

ONE VOICE

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

Making the Rohingya refugee camps safer at night

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

It's not easy to find food and clean water or to see a doctor in the Rohingya refugee camps. It's also not safe to walk alone at night.

Since August 2017, around 910,000 Rohingya people have fled violence in Myanmar and sought shelter in refugee camps in Bangladesh. The camps are harsh places to live. Reports tell of women and teenage girls being attacked, sexually assaulted, or abducted by human traffickers.

Bringing light

Along with providing food, water and medical services, Tearfund's partner, COAST Trust, has also installed 463 solar powered street lights to make the camps safer.

Before the lights, many people were housebound every night. Most women and girls were too afraid to use the toilet or washing facilities in the dark. Many of them had traumatic experiences fleeing Myanmar – the darkness added to their fears of being attacked again.

Some children and elderly people also fell into drains because they couldn't see where they were walking. 'We couldn't go out to bring the water at night,' a woman called Jahura told our partner staff. 'But after the installation of the street solar light we can bring the water safely.'

A blessing

'This street solar light is like a blessing for us,' says Laila. 'We were at risk in the night but now there is no problem at all.'

Sanjeev Bhanja leads Tearfund's Disaster Response work in Asia. He says the lights bring a sense of security among women and children. Women use the latrines in the evening without fear and children can carry on playing in the early evening.

In the midst of such difficult circumstances, these lights bring some safety and freedom. In 2019, Tearfund's Rohingya Refugee Crisis Appeal helped raise money to pay for these street lights. Thank you, once again, for all your support.

PLEASE PRAY

- Praise God for the many benefits the solar lighting brings – particularly to women, teenage girls and children in the Rohingya camps.
- Pray for all the Rohingya people who are still struggling in such a harsh environment.
- Pray for justice for the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps, and that these crimes will stop.

A note from...

'Bringing light into the darkness reminds us of how God's light shines even in the most difficult and distressing situations. Like Laila who found 'a blessing' with the solar lights in the refugee camp, may we see God's light in the midst of the most challenging circumstances.'

Patricia Pagulayan, Asia Team

Beirut blast: stories of courage and unity one month on**Young people in Lebanon are showing inspiring resilience as they deal with the explosion's aftermath.**

It's been just over a month since Beirut was rocked by a devastating explosion.

Baqil*, 13, was at home on his balcony when he saw smoke coming out of the port, just two miles away. When the explosion happened, Baqil ran inside and grabbed his two-year-old baby sister on the way, saving her life, but seriously injuring himself in the process.

He broke six bones in his skull, and was in a coma for several days. Baqil's family was by his bedside the whole time.

Baqil had been attending a youth centre run by Tearfund's local partner. After hearing of his situation, other youth and staff members from the centre (themselves affected by the blast) went straight to his house to help clear it up, so the family wouldn't be returning to broken glass and other debris in their home.

Responding to need

This was not the first or last time the youth from our partner's projects took the initiative to respond in their communities.

Hearing of the need in other affected areas, 35 young people, both Syrian refugees and Lebanese locals, gathered together to clear up the streets and support people in whatever ways they could.

Dasia* is one of the young people who has been helping her community. 'Thank you for the opportunity to help and be part of an effort to support my neighbours,' she says. 'I want to know how and what I can do more to help. I am ready.'

Despite the destruction, stories of hope continue, as does the need for ongoing prayer and support. As media attention is drawn elsewhere, our partners continue to work around the clock to help people in need – including repairing homes, providing food assistance and offering emotional and wellbeing support. Please keep them in your prayers.

PLEASE PRAY

- Lift up Baqil and his family. Pray that he makes a full recovery from his injuries. Ask God to be with all those who were hurt in the blast.
- Thank God for young people like Dasia, who have dropped everything to support their communities. Pray for God's blessing upon them.
- Pray for refugees and other people living in poverty in Lebanon. Pray that our partners will continue to be able to reach people in need, offering practical help and spiritual hope.

**Names changed to protect identities*

Joy for one, joy for all

Memuna's church in Sierra Leone and the local community used to be separate. But the problems that were affecting people in the church were affecting the community too. This is how one group began bridging the gap.

Sierra Leone is ranked by the UN as being one of the countries most prone to natural disasters. Since the Ebola epidemic in 2014-15, where thousands of people lost their lives, recovery has been slow. Over a third of people still don't have access to clean water.

Memuna's church started running Bible study groups, where everyone was able to participate. These groups not only read the Bible and pray, but also work together to find solutions to the problems they face. Through these groups deep friendships are formed and people are empowered to make changes to transform their lives – and the lives of those around them.

Bringing people together

Memuna's group started talking about how there was only one well in the village, and the problems this was causing. 'Children were late to school because of the time it took to get water,' she says.

The group decided to take action. 'We came together as a community and decided to build more wells.' And this was just the beginning for the group.

'We were so deprived before... [But being a part of this group] has enlarged our knowledge. We have developed roads, and we didn't wait for anyone – we did it ourselves.'

Memuna and her group have felt empowered to make these changes for themselves. This is why we invest in groups like hers. Local people understand the problems they face and the solutions that will help them the most. And by being given the tools they need to fix these problems, the groups quickly rise to the challenge.

Community matters

Groups like these soon become a lifeline in the community. They bring people together – people who are often marginalised by society, like women and the elderly.

We were not meant to do life alone. Scripture is full of community: a God bringing people together in the call to love our neighbours. And, at the heart of it all, a God persistent in pursuing a relationship with us.

'If there is a problem for one, it is a problem for everyone, if there is joy for one, there is joy for everyone.' Memuma says. 'In the past, people would just isolate themselves, now people have concerns for one another.'

A prayer for community

Loving God,

Thank you that you made us for fellowship. At a time when so many are facing isolation and loneliness, please give us opportunities to draw together in love. We pray for communities like Memuma's, where the church is uniting people so that they can lift themselves out of poverty. Please continue to bless this work.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Pray for the world



Tearfund and our local partners have noticed a huge rise in cases on Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting (FGM/C) in Chad over the last three weeks. We have raised this with Chad's government. Pray that action will be taken, and for the success of Tearfund and our local partner's work to end FGM/C. And pray for protection over women and girls.



Praise God that we are able to reach more vulnerable families across Yemen thanks to the success of the recent coronavirus appeal. More than 8,000 people will receive food parcels and hygiene packages. Lift up our partner in Yemen, who are carrying out this vital work in the midst of conflict and a pandemic. Pray for their safety and for peace.



Last month, the Sindh region of Pakistan faced the highest levels of rainfall since records began, leading to devastating floods. Hundreds of people have lost their lives, and many more have had their homes destroyed. Tearfund is working with these communities to help them recover. Pray that we will be able to reach those in need, and that people will not be pushed further into poverty.