

# One Voice

Your weekly  
prayer resource

tearfund

## Haiti earthquake: trials and testimonies

It has now been more than a month since the devastating earthquake that shook southern Haiti. Thousands of people lost their lives and many more lost their homes. Yet there are stories of faith shining through these challenging times.

### Praying through the storm

George is 43. He jumped out of the window of his house when the earthquake hit. 'If I had stayed in the corridor, I wouldn't have survived. God did it. He made me move outside... I know God picked me up.'

Setilus, a father of four, was at the supermarket when the earthquake struck: '[Everyone] kneeled and we began to praise the Lord, to call on Jesus, and it is at that moment that the earthquake became calm,' he shares.

### Further tremors

'Families are still sleeping outside – it's still the rainy season, the hurricane season,' shares Marc Antoine, who leads our work in Haiti.

'Tearfund is working with local churches to help with shelter. We have also been distributing cash grants so that people can buy what they need. We are still working on reaching families in the most affected and the most rural areas – trying to get them support both in the short and the long-term.'

### The church continues its worship

Major Thimothee Saint-Juste is a church leader whose house and church were both reduced to rubble. Tearfund has been working with Thimothee to provide for the community's most urgent needs.

'We say thank you to Tearfund for this great effort and this quick response. We are really happy to receive this support, so we can help people,' he shares.

'Today, we had a great worship service with the people in the community to thank God.'

As Thimothee's church continues to praise God – even in the midst of despair – please consider listening to worship music and praising God as you lift up your prayers for Haiti.

## Pray with us

- Pray for people who are experiencing trauma and stress in the aftermath. Pray for peace, comfort and renewed strength and hope.
- Thank God for how he continues to work through the church in Haiti. Pray for even more answers to prayer – of people being reached with provision, especially in rural, hard to reach areas.
- Pray for long-term solutions to help people get back on their feet and reach their God-given potential.

## A note from...

'The situation in Haiti continues to be very volatile. There was another small 4.2 earthquake in the southern region, which didn't cause damage, but it caused a lot of psychological and emotional damage as families relived the shaking and the trauma. The need remains great in Haiti. It will take time to rebuild what has been lost, but God is faithful.'

**Marc Antoine, Country Director for Haiti**

## Pray for the world



Keep praying for peace in Yemen. Tensions have escalated this week and there is a fear of retaliation. Pray for peace talks to resume between all parties involved in the conflict and for an immediate ceasefire. And lift up the people caught up in the conflict and our local partners and pray for their protection and provision.



Tearfund is about to host a church and community training session in Chad's capital city, N'Djamena. Church leaders will be equipped in how they can bring their communities together to overcome poverty. Thank God for this opportunity. Pray that the church leaders attending will be strengthened, inspired and encouraged. Ask God to bless them as they take the teaching back to their communities.



In Rwanda, the rainy season is about to begin. The amount of rain can significantly affect the harvest. Pray for protection against flooding, as well as the right amount of rain for abundant harvests, so that people can feed their families and earn an income. And lift up farmers and ask God for fair wages and working conditions.

# Freedom in forgiveness: lessons from Burundi

*Desire Majambere, Tearfund's Country Director for Burundi, shares his hope for the future of the country.*

**I grew up in Burundi, where there are many challenges related to security. Since Burundi gained its independence in 1962, political instability, including assassinations and coups, has led to repeated violence between the Tutsi and Hutu populations, with devastating consequences. But, because of my faith in God, the work of the local church, and the resilience of Burundians, I still have hope that things will change.**

Burundi is a beautiful country with many hills, lakes and rivers. In Burundi, there are many things that we love and also we have a friendly people.

But the country's history of violence is challenging for us.

In 2019, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Burundi began exhuming mass graves dating as far back as the 1970s. With no proper counselling or psychological care, this has meant renewed trauma for people and the reopening of old wounds and divisions.

## There is always hope

Our work in southwest Burundi, in Matana, has given us incredible hope and encouragement. It reminds us of God's word – that he can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Though we face huge challenges, we know the grace and love of Jesus has no less power here to heal and save.

At the heart of all this is the love and hard work of the church, local Christian organisations and individual champions. They have brought the local knowledge and relationships needed for the depth and longevity of this work. It is essential for us to work with them and help train them in order to bring the unity and resilience that is so needed.

With God, there is always hope – even in the midst of recurring crises, we know God himself can bring us healing and a future peace.

## The good news

The good news is that the church has power and potential in this country. People listen to church leaders, and this is our strength.

'Change is possible,' Bishop Seth Ndayirukiye from the Matana Anglican church of Burundi shares with me. 'Where we have started, you can see we have made an impact, but there are other places we need to go and reach, where people are still suffering.'

'I wish to see a transformed community, without fighting, without hatred, without poverty, without malnutrition.'

### **‘Forgiveness is a gate to peace’**

The stories of hope out of suffering and strength and healing from brokenness, make us eager to extend this work as much as we can alongside our brothers and sisters in Burundi.

Marie, from Matana, was jailed without trial or committing any crime. Three weeks after she was released, Tearfund’s local church partner reached out to help. Her story reminds me of the power of forgiveness.

‘I learnt to forgive,’ says Marie. ‘Even when I meet my jailer, I greet him first. This is thanks to the training I received, which has enabled me to do so.’

‘Forgiveness is a gate to peace... From the teachings, I feel inspired to teach others about forgiveness. Even Jesus, when he was on the cross, said “Forgive them because they don’t know what they do.” We can’t do exactly what Jesus did, but we are called to do what we can.’

### **The strength of the Spirit**

‘Now, we live peacefully, thanks to these teachings. Now, we forgive each other and collect water from the same fountain.’

‘If you don’t pray, where can you get a forgiving heart from? You go to church, you pray for yourself and you ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen you. If I’m only trained without the Holy Spirit, I can’t be enabled to forgive.’

‘In the future, I hope people can forgive the way we did. If we stick to the past, Burundi will be headed to nowhere.’

God is calling us to press on in Burundi. Please join us in prayer.

### **Pray with us**

Dear God,

Thank you for your faithfulness in Burundi. It is encouraging to see your power and love at work. We ask that you continue to strengthen the local church in Burundi – to give them the resources and wisdom to press forward with your plans for the country.

Lord, we ask for a future filled with peace for Burundi. Where there is division and hurt, we pray for a spirit of forgiveness to take hold.

In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

# Making the church a safe space for refugee women

*Warning: contains mentions of sexual and gender-based violence that some readers may find upsetting.*

**Refugee women face many challenges as they settle into a new community. Many live in fear of violence, and some are still processing the trauma of attacks and assaults they have experienced on their journey. But churches across Colombia are now offering these women the acceptance and support they need to heal from the past and build a new life.**

Colombia is home to more than 2 million Venezuelan refugees. They have fled the ongoing economic and political crisis in their home country and now face the challenges of adapting to and integrating into a foreign culture. But instead of finding support, they often find themselves isolated and discriminated against.

‘When I arrived in Colombia, I felt very strange. Everything was different for me. The way of speaking, dealing with people, especially the aggression of men towards women,’ remembers Julie, a Venezuelan refugee who has now settled in the Colombian city of San Juan de Urabá. ‘I was scared because some men tried to grab me with force, so it was all very difficult for me. I was even scared to go out on the street.’

## Finding peace

Churches across Colombia have been reaching out to Venezuelan refugees like Julie, letting them know that they are not alone. Tearfund and our local partner have been equipping Colombian churches as they do this, encouraging them to make their churches a safe space for migrant women and helping them to set up Trauma Healing groups.

Julie is one of the hundreds of women who have been supported by one of these groups. It was at her local church’s Trauma Healing group that she finally found acceptance, community, and healing.

‘It is the first support that I found here in Colombia for migrants like us,’ says Julie. ‘When I arrived at the church I found the peace that I previously did not have... when I got to the church I saw that it was like my family. I arrive and they hug me, I leave and they hug me. It really has made me think about changing my life.’

## Healing in the community

At the groups, the women have a safe space to share and process their experiences. They also make new friendships and gain a support network to help them overcome whatever challenges they may be facing.

‘The church gives us emotional support, moral support, psychological support... They lift us up and help us to solve any problem that we have through the word of God,’ says Judith, another

Venezuelan refugee. 'Through this healing process I have learned something very fundamental: to have faith in God and to have hope in what I can do.'

### Equipping churches

Tearfund has already trained more than 100 church leaders to become Trauma Healing facilitators in 30 churches across Colombia. These groups are now supporting hundreds of Venezuelan migrant women.

'It has allowed me to see that the church is not only about preaching the gospel but also to address the social issues people face,' Pastor José Licona, from San Juan de Urabá, says. 'The unconditional support we have had [from Tearfund] has allowed us today to look at the world from another perspective, it allows us to better organise ourselves to serve the people who really need it.'

These Trauma Healing groups are part of the wider work we are doing to support local churches across Colombia as they reach out to Venezuelan refugees. Please join us in praying for Venezuelan refugees, and that the Colombian church will continue to lead the way in welcoming them into their communities.

### Pray with us

- Lift up all Venezuelan refugees who are looking for a new place to call home in Colombia. Pray that they will find the support and resources that they need.
- Pray that Colombian communities will welcome Venezuelan refugees. Ask that even more churches will provide practical, emotional and spiritual support to refugees.
- Pray for the Trauma Healing group facilitators and church leaders, that they will have sensitivity and wisdom as they reach out to vulnerable women and help them heal.

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Registered Charity No. 265464 (England & Wales) Registered Charity No. SC037624 (Scotland)

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