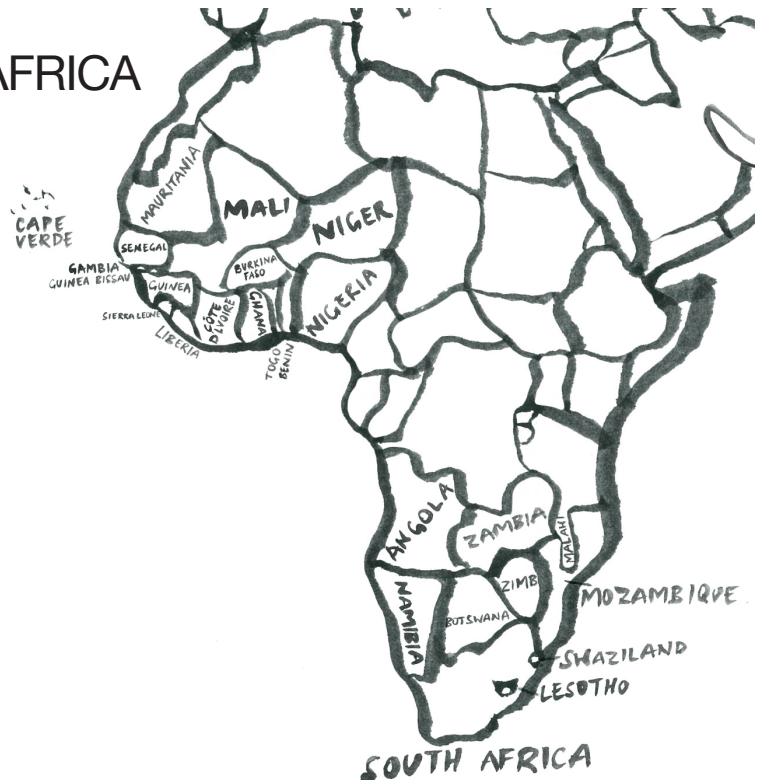


SISTERHOOD FIGHT CLUB

#MIDDAYBABYMIDDAY #SETYOURALARM #BETHECHANGE #PRAYINGFORTHEWORLD

#5: WESTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA

- ANGOLA
- BOTSWANA
- LESOTHO
- MALAWI
- MOZAMBIQUE
- NAMIBIA
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SWAZILAND
- ZAMBIA
- ZIMBABWE
- BENIN
- BURKINA FASCO
- CAPE VERDE
- CÔTE D'IVOIRE
- GAMBIA
- GHANA
- GUINEA
- GUINEA BISSAU
- LIBERIA
- MALI
- MAURITANIA
- NIGER
- NIGERIA
- SENEGAL
- SIERRA LEONE
- TOGO



THE REGION

Western and Southern Africa boasts rich cultural heritage and breath-taking landscapes. Economically, Western Africa is at the heart of Africa's transformation. With a projected growth rate of 7.4 per cent in 2014, it is the fastest growing region in the continent. As many countries in the region undergo a strong stabilization, emerge from conflict, or even rise to middle income status, the region begins to reap the fruits of its regional and global integration.¹ 70% of the world's cocoa beans come from four West African countries: Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon.² In Southern Africa, roughly half of the world's vanadium, platinum, and diamonds originate in this region, along with 36% of gold and 20% of cobalt.³ It's been over 20 years since apartheid has ended in South Africa. In that time, more households have access to electricity (85.3% compared to 50.9%), the murder rate has more than halved, and there are more people living in formal houses as compared to makeshift shelters.⁴

KEY STATISTICS

- » The militant Islamist group Boko Haram has abducted women and girls, used childrens as young as 12 in conflict, and killed hundreds of people in attacks.
- » South Africa is a key destination country for trafficked victims in the region.
- » Sub-Saharan Africa has the most serious HIV and AIDS epidemin in the world with more than 27% of Swaziland's population living with the virus.
- » According to 2019 estimates, there are approximately 1.6 million children working on cocoa plantations in Ghana and Ivory Coast alone, with more than 40% being young girls and working under abusive conditions.

THE CHALLENGES

The militant Islamist group Boko Haram has abducted women and girls, used children as young as 12 in conflict, and killed hundreds of people in attacks.⁵ In 2014, conflict between Boko Haram and government forces caught the world's attention when 276 schoolgirls were abducted from Chibok.⁶ A reported 1.4 million children have been forced to flee their homes because of the conflict between the Nigerian military, civilian self-defence groups, and Boko Haram, with severe acute malnutrition on the rise.⁷

Sub-Saharan Africa has the most serious HIV and AIDS epidemic in the world.⁸ In 2017, an estimated 19.6 million people were living with HIV, accounting for more than half of the global total. In the same year, there were an estimated 1.8 million new HIV infections and 940,00 AIDS-related deaths.⁹

Southern Africa is still in a state of moderate drought caused by severe and long-lasting El Nino weather patterns. Although water restrictions have decreased significantly from their peak in 2018, agriculture industries took a big hit particularly with their most profitable product, maize. Malawi is experiencing a large maize deficit due to extreme weather conditions. Zimbabwe has expressed need of nearly \$1.6 Billion (USD) in aid to help pay for grain and other food. 14 million people in this region already face hunger.¹⁰

Poverty in South Africa is taking a toll on the country as a whole. In 2016, the country's finance minister Pravin Gordhan made a budget speech in which he presented the trifecta affecting South African economy: shrinking growth, 25% unemployment, and widespread poverty. Over the last 18 months, there has been a 30% depreciation of the South African currency, and after Gordhan's speech, its value fell again.¹¹ At the same time, the high rate of urbanization (people moving to urban areas) adds to the poverty issue with the existence of slums. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT) defines a slum as an urban area with a lack of basic services (sanitation, potable water, and electricity), substandard housing, overcrowding, unhealthy and hazardous locations, insecure tenure and social exclusion. In sub-Saharan Africa, 71.8% of urban dwellers live in slums, the highest proportion in the world.¹²

South Africa is the main destination country for trafficked victims in the region. In most cases women and children are lured in with the promises of Jobs, education or marriage only to be sexually exploited.¹³ Nigerian crime syndicates are active in the region and internationally. Nigerian organised crime related to trafficking has been identified by EUROPOL as one of the biggest law enforcement challenges for European governments.¹⁴

There is evidence that child trafficking for forced labour still existent in cocoa-growing regions. The low income of cocoa farmers can result in human and labour rights violations on cocoa farms. It is estimated that there are over 1.6 million children working on cocoa plantations in Ghana and Ivory Coast alone, over a quarter of them working under abusive conditions.¹⁵

There is persecution of the Christian Church in this region. According to the World Watch List, created by Open Doors, 3 countries in this region are in the list of the top 50 countries with the most severe Christian persecution. As of 2016, Nigeria ranks 12th due to a religiously oppressive government and Islamic extremism.¹⁶ Thousands of Christians have been killed or displaced by Islamic extremists depriving Christians of their farming land and livelihoods.¹⁷

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 CORRUPTION.

We pray against greed and political corruption that robs this region of its resources and potential. We pray that just leaders will be birthed and elected. We pray that military conflict will cease allowing nations to be restored. Psalm 7:9, Psalm 2:10-11, Jeremiah 22:3

PRAY AGAINST CONFLICT.

We pray against conflict and its impact on children and families. We pray for healing. We pray that peace will reign throughout the land. Leviticus 26:6, Psalm 99:4, John 16:33

PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE AND OPPRESSED.

We pray against abuse and domestic violence. We pray against racism and discrimination and for marginalised and vulnerable groups to have equal access to education, healthcare and protection under the law. We pray against the effects of illegal drug use, manufacturing, and sale. We pray for health and healing, provision of food and shelter for those in need, and hope for those who are discouraged. Psalm 82:3-4, Isaiah 40:29, Luke 19:10, 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 the Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa). This organization was established in 2006 under the laws of the Republic of Ghana as a women-focused, women-led Pan-African NGO whose mandate is to promote women's strategic participation and leadership in peace and security governance in Africa. From working within adolescent and young girls throughout West Africa, WIPSEN-Africa has learned that given the appropriate training and mentorship, young girls are able to overcome their experiences of violence and discrimination and develop the confidence to affect positive change within their communities.

Source: <http://www.wipsen-africa.org/wipsen/about>

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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.



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 @coloursistahood

 The Colour Sisterhood

 coloursisterhood

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