

# One Voice

Your weekly  
prayer resource

tearfund

## How to pray for Ethiopia at *Enkutatash*

Ethiopians are getting ready to mark *Enkutatash* – the Ethiopian New Year – which happens this Saturday (11 September). It's usually a day of celebration – a church service followed by a family meal after the rainy season. But, with the country embroiled in increasing conflict and a hunger crisis, there could be more to lament this year. Ephraim Tsegay, who leads Tearfund's work in Ethiopia, shares how we can join in prayer for Ethiopians at this important time.

### A nation in crisis

The conflict between armed groups and military forces in the Tigray region has been relentless for ten months. It has pushed hundreds of thousands of people into extreme hunger. And, sadly, it shows no signs of stopping.

'The humanitarian crisis is getting worse as the fighting persists – it has been extremely difficult to reach the most vulnerable people in the conflict zones, as most communication lines have been cut. Many have been forced out of their homes and had to leave everything behind,' shares Ephraim.

'The number of internally displaced people keeps increasing in neighbouring regions – and many don't have access to basic needs, such as food, medical care and shelter.'

### Great need

Tearfund, alongside our local partner, is working in Afar in the north of Ethiopia, to support those who have been affected by the conflict. We are distributing food to 24,000 people at risk, and also giving cash grants, so that families can purchase the basic items that they urgently need.

But as the economic situation in Ethiopia worsens, the government has set restrictions on the amount of money that can be withdrawn from all banks. This limits Tearfund's and other humanitarian agencies' ability to carry out its daily operations to help those in urgent need.

Division and ethnic tensions are increasing and tearing the country apart. As attacks increase across the country, people are limiting their movements to avoid being caught up in the strife. It has led to a climate of fear.

As the conflict worsens, please consider coming together as a household, or gathering with your small group or friends over a meal and praying for Ethiopia to mark *Enkutatash*.

## Pray with us

- Pray for an end to the conflict: for peace, unity and reconciliation for all Ethiopians – that they will begin the new year with renewed hope of a better tomorrow.
- Pray for God's comfort and provision for people who have lost their loved ones, their homes and their treasured possessions.
- Pray for the nation of Ethiopia – especially that the economic situation will be resolved and the hunger crisis alleviated.

## A note from...

'Our country is facing a multitude of crises, but we want to keep our eyes on God. The Bible has much to say on peacemakers – on healing divisions and bringing people together. This *Enkutatash* is an opportunity for us to come together again in a spirit of hope and pray for a peaceful future for Ethiopia.'

**Ephraim Tsegey, Country Director for Ethiopia**

## Pray for the world



There is a long-running conflict in Miango, central Nigeria, between indigenous farmers and herders (who move their cattle for grazing). It has led to cycles of violence – including revenge attacks. People have lost their lives and homes. Pray for forgiveness and reconciliation between these different groups so peace can prevail. Pray for people's safety – including our local partners who are trying to reach people in need.



Thank you for praying for the provision of oxygen supplies in Nepal a few months ago. The situation was desperate; Nepal is landlocked and relies on India for trade and supplies, but India was facing a similar surge of coronavirus cases and didn't have any surplus oxygen. We are delighted to share that our local partner was able to source oxygen concentrators, which helped many people in Nepal recover from coronavirus. Praise God.



In Myanmar, the National Unity Government – made up of previously elected officials – have called for people in the country to attack the military, who have been in charge since the coup in February. There is a fear this will lead to even more violence. Pray for an immediate decrease of tensions, for the safety of the people of Myanmar and for a peaceful return to democratic rule.

# Reconciliation in a conflict zone: healing and hope for young people in Syria

**A whole generation of children in Syria have grown up surrounded by violence and loss, missing out on an education and safe spaces to play and connect with others. But Tearfund and our local partners in Syria are working to turn that around. Here is a crucial update about our work in Syria and how you can pray.**

Syria has been ravaged by conflict for more than a decade. While millions of people have fled to safety in surrounding countries, such as Lebanon, even more people have remained in Syria in desperate circumstances.

One of the ways that Tearfund and our local partners are supporting people in Syria is by helping young people to heal from their trauma and reconnect with the family members that they have become separated from.

## Homeless and alone

Esam\* is one of the many teenagers in Syria who lost contact with his family and became homeless when fleeing violence. He was a young child when the conflict began. Esam's older sister took on the role of parent after their father died and their mother went missing. But when Esam got separated from his sister, he was unable to find his way back to her.

Esam ended up in a juvenile detention centre for the suspected offence of being homeless. These centres usually do not provide practical necessities, such as clothes and hygiene supplies, and they expect family members to provide this support. However, many young people like Esam either have no living family members or have lost contact with them.

Tearfund's local partner is providing food and essentials, as well as emotional support to young people like Esam in the detention centres. They are also offering opportunities for education and vocational skills training, running sports and recreational activities, and helping young people track down their family members.

And it's making a huge difference to hundreds of young people's lives.

## Together again

After a difficult search, our local partners were able to locate and contact Esam's sister. When Esam found out that his sister was coming to see him, he began crying with relief.

'I used to feel so sad when seeing others talking on the phone with their parents, when I was unable to reach my sister... I was worried that no one would find me,' he says.

'I cannot thank you enough for reuniting me with my sister. I will never go to places I don't know again. I will also keep your number with me in case I get lost again or anything happens to me!'

## Healing from trauma

Many young people have turned to drugs to escape the trauma of living among conflict, or have committed crimes so they can survive on the streets. One of our local partners is helping young girls who have been caught up in dangerous situations or who have been convicted of crimes.

Enas\* was traumatised by the things she had witnessed and experienced – full of fear and addicted to drugs. But our local partners have been supporting her on her journey of emotional healing.

Enas began regular counselling sessions with a psychologist who helped her to find positive coping mechanisms to deal with her stress and trauma.

Our local partner was able to get in touch with Enas's parents and let them know where she was and that she was safe. Her parents are thankful for the support she is getting and ready to welcome her home when she is ready.

## Road to recovery

Enas has also discovered a love and talent for embroidery, which helped her healing process. For the first time in a long time, she now has hope for the future.

Recently, beautiful pieces of her embroidery work were displayed at an exhibition called 'Peace Melody'.

'I am very happy about the things I am learning here,' says Enas. 'Once I return back home, my family will be proud of me. I know I did something wrong, but I was able to acknowledge my mistakes and do the right thing, and for that, I am grateful.'

## A future hope

As the conflict in Syria continues, Tearfund and our local partners are committed to supporting young people like Esam and Enas for the long-term.

'So many young people in Syria have been deprived of a safe and carefree childhood. They are dealing with unimaginable stresses and trauma,' shares Anita Malley, who leads Tearfund's work in Syria.

'It is our privilege to come alongside them and support them as they heal from those hurts and gain hope for the future.

'Please pray for the young people and children in Syria and pray that we will be able to help reach even more young people in need.'

## Pray with us

- Lift up young people and children in Syria. Pray for their emotional healing and that they will receive the support they need. Ask God to give them hope and opportunities for the future.
- Ask God for strength, energy and wisdom for our staff and local partners, who are often working in stressful situations.
- Pray for an end to the conflict and for peace in Syria.

\*Names changed to protect identities

## The pastor who went the extra mile

**When the coronavirus pandemic hit Brazil, hospitals quickly became overwhelmed and public resources became stretched beyond their limits. But Pastor Hugo, who has been working with rural communities in Brazil for decades, teamed up with Tearfund's local partner organisation to ensure that even people in the most remote locations received essential supplies.**

Some of the poorest and most isolated communities in Brazil, many of which are living by or in the Amazon rainforest, have limited access to healthcare at the best of times. During the coronavirus pandemic, they have become increasingly vulnerable due to lack of access to resources and public health information.

Pastor Hugo knows the everyday challenges of living in these remote areas well. He grew up by the Amazon rainforest and relied on growing his own food to survive. And he has dedicated his life to helping others in similar situations.

'I didn't have a shirt and I walked barefoot because I couldn't afford sandals – I came from a poor family. But I said, "I'll help. Whether I have it or not, I'll help." And I started helping people,' says Pastor Hugo.

'The Bible tells us that we must love our neighbours as ourselves.'

And when Tearfund's local partner launched an emergency coronavirus response in Brazil, Pastor Hugo was quick to help their efforts to reach the most remote communities.

### A joint effort

Pastor Hugo, along with our local partner, distributed food, medicines and hygiene kits to thousands of people across the region. Many had lost their jobs and income due to the pandemic. Some were forced to resort to boiling tree bark to eat. These food and supply packages were a lifeline at a time when there was nowhere else to turn.

Without internet access, many people had limited information about coronavirus and they were unsure of the symptoms or how to keep themselves safe.

‘There was a lack of information being circulated in the region about the causes and effects of the virus – it was one of the first regions where the medical institutions collapsed,’ shares Pastor Hugo.

In response, Pastor Hugo helped to share educational videos created by our local partner about which symptoms to look out for, and how to slow the spread of the virus.

### **Not alone**

Pastor Hugo’s ongoing relationship with many of the most hard-to-reach communities ensured that support could quickly get to those who needed it most. As coronavirus cases continued to rise and the effects of the pandemic got worse, these communities knew that they were not forgotten.

But despite this vital support, rural communities still remain at risk as the pandemic continues.

If someone gets sick, it is very difficult for them to get the healthcare they need. And because of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, people have been pushed even deeper into poverty.

Please join us in praying for these communities as they live with these daily challenges.

### **Pray with us**

Dear God,

We thank you for Pastor Hugo and his willingness to help people in the hardest-to-reach places in Brazil. Please strengthen him as he continues this vital work. And we ask for your protection over these communities, which have very limited access to healthcare and resources. We pray that they will continue to get the support they need and that they will have new opportunities to provide for themselves and their families.

In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

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100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE

T 020 3906 3906 E [info@tearfund.org](mailto:info@tearfund.org)

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