Important Information about your trip to Bongolo Hospital

Thank you for your interest in serving the Lord at Bongolo. No doubt you have many questions about the adventure you are about to experience. We will try to answer some of them right now.

PREPARING TO COME

The first step is to contact the Bongolo Visitor Coordinator (BVC), Amanda Fabiano at bongolo.visitor@gmail.com.

Once the visit is approved by Bongolo and a draft schedule agreed upon, Bongolo apply for a Letter of Invitation that must be included in your visa application. This letter costs about $40 per person and is part of your trip cost.

In order to apply for the Letter of Invitation, she will need:

1. Full name
2. Passport country & number
3. Home address
4. Date of Birth

APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA:

You need to have a valid passport with at least six months validity. Your travel agent may recommend a Visa Service or you can check out Travel Document Systems, 1-800-874-5100, email: or access them directly at their site: http://www.traveldocs.com/ga/.

If you plan to return to Gabon in the future (and we hope you will!), please write a separate letter requesting a 5-Year visa (instead of a 3 month Visa) and include this in your Visa application envelope. This does not ensure that you will receive a 5-year Visa, but it is often granted. There is a sample letter included in the Bongolo Visitor General Information you received.

VISA APPLICATION DETAILS (email Bongolo.visitor@gmail.com with questions):

Port of Entry:

Libreville

Purpose of Journey:

Business *(important and recently changed)*

Indicate precisely the names and addresses of merchants and industrialists…

N/A

Family connections in Gabon:

None

Indicate your exact addresses in Gabon during your stay there:

Hopital de Bongolo B.P. 49, Lebamba, Gabon

Full name of contact person in Gabon:

Serge BATOUBOKO, Directeur of Administration and Finance

Address of contact person:

Bongolo Hospital, BP 49Lebamba, Gabon

Telephone number of contact person:

+241.01704878 and +241.0236.7465

What company or institution contact person represents:

Bongolo Hospital

Do you intend establishing a business of industry in Gabon?

No

Where do you intend proceeding to when leaving Gabon?

United States (via Paris, France)

Do you undertake during your stay in Gabon not to accept any employment:

Yes

MEDICAL INSURANCE

Few standard medical insurance plans offer coverage for medically supervised emergency evacuations, emergency reunions, or repatriation to the country of citizenship. We strongly encourage anyone traveling to Gabon to purchase supplemental travel medical insurance before coming. A visitor several years ago paid $25,000 for a medical evacuation. International Medical Group (IMG) provides reasonable coverage, i.e. $96 for $50,000 coverage for one month for someone 50-59 years old (if you are younger, it costs less).

For more information, contact IMG at 1.800.628.4664, Fax: 1.317.655.4505 or Email: insurance@imglobal.com. See full brochure and rates for the Patriot International Plan at <http://www.imglobal.com/coverage/patriot>

VACCINATIONS

Yellow Fever vaccine is required for anyone traveling to Gabon. In addition, we suggest that you discuss with your doctor the following recommended vaccinations as soon as you can.

* Hepatitis A & B
* Typhoid- the oral vaccine (VIVOTIF) is preferable over the injectable vaccine
* Tetanus booster if your last one was more than 10 years ago
* Pneumococcal vaccine (unlike West Africa, most of our meningitis here in Gabon is pneumococcal instead of meningococcal)

**MALARIA PROPHYLAXIS**

The most serious medical risk you will face in Gabon is malaria. It is essential that you take preventative measures including the faithful use of malaria prophylaxis. We cannot overemphasize the importance of diligently taking your malarial prophylaxis while in Gabon, and for 4 weeks after your return (1 week for Malarone).

Malarone is also an effective alternative for malaria in this part of the world, but is very expensive.

* The CDC recommends mefloquine, otherwise known as Lariam once a week. If you have a prior history of depression or other mental illness, you should not take Lariam. Take your first dose two weeks before you leave.
* The best alternative to Lariam is doxycycline once daily. However, children under 8, pregnant women, and nursing mothers should not take doxycycline. Start 2 days prior to departure.
* Malarone is also an effective alternative for malaria in this part of the world, but is very expensive.

You may find health and travel information for Gabon at the CDC website at [http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationGabon.aspx](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationgabon.aspx)

HIV NEEDLE-STICK PROPHYLASIX (those doing surgery or medical procedures)

Currently the prevalence of HIV in Gabon is around 10%. For medical visitors who will be doing surgery or procedures using needles such as starting IV's, lumbar punctures, etc, please consider bringing medications for HIV prevention in case of accidental exposure. The 2013 recommendation is a combination of Raltegravir and Truvada for 30 days. You can find these recommendations at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/672271>. Raltegravir is not available in Gabon, and both are very expensive. Medical schools sometimes provide them for medical students doing international rotations if they ask, and they may be available through some hospital pharmacies. If you are able to obtain these medicines or can make a tax-deductible donation, we would appreciate it, when you haven’t needed them, to leave them behind for us at Bongolo.

TICKET PLANNING & PURCHASING

To ensure that we have housing and transportation for your visit, all itineraries and flight reservations must be approved by the Bongolo Visitor Coordinator before final booking. Air France & Ethopian airlines are common international carriers. Bongolo reserves the right to refuse certain airlines that arrive at unusual hours of the night if there is a concern for the safety of those that meet you.

VISITOR COST OF TRAVEL & LIVING EXPENSES

The per diem rate for housing and food during your time in Gabon is $50 US per day in Libreville and $26 US per day in Bongolo If a visit of more than 4 weeks is planned, please email eric\_hofman@gmail.com for a possible adjustment to this rate.

The standard in-country transportation cost is $300 per person per direction when there is adequate participation to cover the airplane. Otherwise costs depends the number of people traveling and the means.

This will be estimated and communicated by the Bongolo finance manager (Eric Hofman).

Visitors are requested to send in advance the funds to cover your Bongolo visit once you have received the estimate from Eric. This may be cIt may be expenses to the C&MA national office in Colorado Springs.

* Send a check with the following memo: “#1-47200-43-40-99005” explanatory note to The Christian and Missionary Alliance /Finance Department, P.O. Box 35000, Colorado Springs, CO, 80935-3500. Please also include in a note with your name and the dates of your trip.  Funds sent to the National Office will be sent out to our field in your name and held for your visit..
* If teams wish to use that account, they should send the funds to NO indicating that this if for account 1-47200-43-40-99005 (this is Gabon's number for teams) with a clear description of the team name (Church) , the field they are going to and dates of the trip.

Personal spending money should be brought directly to the field in US dollars printed in 2006 or newer. Please do not bring traveler’s checks. It is best to bring cash which can be changed in Bongolo or may be changed by the Libreville Guest House managers.

CLIMATE

Except for the months of June through September (which we call the “Dry Season”), the weather is hot and very humid. Temperatures range between 80-90 degrees Fahrenheit, and the humidity hovers around 85%. From the end of September to mid-June, it rains almost every day, you can expect to feel sticky or sweaty all the time.

DRESS

For cultural reasons, we are asking that you dress conservatively. Cotton or cotton-polyester clothing is the most comfortable. For casual wear on the station, sleeveless tops and capris or long shorts are fine. Ladies should wear a dress or skirt (knee-length or longer) or scrubs for all off-station activities which include working at the hospital and going into town. Bring at least one nice outfit for church. Men, a short-sleeved dress shirt is fine. If you have the space, bring extra underwear and tops, since you may want to change clothes several times a day. We sometimes take a day to go to the beach or pool, so bring your bathing suit, a modest two-piece bathing suit is OK. Open toed shoes are also fine for you to wear.

For those coming as part of a work team (i.e. prepared to do manual labor), knee-length shorts are acceptable, but you may prefer long loose fitting pants or jeans. If you have questions about appropriate dress, please contact the visitor coordinator for more specific details!

ADDITIONAL INFO FOR MEDICAL VISITORS:

For medical teams, scrubs can be worn at the hospital. Please bring your own stethoscope.

For surgeons, please bring shoes for the operating room and lab coat.

LUGGAGE SUGGESTIONS

Carry in your handbag what you cannot afford to lose (your medicines, cameras, laptop, a couple changes of clothes, and toiletries). Cardboard boxes hold a special fascination for the customs agents, so stick with suitcases or suitcase sized trunks. Wal-Mart and K-Mart sell plastic trunks that are ideal. Check with the airline on size restrictions. If you are planning to have excess luggage, call the airline ahead of time or you may not be allowed to bring it. Before traveling, always check <http://www.tsa.gov/> for the latest requirements.

If you are bringing one or several suitcases of costly supplies, computer equipment, or medical equipment that was donated or purchased with gifts, prepare a “Gift Certificate” following the sample included at the end of this document. A gift certificate is an official statement of the value, purpose, and destination of a gift, and should be written on official stationary and signed by the donor or contributor.

Please note that if you are bringing out supplies for the hospital that require excess baggage fees, please let the hospital know so that they can cover extra luggage charges.

You may be asked to bring a computer or equipment that a missionary asked you to purchase or that was repaired in the States and is ready to come back (a frequent occurrence). You can still make the statement that it was donated if the missionary purchased the computer with money given to him for his ministry (almost always the case). Equipment for a missionary whose work in any way relates to the hospital can honestly be said to help the hospital, and should be listed in the same way as equipment, tools, or supplies going directly to the hospital.

OTHER SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BRING

Sun screen, a good flashlight with extra batteries, an alarm clock, an umbrella, unlocked GSM tri-band phone, and a few good books to read (and leave!).

Contact lenses are OK to wear. Contact lens cleaning solutions are NOT available in the country, so bring what you will need.

Gift ideas for your hosts that are not available in the country that would make us smile: Oreos, Starbucks coffee, tortilla chips, chocolates, current magazines, pre-cooked bacon, marshmallows, popular novels, music CDs, and any recent DVDs. Audio or video sermons in English and bible study materials that you have particularly enjoyed might also be appreciated.

Housing: Our guest homes are furnished with a fridge, microwave, stove, coffee pot, washing machine, and a water filter. Transformers are available for electronic items that you may bring. TV and a DVD player are available and wireless Internet in all of our guest houses. AC in Libreville only.

FLIGHT TO GABON AND LIBREVILLE ARRIVAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are delayed enroute, please try to text (SMS or WhatsApp) someone to let us know at one of the numbers below.

NOTE: Do not take any photographs at airports or any official buildings. It is best to ask permission from the local people if you wish to take their picture.

The LBV airport is relatively small and straight-forward with good security inside the airport. Follow the normal flow of traffic and observe the signs - many are in English. If you are traveling with an “Authorization d’Entrée”, follow the special instructions that were sent to you.

After immigration, you will be asked to show your yellow, international health card, and then go to baggage claim. The 2 caroussels are not connected. You must check both of them!

Once you have your bags, proceed to the exit with you passport and baggage claim stickers in hand. At customs, give the customs official your passport, baggage claims and tell them you are with Bongolo hospital. They may still search your bags but often are waved through. If they ask about any items, indicate it is for Bongolo.

Upon exiting the sliding glass doors, look for the smiling person holding the Bongolo Hospital sign (a medical cross with “l’Hopital de Bongolo written). You’ll be driven to the Libreville guest house from there.

ARRIVAL CONTINGENCIES

If you don’t see anyone to greet you, walk to the right past the escalators to the newsstand and coffee shop. If someone asks you (or just tries to help you with your bag), politely say “no thank you” or “no merci”. Take a seat there and wait. Your driver may have got caught in traffic or had a flat tire. Enjoy a coffee or a coke and we’ll pay when we arrive to pick you up.

If more than 30 minutes passes, ask someone if you can use their cell phone. Don’t worry; you WILL find a kind person who will do this. Call the following numbers in this order. If you are using your own phone, add +241 for the country code:

0787.3333 SMS Pastor Sangoye (LBV Business agent)

0248.4342 SMS & WhatsApp Robert Peterson (AMB pilot)

0767.5460 SMS & WhatsApp Amanda Fabiano (Bongolo Visitor coordinator)

0668.7347 SMS Ando - LBV guest house hostess).

In case of a personal emergency and there is not contact with Bongolo staff:

0145.7100 & 0738.0171 American Embassy in Gabon:

TRAVELING FROM LIBREVILLE TO BONGOLO

The in-country transportation coordinator, Robert Peterson, works with the Bongolo Visitor Coordinator to arrange your transportation from Libreville to Bongolo. The primary option is by the Bongolo mission aircraft, a Cessna 207. There is also the possibility to be driver by car. His email address is ambgabon@gmail.com and will update you if there are concerns or questions about your travel plans.

GIFT CERTIFICATE

To whom it may concern,

This is to certify that the following items being brought into Gabon by <<name>> have been donated by the members of <<name of your church>> of the Christian & Missionary Alliance to help (project name, the Bongolo Hospital, Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, Pastor).

They are not for resale or for commercial use, and are given solely for humanitarian or religious purposes.

(please list each item separately)

(item a) (value in U.S. $)

(item b) (value)

(item c) (value)

 Total value: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Pastor’s name typed)

(signature and date)

(official stamp, if available)