

ONE VOICE

TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR AN **END TO POVERTY**

BREAKING POINT IN NIGERIA

Nigerian authorities are trying to restore calm in the northern state of Kaduna after fighting between communities. It's reported 55 people have been killed in recent weeks in the Kasuwan Magani area.

So far in 2018, hundreds of people have been killed in outbreaks of communal violence across Nigeria. It means security is now a key campaign issue ahead of the February 2019 general election.

The unrest is one of the main causes of a developing humanitarian crisis in Nigeria that has forced many people from their homes. Around 1.7 million people live in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs). An estimated 7.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. And, in seven years of conflict, more than 20,000 people have been killed in Boko Haram-related incidents.

Building peace

Several Tearfund partners are working to bring peace in Nigeria. These include SUWA, CRCN, ECWA-POD, and CCDP. Their peacebuilding initiatives help Christians, Muslims and traditional worshippers to work together and live peacefully.

With around 190 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation. It's split almost equally between Christians and Muslims, with around 250 different ethnic groups living side-by-side, in the most part peacefully.

Paul Mershak, Tearfund's Country Representative for Nigeria, says: 'If we are to tackle the violence then peacebuilding focusing on interfaith community dialogue is vital.'

Please continue to pray for this nation and its people:

- Pray for God to comfort those who have lost loved ones and homes in the violence. May there be peace in Nigeria. Without peace it's harder to tackle the growing humanitarian crisis.
- Ask God to encourage and equip Tearfund's staff and partners as they provide urgent aid and implement longer-term peace-building work.

- Thank God for those communities who have already learned to put their differences aside and live in peace side-by-side. May their example shine through.

A NOTE FROM...

'It is a challenging time for us here in Nigeria. The conflict and disunity is resulting in worsening poverty. Our church partners are doing all they can to restore relationships and improve lives, but we really need your prayers.'

Benjamin Chikan, Programmes Team, Nigeria

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: SYRIA

To mark 50 years of Tearfund, we're sharing about 50 countries where we've worked, celebrating God's provision and power to transform, and praying for each of these nations. This week we're in Syria.

Conflict broke out in Syria in 2011 leading to one of the most complex and tragic humanitarian situations in the world.

The nation sits on top of the list of countries whose people have been forced to flee as refugees. Taking shelter in places such as Lebanon and Jordan, 6.3 million people have fled from their homes.

According to The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights – a UK-based monitoring group – there have been 364,371 people killed up to August 2018, including 110,613 civilians. These figures don't include 56,900 people who they said were missing and presumed dead and an estimated 100,000 deaths that had not been documented.

Tearfund has been working with Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. The majority of them have settled in local communities. We work with local organisations, building their capacity to deliver effective and efficient responses to those in need.

Our partners are also supporting the Jordanian communities that have been hosting refugees.

A mother's struggle

Fatima and her family wanted to stay in Syria, but when the bombings intensified her mind was made up, 'In the beginning we didn't move, but finally we decided to flee to Jordan because a bomb hit our house.'

For the last two years Fatima has found refuge in a town with her husband, and teenage son and daughter. At first she found it difficult to feel like a good parent to them, particularly after what they'd all been through.

She heard from a neighbour that a Tearfund partner was giving psychological support for Syrian refugee women in Jordan and decided to go along to a session.

'I thought I did everything right and I dealt with my kids in a strong way.' But after the first session I discovered I was totally wrong. I was encouraged by others and I thought there was something in myself that needed to change. The main problem was my 17-year-old son, I couldn't deal with him.'

Viewed differently

Fatima says that after completing the sessions her perspective changed.

'When my daughter came from school I hugged her. She said, "Mum! What is the problem? Are you sick? What is wrong?" She was so unaccustomed to me showing affection. It's because we are under pressure from the war and lots of things have happened to us.'

'Now things are different,' continued Fatima. 'We have won our children back. Because of the sessions we have been equipped to cope. Now we want you to teach our husbands!'

Please pray:

- Millions of Syrians have been forced to flee their homes. Thank God that he knows each of them by name and ask him to bring comfort and healing to them today.
- Pray for the conflict in Syria to finally come to an end and that people would be able to return home.
- Thank God for our partners in Lebanon and Jordan who are providing support to people such as Fatima and her family.

If you've missed any other articles in this series you can find them at [**www.tearfund.org/pray**](http://www.tearfund.org/pray)

GEORGE'S LEGACY OF LOVE

What would one of Tearfund's founders think of our work, 50 years on from its humble beginnings? We ask his daughter.

As we've marked Tearfund's 50th anniversary, one name has come up again and again: George Hoffman. George was a Church of England curate, who became the main founder of the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund in 1968 – soon changed to Tearfund.

Tragically, George died in a road accident in 1992. What would he have made of the Tearfund of today? His daughter Claire has followed in her father's footsteps, working in a number of development charities around the world. She reflects on the charity that her father set in motion half a century ago.

What do you think George Hoffman would think about Tearfund today, would he be pleased to see how we've progressed?

Without question my father would have been hugely and humbly proud of Tearfund today. Whilst

I'm tempted to say he may be surprised at the sheer scale of the charity's growth and its transformational impact, I think he was a man of such faith in Christ's command to Christians to provide justice and hope for the forgotten that perhaps he wouldn't be surprised after all!

He would be thrilled that Tearfund continues to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves and for the rights of all who are destitute, as Proverbs calls us to. After all, it was an article that he wrote giving witness to the suffering of the terrible Biafra famine in the 1960s that first motivated Christians to send in cheques with the request that the money go to help those in need there, from which Tearfund was born.

I also think he would hugely respect the emphasis the organisation puts into continuing to work through local churches to help people find their own solutions and discover that the answer to poverty is within themselves and within Christ.

How much and in what ways has Tearfund changed from your memories of the earlier days?

In many ways so much has clearly changed. The sheer size of the organisation is astounding, given its humble beginnings. In the early days Tearfund was very much like a small family – we knew everyone as aunts and uncles. This God-centred family obviously grew in the UK and overseas, but it remained for many years a close family.

The depth of theological and strategic thinking behind the approach to the work of the charity is also something that is obviously very sophisticated today. A real constant seems to be how the staff, supporters and partners of Tearfund continue to rise to God's call and challenge to give their time, their money and their lives to help care for both the physical and spiritual needs of the world's most vulnerable.

The vibrancy and personal commitment of the staff I've met recently very much reminds me of the team in the early days. That same spirit is clearly present today and is helping drive God's work throughout the organisation.

Supporters were always the lifeblood of Tearfund and clearly that too remains the same today. The loyalty and huge generosity of supporters of all ages seems unwavering, as it was in the early days.

And ultimately the inspirational partners on the ground who through their passion, courage and determination are changing lives every single day. I met many of Tearfund's first partners from around the world and many of their faces and stories remain with me more than 40 years later. The continued dedication of Tearfund's partners, as they truly walk the walk even in extreme adversity, is still overwhelming.

What do you think George's message would be to Tearfund today?

Christ's compassion, a powerful sense of injustice and the determination to put God's command to love into action drove Tearfund from the outset. These remain as important today as they were 50 years ago.

I think he would encourage Tearfund to continue to challenge where useful, and be provocative

when required, to make sure the world's poorest are not left behind.

Ultimately I think he would remind us all that God's compassion is full of action, so let ours be also.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Praise God for the women in Mozambique who have found freedom through self-help and savings groups. Thank God for the relationships they are forming and the money that they are saving to build sustainable livelihoods. Pray that more groups can be set up to reach even more people.



More than a quarter of a million people are on the move in Afghanistan, desperate to find food and water in a country crippled by severe drought. Pray for all those who are living in makeshift camps: that as winter approaches they will receive the support they need.



Lift up everyone attending The Justice Conference hosted by Tearfund and other partners this weekend. Pray for people there as they explore the theology of justice. Ask God to give them ideas of new ways to bring his transformative kingdom around the world.