In Nigeria, thousands of Christians are being displaced and many are killed as a result of Fulani herdsmen grabbing land by force and Boko Haram fighting to create an Islamic state. We returned from visiting our partners last November and brought back a bag of mixed feelings as well as the desire to tell stories that go mostly unreported...

On our visit, we were able to collect many testimonies telling of an increase in internal conflicts and growing instability in Nigeria. We learned the dangers of assuming Boko Haram are in retreat and all is well.

We witnessed first-hand, how areas occupied by Boko Haram have been devastated with the widespread destruction of homes, crops, churches and mosques. Many people had to flee from them and are now living in dire conditions in Plateau State and elsewhere. The scale of malnutrition and starvation caused by Boko Haram is likely to be much worse as more people are able to tell their stories. Despite some evidence of retreat, the jihadi group is still in a strong position to inflict terror.

We also noticed an obvious breakdown in the relationship between Fulani nomadic herdsmen and settled Christian farmers. What used to be largely tensions over land are becoming increasingly religiously motivated and violent. Fulani militants are reigning terror in many of the states in which HART partners operate and we heard numerous accounts from Christian eyewitnesses, including children, who told of torture, religious persecution and murder.

One day we travelled to Ropp, a village near Jos, which was one of a number of villages attacked in 2015. Churches and

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FROM HART TO HEART

A message from Corinna Loges, CEO.

‘The one who is free should help the one who is not free’

Whilst visiting our offices last autumn, our partner Doctor Sasa shared many anecdotes from his youth and work in healthcare. He gave a small snapshot into the lives of some people in Burma and their limited access to food, healthcare and education and why it is so important for us to get involved in advocating for justice.

In Burma - one of the world’s most ethnically diverse countries - ethnic minorities continue to be persecuted by its quasi-civilian government that, behind a public facade of reform, still allows ongoing abuse. Across Burma, as well as other parts of the world, there has been an escalation in conflict and human rights violations over the past few years.

When looking at the turmoil we are seeing in many countries today, one might despair and do nothing. Yet these problems will not solve themselves. They require efforts by people who are able and willing to carry on.

I often think about the dedication of William Wilberforce, the leader of the Anti-Slavery-Movement 200 years ago. At the time the abolition of the slave trade must have seemed almost impossible. However, Wilberforce’s campaign alongside the perseverance of many others, led to the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which eradicated slavery in most of the British Empire. Wilberforce died just three days after hearing that the passage of the Act through Parliament was assured. Great effort resulted in great change.

William Wilberforce’s story is of great encouragement to me as we face overbearing challenges and issues of injustice. However, we learn that it is not impossible for stubborn situations to turn around. With hope, courage, and resolution we can venture through 2017 and create positive change.

Thank you for your help in making this possible.

All the very best,

Corinna

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homes have been reduced to rubble and the vast majority of the community has been displaced. For many, it is simply too dangerous to return.

We spoke to a handful of families who went back after the attack, either to bury their dead or rebuild their home - despite the ongoing danger.

Describing what happened, one local pastor told us: “People were just sitting and the enemies came. They started cutting them.” Another said: “They were trained terrorists with guns. They killed those who couldn’t run – the aged, the children and the blind. A pastor was the first casualty. They surrounded him. They killed him and then they rejoiced, shouting ‘Allahu Akhbar’ and ‘we have got a hero’.”

The pastor further explained: “The Fulani said this is their land now. But it isn’t. It is ours. Even last August they fired shots to stop us coming here. We can’t live here without security.”

We also narrowly escaped an attack, we believe was targeted at us whilst visiting the remains of the Village.

Moving on from Ropp, we met with a large group of children living in a camp for displaced people. Three siblings...
Goodness (9), David (6) and Abednego (14) told us their story:

“The Fulani came to our village at night. The dogs were barking. There were torches on our house. Our mother and father were outside. They shot our father in the legs. They shot him again in the head. Our mother was screaming: ‘He is dead! He is dead!’ She ran to another house with our little brother. The Fulani came into our room and started cutting us. They shot little David in the tummy and he fell down. They thought we were dead. Neighbours found us and took us to the hospital. Our mother was safe. She brought us here.”

However, the picture would not be complete, if we did not tell share some good news of our visit as well. Our remarkable project partners continuously work to bring peace – especially in these turbulent times.

Despite the ongoing conflict, there are inspirational people who display high levels of creative energy in building for reconstruction and reconciliation in their local communities.

Particularly groundbreaking is the work of the Mai Adiko Peace Project in the Rayfield area of Jos.

Mai Adiko is working in a practical way to bring reconciliation between Muslims and Christians. Started by our friends Archbishop Ben Kwashi and Canon Hassan John, they make sure the project is embedded in the local community and has the support of the local Muslim leaders. Their shared vision is to create a culture of people from different communities coming together to work and be friends.

Nearly 40 Muslim women are at present attending income generation courses in dressmaking, bakery and jewellery making; and are having considerable success in economic terms as well as in building friendships with Christian women.

The reconciliation project is also reaching out to young men who, when unemployed or dissatisfied, can be a fruitful recruiting ground for extremist groups. On our visit, we met with 30 young men who had been involved with radical groups, but now would like to rebuild their lives.

We were so encouraged to see the fruit of the reconciliation and joint faith initiatives that HART supports, but we are saddened by the fact that these initiatives do not receive enough financial support to really flourish. Yet, initiatives like the Mai Adiko Peace Project, are the very lifeline providing considerable hope for the future of a country so fractured.

If you would like to support us in our mission to promote peace and reconciliation in Nigeria please use the enclosed response form. It is now more important than ever.

HART Staff visited Nigeria in November last year. You can read the full visit report here: http://www.hart-uk.org/locations/nigeria/

Corinna Loges, Chief Executive

“They killed those who couldn’t run – the aged, the children and the blind.”

The Pastor
At the time of our last visit, we were told that out of the 375 HIV positive children that were under care at the PAORINHER Centre, only eight showed signs of degeneration in health. The rest of the children were in good shape as a result of the ongoing monitoring of their treatment and nutrition by the PAORINHER staff.

The biggest problem was and still is hunger and poverty due to a prolonged drought. With your help, HART responded by providing funds for general support, five tons of food and medicine to treat opportunistic infections in HIV positive children.

We are looking to help PAORINHER to increase their HIV outreach activity and reach HIV infected children and their families further afield in the bush.

The Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre enjoyed great successes in 2016 and has ambitious plans for the New Year. The Centre has around 1,000 registered patients every year and has a staff of 50, including rehabilitative doctors, therapists, psychologists and speech therapists.

On our last visit to Nagorno-Karabakh, last September, the Director of the Centre, Vardan Tadevosyan, emphasised the essential role it played in reintegrating the disabled and changing perceptions of disability.

One example of the Centre’s vital work is 44 year old Mkhitar Stepanyan. In 1992 he was shot in the war, leaving his legs paralyzed and him bed-bound. Mkhitar soon developed a lethal pressure sore. The immense physical pain and emotional isolation left Mkhitar in a critical condition. This was when Vardan found and treated him. He asked Mkhitar to promise that he would start to do something with his time and, because he was good with his hands, Vardan suggested he started working on wood carvings.

Soon Mkhitar started to sell his artwork locally and internationally. Mkhitar regained some of his health, independence and confidence, as well as the empowering ability to financially support his family.

Vardan wants to expand the vital work of the Centre and plans to do so by building a new larger site and satellite rehabilitation stations around the country. He has begun the preliminary stages of the planning and looks forward to a time when there will be more facilities to treat more people.

However, Vardan still faces a significant amount of struggle in getting his government to support the expansion plans. It seems evident that the work of the Centre continues to contend with disregarding disability. Vardan’s work is vital in helping break down stigmas and bring relief from suffering to people beyond the current reach.

HART Staff visited The Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre in September last year. You can read the full visit report here: http://www.hart-uk.org/locations/nagorno-karabakh/

Rory Morgan, Advocacy and Research
STRENGTHENING WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

NEWS: HART is partnering with the Kachin Women’s Action Thailand (KWAT’s) to help skill-up young women from Kachin State, Burma.

In 1994, the Kachin Independence Army negotiated a ceasefire with the junta in return for significant investment in the infrastructure of the Kachin State. The promised investment was never fully delivered and in 2011 the 17 year-old ceasefire was shattered by government forces. By 2012, the outbreak of violence and severe Human Rights violations had claimed thousands of lives and displaced approximately 100,000 civilians.

The Kachin people remain seriously neglected amongst citizens of Burma and have virtually disappeared from the radar of media and advocacy.

KWAT delivers diverse programmes that affect women and their communities. Through these programmes, their efforts are focused on peace and reconciliation, and female participation in politics which includes training and empowerment of Kachin women in Burma. The programme includes a peacebuilding project, capacity building, health, anti-trafficking, political empowerment, advocacy, and the Internship programme which HART has been supporting since 2016.

The new Internship programme provides practical skills and training so that young people can work more effectively in their Kachin State based organisations. Interns will have the chance to learn about human rights, leadership, gender issues and women in politics, as well as computer skills, office management, and English.

We will also continue to support and contribute towards KWAT’s peacebuilding project. The project aims to help build a strong society founded on peace and justice through progressive peacebuilding activity.

Carolina Garcia Marengo,
Fundraising and Communication Executive

WHAT’S BEEN HAPPENING IN PARLIAMENT

As HART’s President and Founder, Baroness Cox has had a busy few months raising the issues faced by our partners in Parliament.

2016

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Sudan and South Sudan has been very active with the grave problems affecting both companies.

Caroline Cox was actively involved in gathering evidence for a report on the Khartoum Process, concerned by the failure adequately to address the Government of Sudan’s genocidal policies in Blue Nile State and the Nuba Mountains.

GOOD NEWS FROM EAST TIMOR

Our partner in Timor-Leste, HIAM HEALTH, was able to respond to the withdrawal of a significant funder not with despair but with amazing initiative and imagination. They were forced to close the residential treatment of children but increased their outreach in combating malnutrition, through taking on the training of 414 agricultural extension workers, gaining a possible outreach to over 25,000 families in poor rural areas. They also continue with the construction of community gardens where the request of local communities ensures sustainability and maximum impact, including the cultivation of the Moringa tree, of high nutritional value. We are committed to supporting them in their endeavours in 2017 and build closer ways of working together.

David Thomas, Projects coordinator

HiAM enables and encourages individuals and communities to take an active role in eradicating hunger and sustaining a healthy population.

Hands-on training for growing vegetables

Many meetings focussed on South Sudan’s bitter civil war and humanitarian crises.

Caroline Cox asked an Oral Question on Nigeria drawing on the recent HART visit, and contributed to events related to Burma.

Other significant events include meetings with senior politicians and military personnel from Armenia.

Caroline has also put down many Questions for Written Answer which serve to raise awareness of issues with which HART is concerned and to call the Government to account.
PUTTING THE FUN IN FUNDRAISING!

GET INVOLVED AND RAISE MONEY FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

We challenge you to raise money for HART by taking part in two London based 10 km runs.
9th April Victoria Park 10km
7th May Regents Park Summer 10km
For more information contact Carolina at carolina.garciamarengo@hart-uk.org

FUNRAISE FOR HART, JUST BY SHOPPING ONLINE!

You can raise money for HART without leaving the sofa! By doing your internet shopping through ‘Give as you Live’, a percentage of your online spendings will go to HART (with no extra cost to you!). Online shops include Amazon, John Lewis and Asos. Help us today by visiting www.giveasyoulive.com/join/hartuk

HELP US RAISE AWARENESS!

If you are part of a church and you would like us to come over and speak about HART or if you would like to receive more information about fundraising ideas please contact Carolina Garcia Marengo at carolina.garciamarengo@hart-uk.org

HART PRIZE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The HART Prize for Human Rights is a competition for young people who are interested in Human Rights. There are 2 competitions running.

Creative Competition: produce a creative piece of work about any humanitarian issue in any of the countries where HART works. We accept most mediums including poetry, short stories, paintings, sculptures, videos, and infographics.

Essay Competition: research and write an essay on a humanitarian topic in one of the countries where HART works. The deadline is 11.59pm on Monday 27th February 2017. There are fabulous prizes and a prestigious Awards Ceremony in London. For more information, an entry form, examples of last year’s winners and fact sheets on the countries where we work please go to our website http://www.hart-uk.org/about-you/humanrightsprize/ or email us at hart.competition@hart-uk.org

Having travelled extensively in my 20s and 30s on a shoestring budget, I visited many impoverished countries, particular in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

My memories of these experiences have remained with me over the years and when it came time to select beneficiaries of my will, HART was an obvious choice.

With an insight of global healthcare needs and human rights violations through personal encounters, I am confident that by leaving a legacy to HART to further their support, this will be used to benefit individuals and communities.


For more information please go to www.hart-uk.org/donate/gifts-in-wills

SAVE THE DATE: Ambassador Meet-up, 23rd March 2017, 18:00
For more information contact Marion Brown at marion.brown@hart-uk.org or go to http://www.hart-uk.org/about-you/humanrightsprize/

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