sank into a civil war. After the signing of a cease fire in October 1997 and a peace agreement in December 1999, His Excellency Sassou Nguesso was able to lead the country to a new chapter of its history. Democratic presidential elections were held in 2002 and 2009 in which Nguesso won a majority and was re-elected by the Congolese people. He is the president that Donovan, Pierre and I met with in early 2012 in the start of the process to being invited to come to his nation. Don & Deyon Stephens, Donovan and Pierre met with the president this week in Brazzaville and were warmly welcomed to Congo.



Mercy Ships founders, Don & Deyon Stephens on the dock as the Africa Mercy arrived in Pointe-Noire



Speech by the Minister of Health at the Arrival Ceremony – I am watching from the top of the gangway.

Please pray *Our upcoming surgical screening in Pointe-Noire for Wednesday 28 August – we expect to obtain 1,000 patients for the various surgical specialties – I have confirmed my similar role from the past as the one at the main gate to greet (in French & Kituba) and hand out tickets to the potential patients. We visited the venue site at a large school compound and I pictured myself at the gate and people coming in. I will share more in the next update on this initial surgical screening and others in the interior will follow later on. Please pray that those God has purposes for with us to come and those God doesn’t have purposes for with us that they would not come.

Serving Together, **Keith**

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Mercy Ships Mission Statement: Mercy Ships follows the 2000-year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world’s forgotten poor.