

SISTERHOOD FIGHT CLUB

#MIDDAYBABYMIDDAY #SETYOURALARM #BETHECHANGE #PRAYINGFORTHEWORLD

#2: NORTH AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

- ALGERIA
- EGYPT
- LIBYA
- MOROCCO
- SOUTH SUDAN
- SUDAN
- TUNISIA
- ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
- IRAQ
- ISRAEL
- JORDAN
- KUWAIT
- LEBANON
- OMAN
- PALESTINE
- QATAR
- SAUDI ARABIA
- SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
- TURKEY
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



THE REGION

Referred to as the “cradle of civilisation” this region is home to many of the world’s oldest cultures and societies. Iconic landmarks and destinations range from the iconic pyramids of Egypt, the historical trading town of Marrakesh in Morocco, and the settings of the events in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. This region has been a central area of religious and political unrest for decades.

KEY STATISTICS

- » Since the Syrian conflict began in 2011, more than 6.6 million people have been displaced within Syria and a further 4 million have fled the country ¹
- » 57% of refugees worldwide have fled from 3 countries- South Sudan (2.4million), Afghanistan (2.6million) and Syria (6.3million) ²
- » Yemen faces unprecedented levels of need due to civil war and famine
- » Women and girls face entrenched discrimination under law and official policies
- » 18 countries in this region rank in the Top 50 of Open Doors World Watch List of Christians facing persecution in their nation ³

THE CHALLENGES

Ongoing conflict in this region has been catastrophic for civilians. Recent years have seen continual armed conflict and horrific abuses in Syria and Iraq. Civil war in South Sudan added a huge increase to the number of refugees and displaced persons while Yemen is experiencing the world's worst humanitarian crisis⁴ with its ongoing famine and war.

The nation of Syria is approaching its 9th year of civil conflict - a widespread conflict which has left an estimated 13.5 million people in need of assistance, and another 6 million displaced within their own country - half of these being children. Fighting continues with various militant groups and the Syrian army attempting to control the territory in the north of the country. Many children in Syria have never known a time without war, and 40% are unable to attend school.

South Sudan became an independent state in 2011 as an outcome of a 2005 agreement that ended Africa's longest running civil war. However independence has not brought peace but yet another civil war lasting 5 years which affected more than half the population by extreme hunger and famine. This country is home to the largest refugee population with 65% of refugees under the age of 18, 2 million internally displaced and another 2 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. More than 230,000 South Sudanese have been sheltered in UN bases across the country. Women and children are at high risk of exploitation and violence.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has reached unprecedented levels of need. Between civil war and ongoing famine, three-quarters of the population are requiring some form of basic assistance to survive.⁵ More than 3 million people - including 2 million children - are acutely malnourished, which makes them more vulnerable to disease.

Across the region, women and girls face entrenched discrimination under law and official policies and there is a lack of protection from sexual and other violence. A bad record continues for women's rights in Iran and Saudi Arabia. Women in Saudi Arabia were prohibited to drive up until 2018. Strict codes of dress and behaviour are in place in both countries. Early and forced marriage continues for girls in Yemen and high rates of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) have been reported in certain provinces.

Adolescent girls are around one-third less likely to experience FGM than 30 years ago, however due to strong social pressure it remains an underground practice. More than 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 30 countries in Africa and the Middle East where FGM is concentrated.⁶

Persecution of the Christian Church occurs in this region. According to the World Watch List created by Open Doors, 18 countries in this region are in the top 50 countries with the most severe Christian persecution.⁷

SO WHAT DO I PRAY FOR?

PRAY FOR STABILITY AND FREEDOM OF CHOICES.

We pray for economic stability that people might be able to flourish and live healthy and safe lives, that they might have the ability to choose wisely for their children and protect their future. Isaiah 60:1-3, Isaiah 61:4

PRAY AGAINST WAR.

We pray against conflict that tears apart the region and its people, displaces the innocent, and exposes the vulnerable to dangers. We pray for oppressors to be brought to justice. We pray that peace will reign in this region. Leviticus 26:6, Psalm 99:4, John 16:33

PRAY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.

We pray that the rights of women will be upheld and for protection against violence and abuse. We pray for girls to receive an education and fulfil their potential. Psalm 140:12, Psalm 36:6

PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE AND OPPRESSED.

We pray against abuse and Female Genital Mutilation. We pray against terrorism, discrimination and exploitation. We pray for shelter, security and hope for refugees and displaced people. Psalm 82:3-4, Isaiah 40:29, Jeremiah 31:17, Psalm 91

PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH.

We pray for the Church, for those who are facing persecution for the name of Jesus. We pray that those being persecuted will be strengthened and we pray for those who are persecuting that they will meet Jesus. Isaiah 55:7, Romans 5:6-8, 2 Timothy 2:25, Psalm 94:16, Proverbs 31:8, Matthew 9:37-38

*I BELIEVE THAT THE WEAPON
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
MUST BRING TO THIS CURRENT
GLOBAL TABLE OF UNREST AND
CRISIS IS PRAYER. IT'S A WEAPON
THAT MANY OUTSIDE OF FAITH
MAY NEVER TRULY UNDERSTAND
NOR EVER APPRECIATE - BUT
REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY
DO OR DON'T PRAYER IS WHAT
ENGAGES THE SPIRITUAL REALM
THAT IS SO OFTEN AT THE CORE
AND CAUSE OF TODAY'S
PROBLEMS."*

*Bobbie Houston
excerpt Chapter Twenty-one
The Sisterhood*

BRAVE WOMEN

Run in Our Family

Among those who are championing the cause of women in this region is 21 year-old Malala Yousafzai. From 2009 Malala began to write and speak out about restriction of girl's education and other rights in Pakistan. She received death threats and was sought out and shot by the Taliban in 2012. Malala survived and has become a global advocate for girl's education. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 and works to bring awareness to the positive impact of girls' education and to empower girls to raise their voices, to unlock their potential and to demand change.

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The Sisterhood Fight Club is all about letting prayer do the heavy lifting as we turn our attention to a world that is broken on many levels and in need of restoration. Our world is a place of beautiful and challenging complexity. We do not claim to be experts, nor to understand or represent this complexity fully. This is a brief collection of information and examples based on our research.

Through prayerful reflection we seek to learn, empathise, add our support to the efforts of brave women everywhere, and continue to grow in our understanding through the help of the Holy Spirit. Let our churches and homes be known as "a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:7).

Join us! Set your alarm at #middaybabymidday and pray with us for the world.



Address: c/o Hillsong Church, PO BOX 1195 Castle Hill NSW 1765, Australia
Web: www.thecoloursisterhood.com Email: coloursisterhood@hillsong.com Phone: +61 2 8853 5353

 @coloursistahood

 The Colour Sisterhood

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REFERENCES

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² www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic/about-ocha-syria

³ www.opendoors.org.au/persecuted-christians/world-watch-list/

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032811>

⁵ www.news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1020232

⁶ www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation

⁷ www.opendoors.org.au/persecuted-christians/world-watch-list/