

ONE VOICE

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

FLEEING WAR BUT FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL IN YEMEN

Following four years of conflict, the people of Yemen are crying out for help and for peace. More than 14 million people are facing starvation, and an estimated 85,000 children have already died from extreme hunger. This is the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today, and it must stop.

Ahmed worked as a farmer to support his 13 children, but then war came to his village. 'The shelling and the airstrikes forced us to flee,' says Ahmed. 'There were only two choices: either to stay under [the] battles...or to flee'.

He and his family now live in tents in a graveyard – one of many makeshift camps for internally displaced people. Ahmed and his wife are doing all they can to care for their children amid the horror of this war. They risk gunfire to collect firewood and walk two hours for water, but food is scarce.

Sofi is another parent afraid for the life of her children, including tiny Afina* aged just seven months (pictured at the top of this story). Because Sofi didn't get the nutrition she needed when she was pregnant, she couldn't breastfeed Afina when she was born. She and her family are putting all their efforts into paying for baby milk, and have even borrowed money, but Afina remains malnourished.

In the short term, people in Yemen need urgent help to survive. In the long term, they need peace. Please pray for them, for Tearfund's partner staff working to reach those in most need, and for increased action from those in power to see Yemen at peace.

A prayer for Yemen

Giver of Life, who hears the cries from Yemen;
 Of mothers choosing between medicine or food,
 Of parents grieving children lost to starvation,
 Of those who have given up everything in hunger.
 Hear our cries for hope, for change, for peace.
 In your mercy,
 Break political deadlocks,
 Soften hardened hearts,
 Change closed minds,
 Open unhearing ears.
 Let people come before power.
 Let life be holy again.
 Let your justice and peace
 Shape the nation of Yemen,
 And the lives of all people. Amen.

A NOTE FROM...

'The more I hear about what's happening in Yemen the more I realise how truly desperate this crisis is. For many Yemenis it's a daily struggle to survive, as they try to access the food and medicines they urgently need. Do join me in praying and raising awareness of this terrible disaster.' **Andrew Horton, Tearfund's News Editor**

LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND

Warning: this article contains reference to sexual violence

Camila* (21) used to start each day weighed down with the struggle to provide for her father and five-year-old daughter. But today, head held high, she is putting a painful past behind her, building a business and looking forward to the future.

Living happily with her parents, Camila was a studious girl who loved learning. She dreamed of all that she might study but in one afternoon, when she was 14, her world came crashing down.

Hidden pain

'My life suffered a terrible change from the moment I was a victim of rape,' says Camila. 'The armed men subjected me to death threats. The change in my emotional life was that I locked myself up, with many fears. I did not leave my room, I stopped going to school, I was afraid of all men and anyone who would visit me.'

Sexual violence was a common, horrific thread in Colombia's protracted conflict, with thousands of victims carrying their pain in silence.

Tearfund's partner, CORSOC, has helped churches to create support teams to work with survivors of sexual violence. Weekly discipleship sessions, along with emotional and spiritual support, bring healing and restoration to many women.

Love in action

One day Camila met a lady who was part of one of these teams. By this time Camila was a single mother selling vegetables and fruits on a tricycle through the streets of her hometown.

'I barely earned enough to get food for just one meal per day,' she remembers. 'My life was thinking about many things, without finishing high school, fighting for the well-being of my daughter and my own.'

But the love shown by the support team and the church began to strengthen Camila. Hope started to rise in her heart. Her self-esteem is growing and now, thanks to some financial support from CORSOC, so is her business.

Moving forward

She was able to establish a fruit and vegetable store at her home and was given a fridge. Now she can add cold fruit salad with yogurt or ice-cream to her offerings.

'I now have a business that has grown and is benefiting others,' says Camila with a smile. She has employed four women who are all heads of their households. Some of them are also survivors of sexual violence.

'I feel very happy. I am excited because I truly believe I have a future with my daughter. Together we will move forward – the past must and will be left behind.'

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray that God continues to strengthen Camila, giving her wisdom and understanding to move forward with her daughter and her business.
- Praise God that CORSOC has been able to help more than 150 women through these support teams, and pray that more can be reached through the work.
- Pray for Colombia as the nation grapples with this challenging aspect of its history.

**Name changed to protect identity*

THOUSANDS FLEE VENEZUELA AS THE COUNTRY SLIPS TOWARDS CIVIL WAR

The crisis in Venezuela has worsened in recent weeks, leading to a mass exodus of its people.

The president of the parliament Juan Guaido was declared as interim president in January 2019. This comes six months after national elections where President Maduro was re-elected. Mr Guaido claims that the election was not according to the Venezuelan constitution.

Since then, massive demonstrations have been taking place against Maduro's government, where at least 40 people died and 850 were arrested including children as young as 12. It's feared this could lead to a civil war and the possibility of military intervention from the USA.

Going for help

With the violence, and a severe lack of food, medicine and essential services, many Venezuelans are having to move, leaving everything behind.

Thousands are leaving their homes and families – just to find resources to help their loved ones to survive. As a consequence, they're becoming vulnerable to mistreatment and even sexual abuse.

In Colombia, Venezuelans arrive tired and hungry – there's nothing to eat or drink in the places they stay, and no electricity. Tearfund's church partners are there, providing food, healthcare and psychological support. Local churches are also taking care of children, finding them places in schools or daycare and providing safe spaces for play.

'We thank God because the sadness we had inside is no longer that big,' says Maria, a Venezuelan refugee staying in the 'Los Angeles' area of Barranquilla city. 'We know God is with us, that his light has accompanied us. Here is a church with a big heart that's helping us even though we're strangers to them.'

A prayer for Venezuela

Father God,

We ask you to bring a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Venezuela. For the thousands who have fled to get help – would you keep them safe, healthy and hopeful. And for the friends and family they've had to leave behind, may they also have your protection and provision.

Let there be a quick and peaceful solution to the political conflict, without military intervention.

And may Tearfund's partners continue to be able to support Venezuelans in Colombia.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



A week ago, a dam at an iron ore mine in south east Brazil collapsed, killing more than 80 people. Hundreds more are still missing. Please pray for the community coming to terms with the disaster. Pray for comfort for the families who have lost loved ones. And pray other dams in the area will remain stable.



The people of the Somali region in the east of Ethiopia are suffering greatly due to ongoing internal conflicts and violence, as well as the presence of international terror groups. Please pray for solutions and that God would reveal himself to the people there.



Over two weeks in March, churches across Bristol will be running events to mark 50 years of Tearfund, and raise more support to end extreme poverty. Please pray that the events will make an impact on global poverty and that these final Jubilee celebrations go well!