

TEARFUND PRESS RELEASE Monday 28th May 2007

Tearfund appeals to Pembrokeshire for prayers and funds as Darfur Crisis deepens.

A Kilgetty based volunteer is today appealing to the people of Pembrokeshire to give generously to help some of the 2 million affected by the desperate humanitarian crisis in war torn Darfur. Tearfund is one of the 12 members of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) who launched its Darfur, Chad and Central African Republic emergency appeal on Thursday 24th May(www.dec.org.uk).

Sharron Hardwick, Tearfund's voluntary media officer for Pembrokeshire, says, "Darfur is a tragic humanitarian situation, which mostly goes unnoticed, where people die on a daily basis from unmet basic needs such as food, medicine and water. People live their lives in fear, so that daily chores, such as collecting firewood or water become life threatening activities. The prayers and generosity of Pembrokeshire people will help to ease this tragedy "

Tearfund's representative for Broad Haven Baptist Church, Mrs Ann Maull, has taken action on the Darfur appeal: 'In Broad Haven Baptist Church we have raised the Darfur crisis with the church and will be collecting money to send to Tearfund over the next few weeks. One of our House-Groups has established a voluntary TAP TAX. We realised that the group has access to over 200 fresh ,clean water supplies each day. By collecting monies each week for each tap in our homes we plan to raise enough money to sink a well in a Third World community that has no such clean water and has to walk miles....and then it is likely to be polluted. £600 will sink a well in Darfur.'

More than 2 million people have been displaced and now live in squalid camps in makeshift shelters. Food and water is scarce and ongoing fighting means that people are unable to return to their homes. The UN estimates that at least 200,000 people have died since the conflict began in 2003. The conflict has worsened in recent months, with 25,000 Chadian refugees fleeing to Darfur to escape fighting in Chad. Tearfund relief workers are operating in some of the worst affected areas, ensuring access to clean water, providing food for malnourished children, and helping to prevent the spread of disease in squalid camp conditions.

Sharron Hardwick says, "With the conflict in Darfur spreading into Chad we are seeing suffering and fear on a chilling scale. Hundreds of thousands of people are, at

best in camps that are spilling over and worse still, caught between rebel incursions across the border. Tearfund has been getting relief to as many people as they are able to reach, but the situation is not improving and they have to be ready to support civilians affected for as long as they need.”

Thorya and Sara fled their home in when it was attacked in November last year with their children. “They burnt our houses, killed children, they stole our sheep, goats and donkeys,” says Thorya. “We travelled for a day on foot to El Neem camp with nothing.” And the women don’t feel safe in the camp. “If you walk half a kilometre out of the camp to collect wood you will be shot,” adds Thorya. She says the women have tried to dig wooden stumps and roots out of the ground to use as firewood rather than venturing out of the camp. Others have returned to check on what they had left behind and were attacked again.

Ibrahim is an old man who fled his home with the rest of his family when it was attacked. They arrived in the camp with only the clothes they were wearing. Looking around the camp at El Neem he says “without the NGOs all these people would suffer or die”.

It is because of people like Ibrahim and Thorya - and the tens of thousands that are at risk, that Tearfund has been at the forefront of aid relief in Darfur since the crisis began in 2003. “Tearfund is running its largest relief operation with its largest field team, with specialists in water and sanitation, nutrition and hygiene, dedicated to saving lives and sustaining life. Despite the massive challenges, aid is getting through and Tearfund’s team in Darfur are helping to save lives. But as the needs increase, more money is required to help those most in need.” says Sharron Hardwick.

People can donate to the Darfur Crisis Appeal by calling 0870 6060 900 (local call rates), visiting www.dec.org.uk or donating at any post office or high street bank.

To find out more about Tearfund’s work in Darfur please call 0845 355 8355 or www.tearfund.org/darfur

