‘VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS TAKES MANY FORMS AND IS WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT THE GLOBE...’

‘... It includes rape, domestic violence, harassment at work, abuse in school, female genital mutilation and sexual violence in armed conflicts... I urge governments and partners around the world to harness the energy, ideas and leadership of young people to help us to end this pandemic of violence.’

BAN KI-MOON, UN SECRETARY GENERAL

The 16-days of Activism against Gender-based Violence runs from the 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). In 2013 the focus of the campaign is ‘From peace in the home to peace in the world: let’s challenge militarism and end violence against women’ which is similar to the previous year.

We live in a world where one in every three women and girls is expected to face violence in some form in their lifetime (United Nations). It is a staggering statistic but, more than that, it is heart-breaking: it breaks the heart of our God who created and loves each and every one of us, whether male or female.

‘THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GENTILE, NEITHER SLAVE NOR FREE, NOR IS THERE MALE AND FEMALE, FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.’

GALATIANS 3:28
During these 16-days of Activism at Tearfund, we aim to:

1. Raise awareness of the work that Tearfund partners, staff and churches are currently engaged with in preventing and responding to gender-based violence
2. Motivate our staff, partners and supporters worldwide to pray that we and others can stand up and speak out against injustice against women and girls
3. Mobilise prayer on this extremely sensitive issue globally

Therefore this prayer guide can be used by individuals, home groups or churches groups to follow the 16-days campaign (or at any time of the year), to pray into gender-based violence issues. Below you will find a short story for each of the 16-days which illustrates how Tearfund and its partners have impacted the lives of men, women, boys and girls around highly sensitive issues such as domestic violence, child protection, sexual violence and honour killing. This resource contains both stories from survivors of sexual violence in South Africa and stories from Tearfund partners from all around the world working to end gender-based violence

NB. All names in the stories below have been changed to protect identities.

‘BY STANDING UP AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, WE WILL COME CLOSER TO PEACE, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.’

FORMER UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MICHELLE BACHELET

DAY 1 SURVIVOR STORY, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Noluthando Mkhize was a teenager when she was raped over a period of time by close family members – her brother, cousins and uncle. She was cast out by her family and became a sex worker where she met a man whom she later married. Her husband took advantage of her vulnerable situation and abused her physically, sexually and emotionally. Noluthando left her husband but returned to sex work in order to survive and became an alcoholic for many years. Noluthando has found temporary refuge staying in the home of a survivor of domestic violence and is willing and eager to change her future. However, Noluthando is facing many challenges, including securing the start-up capital for a small business as an alternative means of earning an income.

HE UPHOLDS THE CAUSE OF THE OPPRESSED AND GIVES FOOD TO THE HUNGRY. THE LORD SETS PRISONERS FREE.

PSALM 146:7

PRAY FOR
• God to heal women and girls of the pain and suffering caused by sexual violence
• the protection of vulnerable women and girls from ongoing cycles of violence and trauma
• for safe spaces for survivors of sexual violence to take refuge

Photo: Christina Shange/Tearfund
DAY 2  FINDING ALTERNATIVES TO HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES, SUDAN

Alia was a traditional healer in a remote part of eastern Darfur, Sudan. She made her living by delivering babies, providing midwifery support during pregnancy, providing traditional healing when children and people were unwell and circumcising girls. Female circumcision altering (sometimes called female genital mutilation or FGM) is often practised in communities where fertility in women is highly valued, yet studies show that it makes it much harder for women to deliver babies safely. Scar tissue from where cuts were made and infibulation (sewing up of the birth canal) prevent normal births. A woman who has been cut often needs more specialist healthcare that may not be available locally, and may not be affordable. This increases the risk of both mother and child dying. However, these were practices that Alia’s grandmother had taught her and she carried them out when requested by the community, particularly the older women who felt that they had to hold fast to tradition. Alia was often paid in kind (eg sugar, milk and flour) which she used to feed her family.

Alia attended a talk on nutrition in her village by a trained facilitator supported by Tearfund’s nutrition programme. She learnt how these traditional practices are often more harmful than beneficial – resulting in great injury or even death. Alia understood that she had to stop but how was she meant to feed her family? Fortunately she joined the women’s livelihood scheme where, with a small investment by Tearfund, 38 women went into the garment business. They worked in groups, taking turns to buy stock from the market, run the shop in their village, to sell door to door and keep the books in order. Alia also realised that fewer girls and women died in her village since she and many cutters like her found an alternative form of income.

PRAY FOR
• continued efforts to encourage women to find alternative forms of income rather than traditional methods and practices that may be harmful to women and girls
• support for women’s groups like this from their spouses and older members of the community so they can multiply
• an end to traditional practices such as FGM, early and forced marriage and traditional healing, to reduce the number of injuries and deaths

DAY 3  FAMILIES DESTROYED BY VIOLENCE, COLOMBIA

Shirley lives in a small village on the north coast of Colombia. In this area of the country violence has been endemic over recent years due to the civil war and violence against women has escalated in diverse forms, including rape and murder. When Shirley was eight years old and her parents were away from home, she was repeatedly raped by a relative, who threatened her so that she would not tell her parents what was happening. ‘I felt so much anger inside of me that I often fought with my parents and my brothers and sisters. I felt that they had done nothing to protect me. For this reason, when I was 16, I left home and began life as part of a couple,’ Shirley says. ‘Soon I had a child. But nothing changed the anger and pain that I felt inside, so I continued abusing my partner and also started to mistreat my child. I did not realise that I had turned into an abuser myself.’

Shirley took part in a series of talks on good treatment for children given by the Light of the Gospel Church, supported by Tearfund’s partner, Red Viva, in her town. ‘I understood the good treatment principles, but I felt hopeless because I could not remove the hatred and anger of my heart,’ she explains. ‘Then people in the church explained to me the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his love for me.’ Now, Shirley is an advocate for children’s rights in her town.

She promotes good treatment for children among families in the community, and also supports actions to prevent the sexual abuse of girls and boys.

PRAY FOR:
• families like Shirley’s, that they will restore their relationships with one another
• families like Shirley’s where violence has destroyed relationships, that they may be touched by Jesus’ forgiving spirit
• children who have been affected by or witnessed violence, that they will receive the support services they need to recover from this trauma

Photo: Jim Loring/Tearfund
**DAY 4  SURVIVOR STORY, PIETERMARITZBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

Nombuso Thuli had a rough upbringing in a township in Pietermaritzburg and was raped as a teenager, a trauma that stayed with her for a very long time because she did not receive any form of trauma counselling. As a teenager she found herself getting into different sexual relationships which lacked trust and enjoyment and which ended in painful experiences of betrayal and violence. During this time she became pregnant and experienced further turmoil when she discovered that she was HIV positive.

She gave in to alcohol abuse and this made her increasingly vulnerable to abusive behaviour which exacerbated her pain and trauma.

However, Nombuso’s has turned away from alcohol abuse and her painful experiences have alerted her to the need to support and help young children in her township and she now works for a local community-based organisation supporting vulnerable and abused children.

**PRAY FOR:**
- access to and availability of services such as trauma counselling and treatment for HIV, desperately needed by survivors of sexual violence
- God to bring transformation of survivors’ painful experiences of sexual violence and strength to all those who work to protect others from violence

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**DAY 5  MOBILISING FAMILIES AND CHURCHES, BURUNDI**

Etienne and Denise head up Tearfund’s partner FECABU, in Burundi. Three years ago, they both attended and supported Tearfund’s capacity-building workshop on child protection and gender-based violence (GBV). Since then they have developed FECABU’s child protection policy that has a robust Code of Conduct on what is unacceptable behaviour. All staff members and representatives are trained in the policy and have signed it. Child protection is now a cross-cutting issue, even within self-help groups (SHGs) where men and women are educated to value children (particularly girls) and treat them with dignity.

It has been a challenge since corporal punishment is the norm in Burundian culture. However, FECABU educates the community to talk and listen to children in order to change their behaviour. There’s a local saying: ‘A stick is used to beat the bones, but it can’t beat the behaviour...’ FECABU works with parents to raise the self-esteem and confidence of children focusing on child development and reducing violence. More importantly, both Etienne and Denise testified that, since they have changed their behaviour towards their own children, they have grown closer as a family and they are more relaxed with each other.

FECABU has also been more involved in educating church leaders to come together and create a network where there are focal points in the church to report possible concerns regarding the abuse of women and children. They will be bringing all the churches together in Bujumbura to speak out against violence. They are also organising a march on 10 December where all church leaders and members will be carrying banners on the streets challenging GBV. In December there will also be a crusade involving all churches.

**PRAY FOR:**
- fathers and mothers to work in partnership to restore relationships with one another and with their families
- Tearfund partners and churches in Burundi and worldwide to have the courage to challenge GBV

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**THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS ON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM FREEDOM FOR THE PRISONERS AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT FOR THE BLIND, TO RELEASE THE OPPRESSED.**

**LUKE 4:18**
‘I WAS A WOMAN WITH MANY FEARS AND WORRIES,’ SAYS ELIANA. ‘NOW I AM ANOTHER PERSON – I AM A CITIZEN WHO HAS OVERCOME ALL THE BARRIERS AND I AM READY TO SPEAK FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO VOICE, TO FIGHT FOR THOSE WHO CRY OUT FOR JUSTICE.’

Eliana approached Tearfund partner Peace and Hope in Peru in 2005 looking for help for her daughter, a victim of child sexual abuse. She came with many problems: she did not trust anyone, was very reluctant to receive spiritual help and had serious family difficulties as the perpetrator of her daughter’s abuse was one of husband’s nephews. Peace and Hope provided legal advice and family support during 2006 in order to help the family to manage their issues.

In 2007 Eliana joined a group called Returning Tamar’s Smile, a group of mothers and fathers that was created in order to seek justice and rights restitution for child victims of sexual abuse. In this group she received spiritual support, gained more self-esteem and learned how to protect children from sexual abuse.

Throughout all this time Eliana, together with other parents in the organisation, faced first-hand the corrupt actions of people responsible for justice in the state system, as child sex offenders were frequently released despite evidence to corroborate accusations made against them. In 2012 the Parents’ Association of Returning Tamar’s Smile began a joint campaign with other civil society groups that called for the non-ratification of judges considered to have freed child sex offenders. This has led to the non-ratification of three judges. In November 2012 Eliana and other mothers of abused children travelled to Lima to be heard by the Minister for Women and other national authorities. This resulted in important commitments being made and the implementation of a pilot programme of comprehensive care for victims of child sexual abuse through Women’s Emergency Centres.

PRAY FOR:
• justice for those who have been affected by sexual violence
• good governance to replace corruption in many countries so that perpetrators can be brought to justice
• the implementation of legislation enacted to protect survivors of GBV

DAY 6

STORY FROM TEARFUND PARTNER PEACE AND HOPE, PERU

DAY 7

SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA

Thembeni Mazibuko is in her early twenties. She was raped coming back from her university library and this has deeply hurt her because the case was not handled properly by the South African justice system and she has to face the perpetrator on a daily basis in her community. Thembeni has dropped the legal case and is struggling to come to terms with her trauma. Thembeni dropped out of university when she became pregnant and is now a single mum with two boys. It’s a struggle to raise them on her own. But she dreams of studying engineering so that she can improve her circumstances and and build a successful future for her children.

PRAY FOR:
• all those who that are in positions of authority in the justice system, that they may seek justice for survivors and not fail them
• support from the community and authorities for women like Thembeni who are struggling to look after children, seek legal redress and overcome deep trauma
• God to give women like Thembeni hope, encouragement to pursue their dreams and fulfil their God-given potential
Roopa is 20 and her dream is to be a famous hairstylist. This dream is starting to be realised as she is being trained in one of India’s most fashionable hair salons in Mumbai. However, when Roopa was five, she was abducted from her parents by an uncle and sold to a woman in Mumbai who kept her until she was nine years old before selling her again, this time to work as a prostitute. Roopa worked for three years as she paid off the so-called ‘debt’ to the woman who bought her. Trafficked for sex, Roopa could earn a relatively high price for her ‘madam’ with young children considered a premium product. They are less likely to work in brothels where prostitutes, the vast majority of whom are also trafficked, are expected to service up to 20 clients a day – and receive something in the region of 15 rupees for each one (about 12 pence). The madams and pimps, of course, make much more.

After three years, Roopa was rescued in a police raid and taken to a government home. Given the scale of trafficking in India, such homes and their wash facilities, toilets and beds are entirely inadequate – filled to up to three times their capacity and with a staff-to-child ratio of about one to 60. ‘Every day I cried,’ said Roopa. ‘The staff would verbally abuse us. They would tell us we were bad and remind us of our past.’

Within the home, Roopa met a Christian who encouraged her to pray to Jesus for help. Today she’s being helped by a Tearfund partner. The process has been a long one, but the signs are now good: Roopa is holding down a job, is a role model to others and is brilliant at doing all the work asked of her and more in the rehabilitation home. ‘I was hopeless and had no confidence’ she says. ‘Thanks to Jesus I now have confidence,’ to fight against the wrong that I’ve seen in this world.’

PRAY FOR:
• women like Roopa who have been trafficked and sold into sexual slavery, that they will find a way to escape their situation
• families so that they will be able to protect their girls from trafficking
• more people to be aware of human trafficking and provide support as quickly as possible

Marie Claire Mahoro is the mother of two boys. She was raped by her uncle after the death of her parents during the civil war in Burundi. Her uncle raped her several times until one day Marie Claire was so physically injured that she was taken to hospital. However, because her uncle was a soldier, nobody was able to confront him. Marie Claire couldn’t wait for a complete recovery in hospital and had to flee from Burundi to Rwanda to join other relatives there. Living in Rwanda she had to remain silent about the sexual violence she had suffered to avoid causing conflict among her family and also because she feared being rejected by them. Since then Marie Claire has been living a lie in order to protect herself from being stigmatised or rejected.

PRAY FOR:
• an end to sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by by soldiers and other state agents
• communities to be empowered challenge individuals in authority who act with impunity
• a breaking of the silence and stigma experienced by survivors of sexual violence
DAY 10  REDEFINING MASCULINITY, RWANDA AND BURUNDI

In recent years the work on ending violence against women and girls has led to a parallel conversation around the role of men and boys in ending this violence. The need to work with men and boys, as they are most often the perpetrators, and to address their behaviours, attitudes and social norms in relation to gender and gender equality, is imperative in order to see an end to the gross acts of violence committed against women and girls. This has warranted the need for better understanding men’s own experience of violence, abuse and childhood trauma, their struggles to express their experiences, and the limited available spaces to do so.

Studies in recent years find that many men have faced abuse as children, and that also as many as one in every four men admits to perpetrating sexual violence, including rape (UN Multi-country study, 2013; MRC, SA). Many men interviewed in Rwanda and Burundi for a baseline study for the Tearfund HIV and Sexual Violence unit said that ‘a woman asks to be raped by the way she dresses and behaves’ (Rwanda 97%, Burundi 77%). 63% of the men interviewed in Burundi also believed that ‘a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together’. The IMAGES study conducted by Promundo and Sonke in DRC found that 9% of all men interviewed admitted to having suffered sexual violence during conflict. It also reported that 75% of men were ‘ashamed to face their families for lack of work’, and reported different consequences as a result of their experience in the conflict, including more than 60% of the men reporting that they had ‘lost their capacity to love or care for others’.

The baseline study also found that more men were willing to change their own behaviours at home such as 84% of the men in Rwanda and 59% of the men in Burundi agreeing to the statement ‘I think that men should share household work.’ More than 80% of all men interviewed stating that they were willing to be the first man in their community to demonstrate change.

In addressing the role of men and boys, the process has also led to a redefining of what it means to be a man. It’s clear that not all men are violent or abusive, and that many men work in partnership with women in their homes, communities, churches and workplaces to end sexual violence.

PRAY FOR:
• Tearfund’s partnership with the Anglican churches in Rwanda and Burundi on ‘Transforming Leaderships,’ work on engaging men and boys in ending sexual and gender-based violence. Pray for the churches’ leaders, for positive attitudes and commitment to pioneer this work in their parishes
• the men and boys in Rwanda and Burundi for the healing of memories as we create safe spaces for them to share their trauma and work together for restoration of relationships
• men and boys who emerge as role models, for God’s protection and covering over their lives as they put themselves in the forefront to lead this work
• breakthrough in the work we are to launch in DRC in January especially for the sensitive work with ex-combatants in healing and helping them live out their God-given potential

DAY 11  PREVENTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF YOUNGSTERS, BRAZIL

Many think of sexual violence as occurring mainly against women. But boys and men can also easily become victims of abuse. The World Cup Project, run by Tearfund partner RENAS, is working to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and teenagers in Brazil.

Support workers Charles and Vivian remember meeting 24-year-old Gabriel at a RENAS rally. He broke down in tears, sharing that he had been abused at the age of eight. Although Gabriel is a father himself now, Vivian comments, ‘I could see a child filled with fear, bearing the grief of his childhood.’

Charles prayed with Gabriel and they exchanged contact details. Later, Gabriel got back in touch and offered to assist RENAS with their work. RENAS is helping him deal with his pain and make a positive contribution in the lives of others.

PRAY FOR:
• comfort and healing for boys and men who have suffered sexual violence
• workers like Charles and Vivian who are supporting victims of abuse, thanking God for them
• the World Cup Project as it combats sexual exploitation in Brazil

www.tearfund.org/gender
As a child I watched my father beat my mother and draw blood,' says Alicia. 'When this happened, my brothers and I cried and screamed... but we couldn’t do anything to protect my mother.’

Alicia is one of too many young people in Lima, Peru, whose family life and upbringing were marred by violence and instability. Alicia met her husband when she was still a teenager. At first, things were okay, but their relationship was put under extreme pressure when there wasn’t enough money even for the basic necessities. ‘When I asked for food, my husband screamed and punched me,’ says Alicia.

Tearfund partner Agape works in Lima to provide social, psychological and pastoral support to vulnerable children and teenagers. Agape staff supported Alicia and her husband to attend a course about tackling domestic violence, and they also provided follow-up support.

I feel happy because I’m learning, and am improving life for my family,’ says Alicia, who is feeling more confident and hopeful for the future, and hopes to start a business to earn more income for her family.

PRAY FOR:
- the many young people who grow up surrounded by violence
- the future of families who have suffered violence
- the continuing work of Tearfund partner Agape

Precious Mthembu is a retired single parent with grown-up children. She survived many years of an abusive marriage where rape and violence were part of her daily life, but she persevered and kept her marriage together because that is what her religion and culture expect from her as a married woman. One day she snapped during the normal violent fights with her husband and she stabbed him in self-defence. Unfortunately no one believed her story and even her children blamed her and disowned her.

She is struggling to deal with her painful past; she still has nightmares of that traumatic experience and is grieving the loss of trust and meaningful relationship with her children and grandchildren.

She still mourns the death of her abusive husband and wishes to support other women in a similar situation so that they can heal.

PRAY FOR:
- healing of memories for all those affected by situations of gender-based violence, for survivors, perpetrators and their families
- for just and equitable relationships between men and women

‘HE WILL WIPE EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES. THERE WILL BE NO MORE DEATH’ OR MOURNING OR CRYING OR PAIN, FOR THE OLD ORDER OF THINGS HAS PASSED AWAY.

REV 21:4
**DAY 14**

**PRAYER FOR THE WE WILL SPEAK OUT COALITION AND ITS MEMBERS WORKING WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH**

We Will Speak Out (www.wewillspeakout.org) is a global coalition of Christian NGOs, churches and organisations, supported by an alliance of individuals, who together commit themselves to see the end of sexual violence across communities around the world.

The WWSO coalition is committed to empowering women and girls, to transforming relationships between women and men, and to ensuring that the voices of survivors of sexual violence – women, girls, men and boys – are central to their work.

**PRAY FOR:**
- thank God for giving Tearfund the vision to bring together so many key Christian denominations and groups with a commitment to end sexual violence globally
- we hope that together we will be able to demonstrate the power of the global church as intended by God and that the world will see that power expressed in practical action
- pray for the launch of the national chapters of the coalition in South Africa in November 2013 and DRC in January 2014

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**DAY 15**

**SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA**

Janet Ndamase was raped several times in her youth and the pain and trauma that she felt led her to start an organisation to empower young girls. Her vision has been to transform her painful experience and anger to help bring healing to young vulnerable girls, to enable them to cope with their pain and trauma and receive much-needed support to go on through life. Janet works in schools, mentoring young people and running seminars and workshops to create awareness around issues of relationships, sexuality and culture.

**PRAY FOR:**
- individuals like Janet who have used their painful and traumatic experiences to help others who are vulnerable
- for all young people to receive support and advice around issues of relationships and sexuality

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**DAY 16**

**GRACE’S STORY, RWANDA**

Grace from Rwanda was 16 when her aunt’s husband started to rape her. ‘He said that if I didn’t let him do what he wanted, he would kill me,’ says Grace. When Grace discovered she was pregnant, she was terrified. But she found the courage to tell doctors and the police what was happening. The police, doctors and her aunt, who she lives with, supported Grace, and her rapist was put in jail. Grace gave birth to a baby boy, Pascal, who she loves, and her aunt continues to support her. However, she feels stigmatised by the rest of the community as a result of what happened to her. ‘No one in my community supported me apart from my aunt,’ says Grace.

Tearfund’s church partners in Rwanda, where an estimated 30 per cent of women have experienced sexual violence, are working to raise awareness of these issues and support those affected. They are working to change national policies and local attitudes, to help ensure people like Grace are supported, not ostracised, and more attackers like hers are exposed and brought to justice.

**PRAY FOR:**
- the many girls across the world like Grace who are affected by rape
- strength for communities and churches to support victims of rape
A prayer for those working to end violence against women.


God bless you
with insight to recognise violence in all its forms,
and courage to name it,
speaking out for justice. Amen.

The Lord Jesus bless you
with compassion for the vulnerable,
and grace to stand with them,
sharing his strength. Amen.

The Holy Spirit bless you
with a prayerful heart,
and power to breathe peace,
transforming the world. Amen.

The blessing of the holy and glorious Trinity, eternal Wisdom, living Word, abiding Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Visit www.tearfund.org for further news, stories and other prayer resources on ending gender-based and sexual violence.
Thank you for joining with us in prayer. Let’s continue to pray until there’s an end to gender-based violence.

CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINES
If you have been affected by any of the information above and would like to speak to someone confidentially, contact your church leader or please call

National Domestic Violence Helpline (UK) 0808 2000 247
If you are based overseas, please go to www.hotpeachpages.net to find a helpline.

With thanks to the Anglican Church of Australia for this prayer