

# ONE VOICE

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

## **The UK must stop sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia**

**The UK Government has decided to resume selling weapons to Saudi Arabia. This will have devastating consequences for the people of Yemen. Please join us in prayer that this decision will be reversed.**

The UK government was prevented from granting any new export licenses for sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia in 2019, after the UK Court of Appeal judged it unlawful. This is because there was evidence to show that civilians in Yemen were being targeted using these weapons. Two weeks ago, the UK Government decided it would start selling weapons again to Saudi Arabia.

### **Why this will be deadly for Yemen**

The people of Yemen have already suffered more than five years of brutal conflict. The country is on the brink of famine. More than 80 per cent of the population require humanitarian assistance to survive.

And now coronavirus has hit. Conflict has shattered the country's health system, leaving it incapable of coping with a pandemic. Many hospitals and health centres have been damaged through the conflict. Only half of them are thought to be fully functioning.

Yemen cannot wait any longer. Stopping the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia is a vital step in ending the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

### **What is Tearfund doing?**

Tearfund is speaking with MPs across all political parties to urge them to persuade the government to reverse their decision. We have put together briefings for MPs so they can see the catastrophic impact their decision will have, and why they must intervene.

Our local partners in Yemen have been providing clean water, food, seeds and farming tools to enable people to grow their own vegetables. Since the pandemic hit, our partners have been sharing vital information about measures people can take to keep their families safe.

### **Please pray**

The people of Yemen urgently need your prayers. Please join us in crying out to God today.

- Pray for the UK Government to reverse its decision and stop selling weapons to Saudi Arabia.
- Pray for peace for Yemen. Pray that all parties involved in the fighting will agree to a ceasefire.
- Lift up the people of Yemen and ask God to comfort them and protect them from disease, illness and conflict. And pray a blessing over their future – that it will be free from poverty, hunger and conflict.

*As well as praying, if you'd also like to write to your MP about this, then please email [campaigns@tearfund.org](mailto:campaigns@tearfund.org) and our team will send you all the information you need to do this.*

### **A note from...**

'We have a choice whether we support our neighbours, or stay silent. The situation may look hopeless, but we must stand firm and remember that anything is possible with God. Please stand with us in prayer, lifting up the people of Yemen to our God, who can do so much more than we can ask or imagine.'

**Asha Kurien, Humanitarian Team**

## **Why the church is our greatest partner**

**Churches know the needs of their communities better than anyone else. They have a God-given mandate to love their neighbours – to give them both practical and spiritual help. Through our work with churches around the world we see them doing this all the time. Here's one inspiring example from Brazil.**

Carlos\* and his wife Francisca have four children. They used to live in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. But then Carlos got sick. Money became tight and the family were forced to leave the city.

The family lived in a canvas tent and were reluctant to seek help. 'I did not want to take land from others,' says Carlos.

Thankfully, Carlos was persuaded by his family to approach the government for support. His family were moved out of the cramped tent and into rented accommodation before a house was built for them.

However, Carlos and Francisca still couldn't find any work, leaving them unable to provide for their family. And a drought made everything worse.

### **It began with a well**

The dam close to them had dried up. To get water, the family were forced to travel over four kilometres. Water was limited – one small water source had to be shared between 20 families. Cooking, drinking, washing – all necessary things that this limited resource was desperately needed for.

Carlos then met two people who helped turn his family's lives around.

Mr Tarcisio and Pastor John were part of the leadership of two nearby churches, supported by our local partner, Evangelical Action Brazil (ACEV). Mr Tarcisio was an Elder at one, and Pastor John was a pastor at the other. They saw the needs of these communities, and wanted to help out.

Through our local partner, Tearfund has been equipping them to help them address the needs in their local community, so that people can overcome poverty. It's a model that works because it empowers local people to be the solution for change.

After talking with these communities to find the best location, Tearfund was able to help the churches to build a well. This gave them the water they needed to flourish. And after tackling the issue of providing clean water, other problems could be addressed too – such as how Carlos and Francisca could feed their family.

### **Life and life to the full**

Our work through our church partners is designed to care for the individual as a whole. We believe every human being is created in the image of God – having inherent value. And we want to help each person be able to flourish and achieve their God-given potential. That means breaking the barriers that poverty traps people behind.

Carlos and Francisca were given food by our church partner so that the family didn't go hungry. But our church partners wanted to empower the couple for the long-term.

They were invited to take part in an ACEV and Tearfund initiative called the Plantation Project, which enables families to grow gardens and orchards. It teaches them skills to cultivate plants and vegetables – providing them with both food and an income.

Francisca shares that she now feels motivated and wants to develop her skills further. 'No one goes hungry anymore... I've never seen such a good project for us,' she says.

Carlos's faith has been strengthened and encouraged during this time. He regularly met with Mr Tarcisio, asking questions and wanting to learn more. Now he meets with fifteen others in his community to worship God and pray.

'All my dreams have been realised,' says Carlos. 'Today I feel rich, I want to continue planting.'

This is why partnering with churches is at the heart of what Tearfund does globally. By working together, we can help people lift themselves out of poverty. And stay there.

### **PLEASE PRAY**

- Praise God for how Carlos and Francisca's lives have been turned around, and for the love and care shown to them by their local churches.
- Thank God for the churches Tearfund partners around the world and how they adapt continually to serve their communities – even in the midst of crises. Pray for wisdom, energy and health for their leaders.
- Pray for even more opportunities and resources for Tearfund to come alongside churches around the world to help equip them to be the solution to ending poverty.

*\*Names changed to protect identity*

*This article references events that took place before the coronavirus crisis.*

## **Four million people flee their homes as monsoon rains hit south Asia**

**Monsoon rains have brought flooding and landslides to India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Across south Asia, an estimated 4 million people have been forced to flee their homes, and government authorities are reporting that more than 600 people have been killed.**

People have lost their loved ones, their homes and their businesses. Floods also bring the threat of waterborne diseases, such as cholera.

Tearfund partners are responding across the region.

In Bangladesh, staff from our partner organisation, LAMB, are helping vulnerable people to get to shelters in safer places. They are also giving food to people who have lost everything in the floods so that they don't go hungry.

### **Overflowing**

'It is very sad to see millions of vulnerable Bangladeshis having to deal with another disaster, while already having a hard time coping with the coronavirus,' says Sudarshan Reddy Kodooru, Tearfund's Country Director for Bangladesh.

'Riverbanks are overflowing and flood defences such as dykes, dams and sluices have been damaged because of the heavy monsoon rains. Please pray for the affected families, rescue teams, our partner LAMB and other humanitarian workers, and the government.'

In Bihar, India, in the last 48 hours the situation has become critical. The local government is evacuating people who live near the Kosi River, which has burst its banks.

Three Tearfund projects take place in this area. Our local partners were able to respond quickly to those in need. We are providing assistance and support to help them navigate this disaster.

Meanwhile, in the north-eastern Indian state of Assam, 87 people have been killed by monsoon flooding. The worst affected are people living along the banks of river Brahmaputra. Every inch the water level rises is putting more lives in danger.

### **Feeling helpless**

Prince David, Tearfund's Country Director for India, says: 'The two biggest challenges in responding to this crisis are, firstly, the lack of access to communities due to the water level rising way above the danger mark. Secondly, the lack of physical distancing during the coronavirus pandemic exposes already vulnerable people to greater risk. It's the toughest situation in my lifetime and I have never felt so helpless.'

'Tearfund and our partners are identifying those who are most vulnerable, to provide them with food supplies and cash. It is our prayer that God will keep our field staff safe and grant them wisdom to travel safely to the worst affected areas. Thank you for praying and supporting Tearfund.'

Please join us in prayer for this urgent crisis.

## PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for protection for people affected by the floods and landslides, and may they be able to access food, clean water and shelter.
- Ask God to comfort those who have lost loved ones. May they know God's peace and hope.
- Pray for wisdom and resources for those who are responding to this crisis.

## Pray for the world

-  Four community leaders who collaborate with one of our local partners in Honduras have been abducted this week. Pray that they will be returned to their families unharmed. Pray that people in Honduras will be able to speak out against injustice without fear, and without being targeted with violence and abuse.
-  This week we ran our *Transforming Masculinities* training course in Rwanda (online due to coronavirus). The course challenges behaviours around sexual and gender-based violence by working with faith communities. Pray that this training will help the participants to promote positive relationships in their churches and communities, so everyone can thrive free from violence and abuse.
-  Last weekend, the G20 – a meeting of world leaders – failed to support some of the world's poorest countries as it refused to cancel their debt. Pray that finance ministers – including the UK's Chancellor, Rishi Sunak – will review this decision. And pray that countries who are burdened with debt will be able to access the resources and funding they need to respond to the pandemic.