

# ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

**EVERY PHOTO TELLS A STORY:** The latest UNICEF report on the impact of **Cyclone Idai** says that the estimated number of people affected was 270,000 of which 129,600 were children. Zimbabweans have responded with outstanding love and generosity when their own



lives are in extreme distress due to their economic crisis. With each 10\$ purchase to assist with cyclone relief, the government charged 2% tax! Artist Fortune's wife Norah lost her teacher brother Martin as



widespread changes appeared across Zimbabwe's landscape after tropical Cyclone Idai swamped some areas with intense rainfall. Luckily his wife and children survived as they were elsewhere. The photo above shows surviving wife Maria with daughter Jane in Chimanimani during happier times. Above left, Fortune's wife Norah (seated) outside her home being consoled by a neighbour.



**DESPERATE!** from Fortune. The man (trussed up) below, his wife and children had gone three days without food so he decided to take food from a local shop in Caledonia to feed his family as nobody could help him. His luck run out and he was caught and beaten only to be rescued by locals who understood his problem. Last December he was employed but was told in January that his company could no longer continue due to financial difficulties - so he and all the others lost their jobs. Now he cannot feed his family. His neighbours said they heard that he wanted to commit suicide.'

**DESPAIR** – from Mike. ‘My 25-year-old son Tatenda (left) is still suffering from beatings by the army following recent riots. I have just returned from the clinic having experienced the decay in Zimbabwe’s medical institutions - patients died in front of me – so sad. I borrowed money to cover tests and painkillers. I am very worried John. My son did nothing and the army just beat anyone they thought may have been involved in the protests in January when many were shot. His wife Rutendo was also beaten for trying to defend him.’



**ONE ARTIST’S VIEW** from Christine – ‘The economy has slumped yet again and we feel let down by our leaders. We hoped at last for honesty and accountability. We hoped for an upturn in industry. We hoped for something to hope for. We are saddened that the march to relieve Robert Mugabe has had no effect. Of all the enemies of state since arrested, all cases seem to die a mysterious death before the courts. We are saddened by the vulgar levels of unaccountability. We wish that our finance minister would for once deliver good news that does not see us pay for sins we did not commit while the culprits walk free and live more comfortably than those earning an honest living. We

must not be party to the circus that raises funds for alcohol when children are starving, uneducated and unhealthy. We feel let down because we have become vulnerable. There are few constants left. Nothing we used to place our trust in is reliable any more. We keep on keeping

on. We must remain faithful to the name of our nation - the house of rock. We must remain true and empathetic to the next person. When we lose our empathy completely, we shall surely fall. It is stories told, jokes shared and little gestures of love passed from one person to the next around pots and packets of the little food we have to offer, that remind us we are not alone and tomorrow the sun rises and shines upon all of us.’



**ROBBED!** After attending a funeral, four men attacked and overpowered Godfrey (left) running off with his phone. Christine also had her mobile stolen. They are devastated as mobiles are vital to contact families. Luckily Teresa from Woking URC came to the rescue with replacements!



The **GOOD** news is that ArtPeace are enjoying a good harvest: certainly, an improvement on last year thanks to early maturing quality seed, fertilisers and chemicals provided by our Marlow URC friends. Photos L to R show a happy Lizeni, Fortune’s excellent crop which will last the best part of a year and Lovemore’s wife Junior harvesting. Our quick reaction in providing chemicals when crops were being attacked by the dreaded army saved the day as many of their neighbours’ fields suffered badly - the artists will share with neighbours. **Johnston Simpson**

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