

Dr. Thomas Krueger

Doctors Without Borders surgeon: Liberia, Darfur (Sudan), Nigeria, and Sri Lanka

In 2005, Dr. Thomas Krueger closed his private practice of 20 years in Springfield, Tennessee, to go on humanitarian assignments with the international medical organization Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). “I was ready for a change,” says Dr. Krueger. “I joined MSF’s surgical pool and over two years, I went to Liberia, Nigeria, Sudan (Darfur), and Sri Lanka.”



Each of Dr. Krueger’s assignments involved emergency surgical care and training of local doctors. “In Liberia at the Mamba Point Hospital our surgical team treated mostly complicated cases,” he says. “Most of the patients came in at a very late stage, so all the procedures were of a much higher level of difficulty. In the two months I was there, I performed the same number of surgeries as I would have working for six months in the U.S.”

When Dr. Krueger arrived in Teme, Nigeria, the hospital had 35 beds. After an assessment of medical needs, his team set up a much needed trauma department, which doubled the number of beds. Dr. Krueger hired young doctors and conducted surgical trainings to expand their skills. In February 2006, due to local riots, the hospital had to triage and treat a dozen severely injured victims of violence. “The majority of our cases were orthopedic with some very challenging and complicated injuries,” recalled Dr. Krueger.

In Darfur, Sudan, in the town of Zalingei, 120,000 displaced people were living in camp situations. Dr. Krueger was Chief of Surgery at the hospital. “We repaired a lot of vesicovaginal fistulas as it was the only referral center in the region,” he says. “The plight of Darfurians was quite heartbreaking.”

In the Spring of 2007, Dr. Krueger was sent to Sri Lanka, where a long civil-war re-ignited. “The people had to live with nightly artillery barrages and active night-time rebel movements,” says Dr. Krueger. “We cared for the war injured, including some military personnel, and treated a lot of injuries from land mines. What exacerbated the misery was the fact that the population was still suffering from the devastating effects of the tsunami.”

After returning to the U.S., Dr. Krueger opened a new surgical practice, which is affiliated with the Southern Hills Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to his medical degree, he earned a masters degree in theology.