

Christian Aid Ireland magazine

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Autumn/Winter 2021

A woman with a serious expression holds a young child in her arms. They are standing in a flooded field with sparse, struggling crops. The woman wears a grey dress with a vibrant, colorful pattern and a beaded necklace. The child is wearing a pink top and blue shorts. The background shows a vast, flat landscape under a clear sky.

Conflict and climate change bring hunger

Millions just
one step away
from famine

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aid

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actalliance

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Rosamond Bennett

Chief Executive, Christian Aid Ireland

Belfast

96 Beechill Road, Belfast, BT8 7QN
Tel: 028 9064 8133
Email: belfast@christian-aid.org

Helen Newell

Senior Church and Community Officer

Dublin

Canal House, Canal Road,
Dublin 6, D06 FC93
Tel: 01 496 7040
Email: dublin@christian-aid.org

Dee Huddleston & Michael Briggs

Church and Community Officers

Cork

Hill View, Bandon, County Cork
Email: cork@christian-aid.org

Andrew Coleman

Church and Community Officer

NI Company no: NI059154
NI Charity Commission no: NIC101631

ROI Company no: 426928
ROI Charities Regulatory no: 20014162

Give thanks with a donation



Have you or your loved ones received the vaccine?

Help us protect the most vulnerable while the vaccine remains out of reach for so many. caid.ie/vaccine

Charity shop



Garvagh (near Coleraine)

The shop at 85 Main Street, Garvagh is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am until 4.30pm and on Saturday 10am until 4pm

Editor: Lisa Fagan

Contributors:
Katie Cox, Paul Donohoe,
Dave Thomas

Cover image:
Asunta Nyanut Deng and granddaughter. Floods destroyed Asunta's crops. Full story on pages 6-7.
Credit: Christian Aid/
Silvano Yokwe

Mission statement

The work of Christian Aid Ireland is based on our Christian belief that everyone, regardless of their faith or race, is entitled to live a full life, free from poverty.

We believe in tackling the root causes of poverty, not just their symptoms. We believe that the world can and must be changed so that there is equality, dignity and freedom for all.

Please visit our website at: christianaid.ie



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I want to thank each and every one of you for the extraordinary love you have shown to the world's most vulnerable people at a time of crisis. Despite the difficulties and uncertainty that coronavirus has brought into all our lives, you have continued to support our work with your donations, your fundraising and your prayers.

The vaccine roll-out has been a huge blessing and I'm sure, like me, you're grateful that you can do more of the things you enjoy and see the people you love. But as we know, not everyone has this privilege. It is deeply unjust that so many people across the world cannot access vaccines. And for many communities around the world, in countries such as Afghanistan and South Sudan, the spread of coronavirus is not the only – or even the worst – crisis they face. Conflict and climate change are powerful drivers of poverty, bringing hunger and hardship.

I'm sure all of you have watched with concern the situation unfolding in Afghanistan this summer. Christian Aid has been working in Afghanistan for 30 years and we will not desert the Afghan people now. In uncertain times we will continue to do all we can to reach those in need and distribute emergency supplies to the most affected communities.

As we approach the last few months of the year, we have an opportunity to raise the voices of our global neighbours and call for climate justice. In November, the United Nations climate talks (COP26) will be held in Glasgow.

Creator God,
from the tree of the garden of Eden,
to the tree in the city in Revelation,
we thank you for your vision of
creation healed.

Help us to be your agents of
restoration,
tending to the beauty of the Earth,
and enabling your healing of the
nations.

Amen



Together our actions have impact, and together we can sustain one another for the journey ahead. The science is clear and the time is now. We must make deep and urgent cuts in our greenhouse gas emissions if we are to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown.

We must not lose hope. The seas are rising but so are we! In this season, let us rise up and demand action from our political leaders. Let us rise up and demand justice for our global neighbours.

With every blessing

Rosamond

Rosamond Bennett
Chief Executive, Christian Aid Ireland

We've been calling many of our supporters over recent months. It's been great to chat and hear your reasons for supporting us. Please continue to share your thoughts by emailing ireland@christian-aid.org or via social media.

Gaza airstrikes

In May, the threat of eviction of Palestinian families living in the Sheikh Jarrah district in East Jerusalem followed by the storming of the Al-Aqsa mosque by Israeli police stoked tensions and violence across Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

The violence culminated with Hamas and other militant groups firing rockets into Israel and the Israeli army carrying out airstrikes across Gaza. Over 11 days, more than 250 Palestinians including 66 children were killed and nearly 2,000 others were injured. Twelve people including two children were killed in Israel.

During the violence, Christian Aid heard from Rana Abdallah, who works for our local partner, the Women's Affairs Centre, about what life was like in Gaza during the bombardment.

'We felt huge explosions. The whole house shook. My children were terrified. A friend of mine is staying in a warehouse with her husband and four children because her house was destroyed in an airstrike.'

With support from Irish Aid and others, Christian Aid continues to work closely with local partners in Gaza to provide support to some of the most vulnerable people, offering food, free legal aid and support to survivors of sexual and physical violence.



Above: The aftermath of an Israeli airstrike in the town of Beit Lahia in northern Gaza on 13 May 2021.

Credit: Chine Nouvelle/SIPA/Shutterstock



Left: Rana Abdallah works for Christian Aid's local partner, the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza.

Haiti earthquake

A massive earthquake struck south-western Haiti on 14 August claiming over 2,200 lives and injuring more than 12,000 people. The earthquake destroyed more than 50,000 homes and damaged nearly 80,000 more.

Working through our local partners Konbit pou Ranfòse Aksyon Lakay (KORAL) and Service Jésuites aux Migrants Haiti (SJM Haiti), and with emergency funding from Irish Aid, Christian Aid has provided cash grants of around \$2,000 to 32 community groups to support more than 800 particularly vulnerable families living in Les Cayes and Cavaillon, two of the worst affected towns.

These grants allow local communities to decide for themselves the most urgent priorities for earthquake survivors and will be spent repairing vital water systems and fixing roads as well as buying food and other essentials.

A woman sits in front of a house destroyed by the earthquake in Camp-Perrin, Les Cayes, Haiti.

Credit: Joseph Odelyn/AP/Shutterstock



India's deadly coronavirus second wave

Mrs Hasinur collecting a food ration provided by Christian Aid's local partner in Delhi.

Credit: Lambard Regulus/EFICOR

Earlier this year, India faced a deadly second wave of coronavirus infection and at one point was reporting over 400,000 new cases a day, although relatively low testing rates mean that the true number was likely higher.

At the height of the crisis, Christian Aid heard from one local partner based in northern India who described public hospitals running out of beds, medicines and oxygen, leaving some people unable to get the treatment they desperately needed while forcing others to try to source their own oxygen to survive.

Thanks to your generous support, together with funding from the UK Disasters Emergency Committee, eight Christian Aid partners reached over 100,000 vulnerable people in Delhi and across four states in northern India, primarily by providing families with food, cash and covid-care kits containing soap and reusable masks. They also shared vital information on how to prevent the spread of coronavirus and the importance of vaccinations.



Africa struggles with worsening pandemic

Below: Martha Ayua arrives to collect her hygiene kit in Benue state, Nigeria funded by Christian Aid's coronavirus appeal. Martha was disabled in an accident.

Credit: Christian Aid/Latitude Space

During the summer, Africa experienced a third wave of coronavirus infection. In July, the World Health Organisation said that coronavirus cases in Africa had risen for eight consecutive weeks and that the continent had recorded a week-on-week rise in coronavirus deaths of more than 40% as hospital admissions jumped and oxygen and intensive care beds were scarce.


Just 2% of all doses administered around the world have been in Africa and a lack of vaccines is leaving people at the mercy of the virus.

Christian Aid has worked with local partners in 12 African countries throughout the pandemic to help keep people safe.

In South Sudan, we supported our partner, the South Sudan Council of

Churches to provide a coronavirus helpline which provided callers with pastoral care, emotional support and accurate information. In Nigeria, we distributed covid-care kits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus in camps for people displaced by violence.





Asunta Nyanut Deng (pictured with her granddaughter) is a 55-year-old mother of six, living in north-western South Sudan where 10% of the population are at risk of starvation.

Credit: Christian Aid/
Silvano Yokwe

Hunger crisis raises fear of famine

Millions across the world are right now at risk of dying from starvation. According to the World Food Programme, 41 million people in 43 countries are on the brink of famine, almost 50% more than in 2020.

In four countries - Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan and Yemen - nearly 600,000 people are already facing starvation.

While there should be no place for famine in the 21st century, the combination of conflict, covid and climate change is creating the conditions which could see a staggering number of deaths if the world does not act immediately.

Christian Aid and its local partners are responding to the worsening food crisis in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Burkina Faso. All four countries are dealing with conflict, resurgent waves of coronavirus and the impact of climate change.

In South Sudan, 2.4 million people are at risk of falling into famine including over 100,000 facing starvation. Colleagues in South Sudan say that too many people do not know where their next meal is coming from with some people having no choice but to cook leaves or eat lily pads to survive.

Asunta Nyanut Deng is a 55-year-old mother of six, living in the Aweil region in the north-west of South Sudan where around 10% of the population are at risk of starvation. Asunta's farmland was devastated by floods. She said: 'The flood caused the crops on my farm to fail. I have to hunt for leaves to cook for my family to survive.'

Working through local partners, Christian Aid is responding to the food crisis in South Sudan by providing cash, farming tools and fishing kits to vulnerable families as well as giving mothers vital nutritional information.

Christian Aid also partners locally with the South Sudan Council of Churches to help resolve disagreements peacefully and prevent outbreaks of violence that can disrupt harvests or leave people in desperate need of aid. Despite the vital role of peacebuilding in preventing a worsening hunger crisis, UK Aid stopped funding Christian Aid's peacebuilding initiatives in April when the UK cut its overseas aid budget, leading to a 59% reduction in aid spending in South Sudan. Christian Aid continues to carry out peacebuilding work with funding from Irish Aid.

Conflict, displacement and drought have also left 11 million people in Afghanistan facing food shortages including 3.2 million people who are just one step away from famine. Violence across the country forced people to flee their homes which, combined with a drought declared in June, could devastate rice and wheat harvests, further pushing up food



Severe drought caused Ghulam Hazrat to abandon his rural home in Badghis province, Afghanistan to settle in Zaimati displacement camp where he was able to receive support.

Credit: Christian Aid/AHDAA

prices. Afghanistan also struggled to cope with the impact of a third wave of coronavirus infection.

Christian Aid and local partners provide support to displaced people in Afghanistan, including to some of those who had to abandon their homes following a severe drought in 2018 and we will once again focus efforts to reach those displaced because of fighting or the impact of the current food crisis.

One of those we reached was the family of Ghulam Hazrat who left his rural home in Badghis province so he could receive support in Zaimati displacement camp. The father of five suffered serious back injuries as a result of a car accident, leaving him lame in his left leg and unable to work. Ghulam said: 'The drought affected us a lot, we were hungry and thirsty. It forced us to leave our homes.'

We are in the grip of a global hunger emergency and urgent action is needed now to save lives. Christian Aid has launched a hunger appeal to raise funds to reach those at risk of famine. To help us reach even more people, please visit caid.ie/Hunger

What causes food crises?

Conflict is the root cause of nearly two thirds of all food crises across the world. Fighting drives large numbers of people from their homes, their land and their jobs. Conflict and displacement also prevent people from farming their land and growing or harvesting crops. Famines usually only occur when conflict makes it impossible to get food or aid to those most in need.

Economic shocks are a cause for over a quarter of all global food crises and over 160 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty because of the loss of jobs and disruption to markets since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The situation is particularly precarious for those without access to furlough schemes or welfare support.

Extreme weather is behind 10% of food crises. Droughts and flooding brought on by climate change are devastating for farmland and pastures. A scarcity of land and water inevitably leads to disputes between communities, which can lead to a cycle of violence that further exacerbates food shortages.

Coping with climate chaos

For a long time, 27-year-old Adut Mariu had no choice but to give her children water that she knew wasn't safe.

'We were in desperate need,' Adut said. 'To look after my children, they had to drink the dirty river water.'

People were frequently ill from drinking the water but the river closest to the village of Biet in the north-west of South Sudan was the community's only water source.

To make matters worse, Adut is also on the frontline of the climate crisis. South Sudan suffers with drought and flooding and many areas have been badly hit for three years in a row. Locust swarms have also devastated crops.

The river near Adut's village dries up during periods of drought, forcing people to walk long distances in search of water, and it floods during the rainy season, polluting fragile water sources, killing crops and destroying homes. Combined with years of conflict, climate chaos is bringing hunger and hardship to families like Adut's.

But with support from Irish Aid, the Irish Government's overseas development programme, Christian Aid's local partner sank a borehole in Adut's village, bringing clean water for her children to drink, whatever the weather.

'The water from the hand pump is very good. It's free from disease. We drink it with peace of mind.'

It means no more upset tummies from drinking dirty water.

Thanks to this borehole, Adut's family was safe the last time the river flooded. 'In the autumn it flooded, but we were not going to the river. We drank the clean water,' Adut said proudly.

The borehole is life-changing but clean water is in short supply across the region and the borehole is being used by three times more people than it should be.

Mums living in poverty face impossible choices every day. But our decision to stand with them is an easy one.

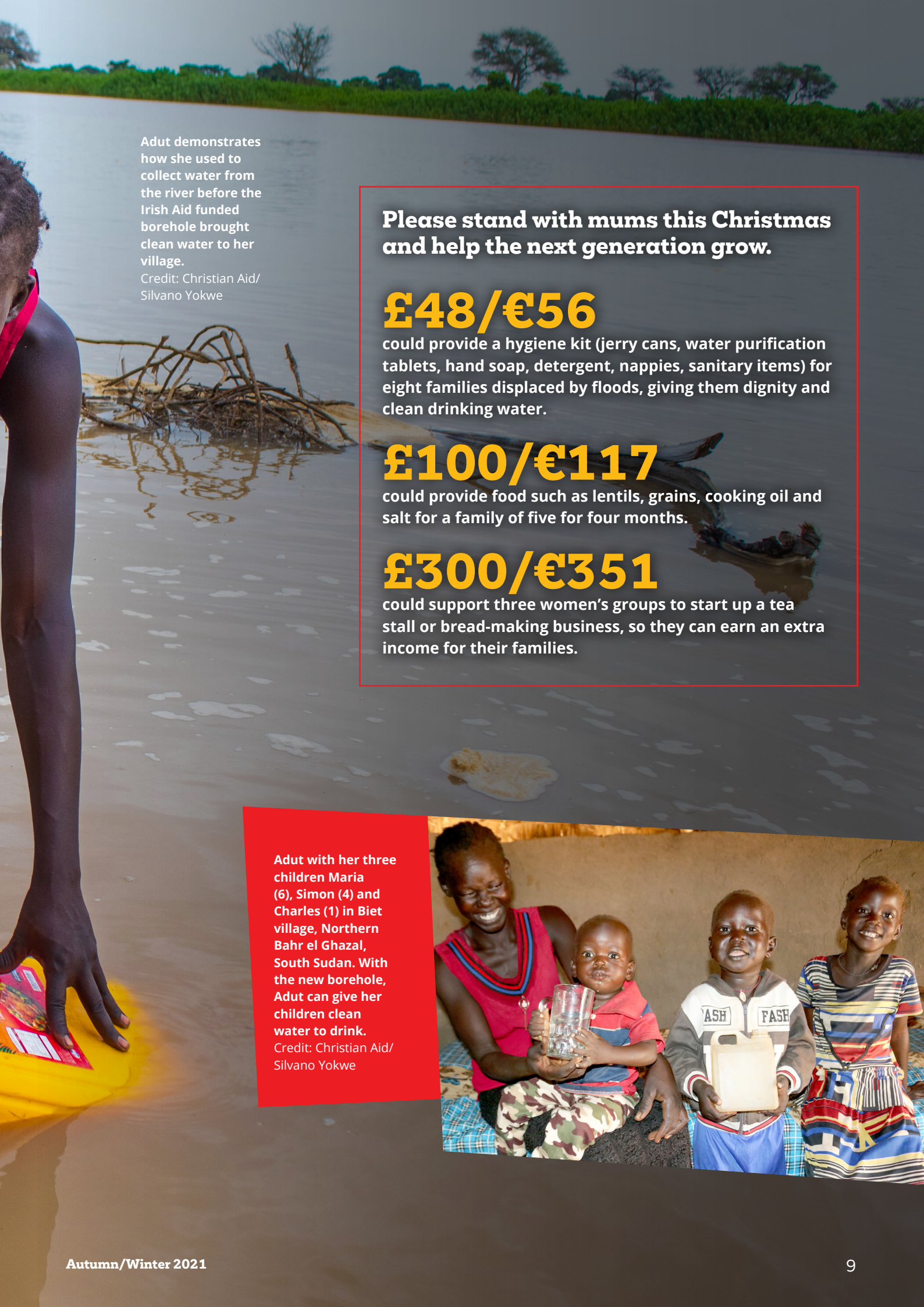
Your gifts this Christmas could help to build more boreholes, provide seeds and farming tools, and give mums the chance to set up small businesses to take care of their families.

With clean water, nutritious food and ways to earn money, mums like Adut won't have to make such impossible choices.

Life for Adut has been tough, but so is she. She's lived through displacement, conflict, loss and now the climate crisis. But she is still full of hope for her children's futures.

We all do what we can for the children in our lives, especially at Christmas. To find out more and to donate, please visit caid.ie/Christmas or you can make a telephone donation by calling 028 9064 8133 (Belfast) or 01 496 7040 (Dublin).





Adut demonstrates how she used to collect water from the river before the Irish Aid funded borehole brought clean water to her village.

Credit: Christian Aid/
Silvano Yokwe

Please stand with mums this Christmas and help the next generation grow.

£48/€56

could provide a hygiene kit (jerry cans, water purification tablets, hand soap, detergent, nappies, sanitary items) for eight families displaced by floods, giving them dignity and clean drinking water.

£100/€117

could provide food such as lentils, grains, cooking oil and salt for a family of five for four months.

£300/€351

could support three women's groups to start up a tea stall or bread-making business, so they can earn an extra income for their families.

Adut with her three children Maria (6), Simon (4) and Charles (1) in Biet village, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan. With the new borehole, Adut can give her children clean water to drink.

Credit: Christian Aid/
Silvano Yokwe



Climate action ahead of COP26

A 'code red for humanity' was how the head of the UN, António Guterres described a recent report by leading UN climate scientists detailing how human activity has changed the world's climate in unprecedented ways.

However, climate change does not affect us all equally. Developing countries are impacted the most, despite having done least to cause it and have least resources to adapt.

Christian Aid has been pushing for the Irish and UK Governments to reduce their own emissions as well as do their fair share internationally to help tackle the global climate crisis.

In July, the Dáil passed a landmark new climate law, long campaigned for by Christian Aid which puts binding emissions targets into law.

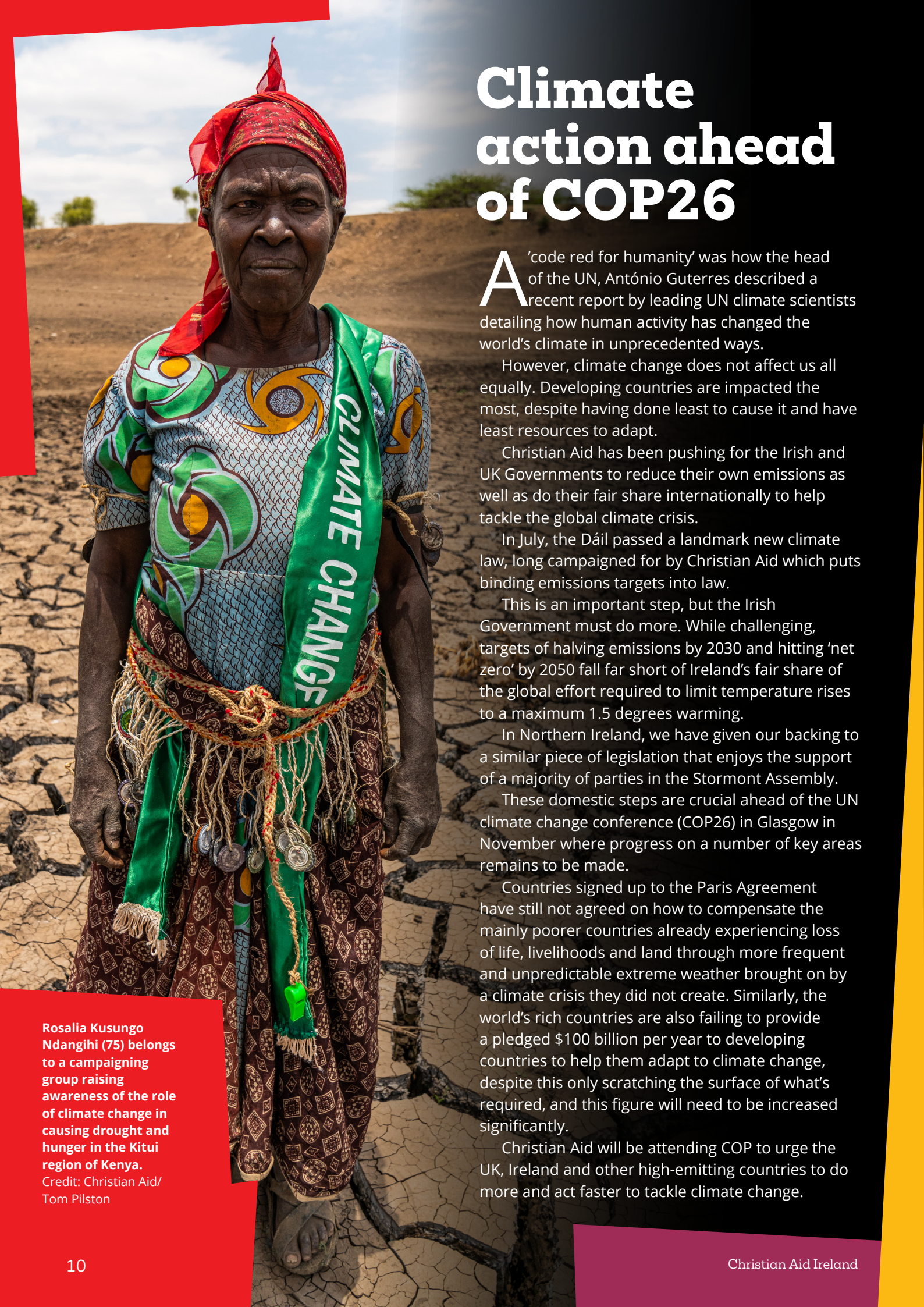
This is an important step, but the Irish Government must do more. While challenging, targets of halving emissions by 2030 and hitting 'net zero' by 2050 fall far short of Ireland's fair share of the global effort required to limit temperature rises to a maximum 1.5 degrees warming.

In Northern Ireland, we have given our backing to a similar piece of legislation that enjoys the support of a majority of parties in the Stormont Assembly.

These domestic steps are crucial ahead of the UN climate change conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November where progress on a number of key areas remains to be made.

Countries signed up to the Paris Agreement have still not agreed on how to compensate the mainly poorer countries already experiencing loss of life, livelihoods and land through more frequent and unpredictable extreme weather brought on by a climate crisis they did not create. Similarly, the world's rich countries are also failing to provide a pledged \$100 billion per year to developing countries to help them adapt to climate change, despite this only scratching the surface of what's required, and this figure will need to be increased significantly.

Christian Aid will be attending COP to urge the UK, Ireland and other high-emitting countries to do more and act faster to tackle climate change.



Rosalia Kusungo Ndangihi (75) belongs to a campaigning group raising awareness of the role of climate change in causing drought and hunger in the Kitui region of Kenya.

Credit: Christian Aid/
Tom Pilston

Ireland recognises annexation of occupied Palestinian territory



An Israeli settlement in the West Bank showing the separation wall which cuts off Palestinian families from their land.
Credit: Christian Aid/Conor O'Neill

In May, the Irish Government officially acknowledged that Israel's policy of ongoing expulsion, dispossession and settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territory constitutes de facto annexation of that land, which is illegal under international law.

In 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank and since then has transferred over 600,000 of its citizens onto

occupied Palestinian territory, fragmenting it into a series of disconnected enclaves, cutting people off from their communities and land.

For decades, Ireland and other EU states have condemned the destruction of Palestinian homes and communities and the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements but have failed to take meaningful

action to oppose this.

Christian Aid Ireland has long campaigned for the Irish Government to actively work for a just and lasting peace in the region. Recognising the reality of annexation is an important first step. The drafting of the Dáil motion was supported by Christian Aid Ireland, Trócaire, Sadaka and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Christian Aid joins People's Vaccine Alliance

Christian Aid Ireland has joined forces with other charities, trade unions and health workers to form the People's Vaccine Alliance Ireland.

Officially launched in July at an event that included a speech from Dr Mike Ryan from the World Health Organisation, the Alliance was established to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments.

As of September, only 2.2% of

people in low-income countries have received at least one vaccine dose. This inequality will cost lives and also make the emergence of dangerous new variants more likely.

Currently, big pharmaceutical companies are refusing to share vaccine recipes and know-how, which could leave poorer countries waiting until 2023 for widespread vaccination.

The People's Vaccine Alliance Ireland is calling on the Irish

Government to help address this by using its voice within the EU to support a 'TRIPS waiver', which would temporarily suspend intellectual property rights for coronavirus vaccines and allow more companies to produce and supply more doses, boosting global access. For more information, visit peoplesvaccine.ie



Solidarity walks

This year, many of our supporters completed sponsored walks to raise funds for our work and to highlight the impact of climate change on some of the world's poorest people. The walks were inspired by Rose Jonathan (68) from Kenya where drought forces her to spend up to 7 hours each day walking in search of water for her family and livestock.



↻ Rev Nicola Halford, rector of Enniscorthy, County Wexford carried 5 litres of water for 5 kms each day during Christian Aid Week, raising €3,350 for our work.

↻ Rosemary Hunter and Jenny Carmichael from Stormont Presbyterian Church in Belfast carried water around the Stormont estate during Christian Aid Week in May.



↻ Bob Loade from Craigyhill Methodist Church in Larne, County Antrim (right) fought his way back to fitness after chemotherapy treatment and in April completed a 10-mile water-carrying challenge in the hills above Larne. He was joined by his friend Allan McCullough.



↻ Rachel McCormick and the other volunteers who run our charity shop in Garvagh, near Coleraine completed a 75 km water-carrying challenge during May.

↻ Rev Ross Wilson, rector of St John's Parish, Orangefield in east Belfast and his wife Sonia led a 'walk for water' during June, raising £2,000.





◀ Six mums from Annahilt parish in County Down carried water for 5 kms at Hillsborough Park on an evening in May, accompanied by the rector Rev Robert Howard. They raised £2,500.



◀ Freddie Stirling, Christian Aid representative at Kilbride Presbyterian Church in Doagh, County Antrim completed a 75-mile sponsored 'walk for water'.



⤴ In April, Suzanne Shepherd from St Dorothea's Parish in Gilnahirk, east Belfast raised almost £6,000 with her 75 km sponsored walk, just four months after surgery for a cancer that had made walking unbearably painful.



◀ During May, Rev Tony Murphy walked for 5 km in each of the 22 parishes in the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, raising around €12,000 for a Christian Aid project tackling poverty and hunger in Burundi. Rev Tony was supported by clergy and parishioners on each stage of his pilgrimage.

⤵ Claire and Neil Farmer from St Gall's Parish, Carnalea near Bangor, County Down walked a combined total of 300 miles during May, raising around £2,000.



You can read these stories in more detail on our Facebook page at Facebook/ChristianAidIreland

Change makers

We don't have space here to celebrate the fundraising efforts of all our fantastic supporters but we want to say a special thank you to this creative pair.



⤴ Betty McCann of St Mark's parish in Armagh made this beautiful patchwork quilt and donated it to support our Christian Aid Week fundraising.



⤴ Our Kilkenny organiser, Hazel Dickinson has sold more than 150 pots of her home-made jam and marmalade, raising over €500 for Christian Aid.

A Just Word

I recently read a book called 'Knowing God' by J.I. Packer and I was struck by the author's claim that the highest privilege offered by the Christian gospel is not forgiveness but adoption into the family of God. The privilege of being forgiven is a wonderful gift but adoption is an even higher privilege made possible through the gift of forgiveness!

As with all great privileges though, adoption comes with responsibility - in this case,



Dave Thomas, Church and Community Manager

the responsibility to reflect the character and nature of our new family. Jesus said, 'let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify



Florence Muthiani adopted her nephew when he was orphaned.
Credit: Christian Aid/Tom Pilston

your Father in heaven'. (Matt 5:16)

As we love our neighbours, speak up for justice and pray for those in need, we show our new family's traits to those around us.

Teacher's gift

When Shirley Chee was a child, her parents fostered a little girl who'd been injured in the war in Eritrea. Fifty years on, Shirley is pledging a gift in her Will to help Christian Aid rebuild other lives torn apart by conflict and poverty. Lisa Fagan spoke to Shirley about her life and continued support for Christian Aid.

In June, Shirley Chee retired from a job she loved, teaching 4th class at Taney Parish Primary School in Dundrum, County Dublin.

Sitting in her home in Greystones, County Wicklow, her passion for teaching and music is undiminished even after 40 years in the profession. She said:

'I love the Old Testament stories. I used to play the piano and sing with the children - I did a rollicking good RE lesson', she laughs.

Born in Limerick and brought up in Killiney, Shirley was the eldest of three children:

'Mum was Baptist and Dad was Brethren but when they married, they joined Dun Laoghaire Methodist Church.'

The family fostered a little girl from The Bird's Nest, a children's home in Dun Laoghaire.

'She was from Eritrea and had been injured in the war. She stayed with us at weekends and in the holidays. Eventually her mum was found and she returned to Eritrea.'

This experience sparked a lifelong interest in Africa and by the time she was in her 20s, Shirley was secretary of the Christian Aid group in Dublin Central Mission.

'I was inspired by Rev John Parkin. He was fantastic, a real character. We used to raise money by holding suppers in the church hall - I remember doling out bowls of stew - and we ran sponsored walks.'

By her early 30s, Shirley had completed a Master's degree and a PhD in education, specialising in the

teaching of music. One summer, during the school holidays, she volunteered at a school in Uganda.

Shirley recently decided to leave a gift in her Will to Christian Aid. 'I want to help children like the little girl my parents fostered, children displaced by war. And I love the way that Christian Aid helps people boost their incomes by selling honey or vegetables, so they can send their children to school.'

'I don't have very much, just this house, but I decided that I would give a tenth to God - that's the share Christian Aid will receive. The rest is being divided out among my family.'

Shirley plans to keep busy in retirement. 'I love art and gardening and music, of course. I play the piano, the recorder and the cello and I sing in a choir.'

You can read a longer version of this story at caid.ie/TeachersGift



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a red top and a small diamond earring. She is looking down with a gentle expression at a baby who is wrapped in a blue blanket. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

Let your **love** live on

As a Christian Aid supporter, your love is alive across the world.

It's in the clean, fresh water in Grace's village in Kenya. It's in the relief supplies that reach Tasmin's refugee camp in Bangladesh. And it's in Johaira's smile in Nicaragua, because she knows she can provide for her precious baby - not just today, but for the years to come.

You can let your love live on. By leaving a gift in your Will to Christian Aid, you can help build a fairer, more peaceful world for the next generation.

Let your love live on with a gift in your Will. For support, please contact Sarah by email on sleeman@christian-aid.org or telephone **028 9064 8133** (Belfast) or **01 496 7040** (Dublin).