

ONE VOICE

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

CYCLONE IDAI PRAYER UPDATE

More than three months have passed since a devastating cyclone hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. We've been working with our partners to respond.

When Cyclone Idai made landfall on 15 March more than 740 people were killed. Almost 3 million people suddenly found themselves in need of emergency aid.

Here's an update from the three countries affected:

Mozambique

The hardest hit areas were around central Mozambique, where more than 600 people died and 1,600 were injured.

Tearfund has three partners responding in Sofala, Manica and Zambezia provinces, providing relief in some of the hardest to reach areas.

They're distributing food, basic household goods, seeds and tools, as well as providing psychosocial support and access to clean water.

Getting help to people has been challenging as many roads were destroyed. There has also been concern at the spread of cholera after the disaster, but thankfully a large-scale outbreak hasn't occurred – a real answer to prayer.

Malawi

Malawi was struggling to recover from flooding caused by heavy rain in February when Cyclone Idai hit a month later.

More than 850,000 people were affected. Thousands were forced to flee their homes and move to temporary shelter in schools, churches, and community buildings. Over 60 per cent of those displaced are women and children.

As well as their homes, many families have lost their livelihoods – mostly crops and livestock.

Our partners Eagles and AG Care are working in villages that are far from the main roads, making it difficult for trucks carrying heavy relief items to reach people. They're providing food, shelter, access to clean water and helping people recover their livelihoods.

Zimbabwe

Cyclone Idai hit the eastern part of Zimbabwe. In Chimanimani and Chipinge districts an estimated 250,000 people were affected, with 333 confirmed dead.

The cyclone destroyed homes and livelihoods and damaged roads, bridges, schools and health centres. There was also significant damage to water supplies, increasing the risk of disease.

We are working with our local church partner, the Evangelical Fellowship Zimbabwe (EFZ), and the Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT) to provide emergency relief with food, blankets, access to clean water and psychological support.

PLEASE PRAY

Lord of mercy,

Please move powerfully in the nations of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe as they recover from the devastating effects of Cyclone Idai. Heal the sick, comfort the brokenhearted, and provide for those who are desperate. Thank you for the work of all those who are providing essential supplies and support. We pray that you will keep them safe, and work through them to reach those in most need.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

A NOTE FROM...

'I was recently in Chibabava, Mozambique, which was seriously affected by Idai. People had been marooned for several days. When the waters subsided, people's farms and food stores had been totally destroyed. But thanks to the generous prayers and gifts of supporters like you, these people and many others have received help. More needs to be done, so thank you for your continued prayers.' **David Mutua, Southern and East Africa Team**

THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

'In a world of obvious, giant needs screaming for urgent attention, what about the 'smaller' ones? The more personal ones? Like a child's need to be 'cool'. To fit in. Is there space for the little things that won't save a life, but will certainly make it much more bearable?

A UN report describes the humanitarian crisis in Yemen as 'the worst in the world [with] an estimated 24 million people [requiring] some form of humanitarian or protection assistance.'

There has been some progress in recent months, yet the situation in Yemen remains dire. Malnutrition, explosions, cholera, unemployment. The list extends. No one – no child – remains unaffected by the conflict – although not always in the most obvious ways.

Along with many others, we are responding and we can make a difference. There is hope, but there is a long way to go to see people with the basic food, health, sanitation and protection they need.

Children... are children.

Sabiya* was unable to afford to buy clothes for her children, so they had to wear the community's cast-offs. Still, under the circumstances, it's possible to suggest they should have been grateful. Their basic need had been met.

Only... the neighbourhood children recognised their own unwanted things and Sabiya's children said they felt 'inferior' and 'humiliated' whenever they went to school or out to play. 'The despising eyes' were on them, as they put it. So, to hide their shame, they stayed inside. They became isolated – missing out on friendships and the possibility of a full life.

Though Sabiya's children may live half a world away from mine, speak a different language and have different coloured hair and eyes, in the end they are not so different. Children are children. Not to fit in with their peers is to be lonely. To be outcast. To hurt. As a mum, this hurt Sabiya too.

A-dress-ing the problem...

Then Sabiya met one of Tearfund's partners in the region. She received food baskets from them for five months which meant she was able to feed her children. On top of that, it allowed her to save a little money to buy new clothes. The new garments gave her children the confidence to go out and face their peers, providing an opportunity for them to return to play and enjoy their childhood.

In a world of urgent needs, perhaps new clothes for some kids to feel accepted by their friends may not appear to be the most pressing one. Maybe it could even seem trivial to some. How can such a thing matter in comparison to gunfire and starvation? But I know this: when my children hurt – irrespective of how 'valid' their hurt might seem – I hurt. I wonder, then, as we consider the outrageous love of the Father for his created ones – how much more deeply must his heart be moved by the little things that matter to these children? The small, big things.

PLEASE PRAY

Dear Father,

Your word tells us that you are full of compassion. You number the hairs on our heads and you know and love us intimately. Thank you that you hear the cries of each of these children's hearts and you care so deeply for them. Please be close to Sabiya and her children and all those in Yemen, and pray for peace to come quickly. In Jesus' name, amen.

**Name has been changed to protect identity*

SEND ME

It can't be easy to spend weeks at a time away from your family. But for Leonilo Endoso, an Emergency Roving Manager (ERM) for Tearfund, it's a calling.

Originally from the Philippines, Leonilo – known as Nilo for short – has had stints working in Pakistan, Iraq, Central African Republic, Mozambique and South Sudan. He's currently in Indonesia supporting Tearfund's response to the devastating tsunami and earthquake which hit Sulawesi in September 2018.

As one of four ERMs, Nilo's job involves supporting local Tearfund teams as they respond to emergencies. When a disaster happens in a country where Tearfund doesn't have staff, he helps coordinate the immediate response and identify new partners for a longer-term response.

Challenging times

Each assignment is around eight to ten weeks. 'The work is tough, there's no doubt about that,' says Nilo, 'but my family have come to an arrangement that they are happy supporting me in prayer.'

'We keep in touch via Skype and I share updates with them. Thankfully, communication is relatively easy compared to ten or 15 years ago!'

Nilo says some of the challenges with his work are when he's in areas of extreme poverty. 'In South Sudan, for example, it was very tough physically and emotionally. You cannot meet all the needs of the people. That's why Tearfund's supporters are so important, so we can do more.'

A certain faith

So what gets him through? His faith is vital. 'The book of Ephesians is so important for me,' says Nilo.

'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.' (Ephesians 2:10)

'I really feel that, through the work of Tearfund, we can be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. In many places, people know we are Christians. We do not hide it, we're not ashamed of it, we do not flaunt it, but people say: 'why are you doing this, it's a very dangerous place!

'But they see that in Christ we have hope, and that keeps me going.'

PLEASE PRAY

Lord God,

We live in uncertain times, where natural disasters, conflict and political instability are too common. We lift up those who are suffering and thank you for the courage and commitment of people such as Nilo. Please keep all humanitarian workers safe and healthy as they reach out to vulnerable people in desperate need.

In Jesus' name, amen.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

-  Please pray for the people of Haiti, where ongoing political instability is making life harder and more uncertain for many. Pray for peace. Pray also for protection for communities as the hurricane season starts.
-  Thousands of people joined together in London on Wednesday to call on our leaders to do more to tackle the climate crisis. Praise God for this, and pray that this will result in strong action to reduce the impact on people living in poverty.
-  Please continue to pray for the Central African Republic. Although a peace treaty was signed in February, violent attacks continue in some areas. Pray for lasting peace and stability, and protection over communities and our staff and partners as they work alongside those in most need.