

## What is Life like today for ordinary Zimbabweans?

### Some Questions and Answers

1. Food shortages: I understand that you have had rains but is this too late for crops? How are folk in rural areas managing?

*There is a steady stream of mealie meal - but not an abundance. Grain is imported and it is very very expensive - almost 300 ZW \$ for 20 kgs. This makes it almost unaffordable for your average Zimbabwean. A loaf of bread is \$21. Some sums need doing on that to think what it would cost you for a month at a loaf a day. Meat is a dream - maybe once or twice a week. Many families have one meal a day.*

*The rain pattern has been appalling. The long-range weather forecast was for average to above average before Christmas and average to below average after Christmas, well that did not happen. Crops were planted and have failed. Our millet is a sorry sight - this is repeated through the country. At Christmas the World Food Programme estimated that 5 million people in Zimbabwe were already in need of food aid and that number is likely to increase significantly. Rural areas will be badly affected, and we can expect an influx into already overcrowded cities. We have had significant rain this last month but not nearly enough and some areas have had flooding.*

2. What is the currency now?

*The Zimbabwe dollar (ZW \$). The use of the US \$ is illegal but one can buy fuel in US \$. Everything is denominated in the US \$ and one can pay the local equivalent, but the bank rate is much lower than the reality on the street. So today the rate on the street is 28 - 30 against the US \$.*

3. Can you draw money/bonds out of the bank?

*Yes, but after a long wait and only a small amount at a time. One cannot withdraw one's salary at one time.*

4. What are the consequences of the country's economic difficulties?

Water shortages:

*We've not had enough rain. Only two of our nine storage dams are over 50% and the infrastructure to pipes and pumps is inadequate for the job. We have two 48-hour water cuts each week. Thank God we still have water. Harare is much worse*

Power:

*Power outages differ from city to city and can be up to 19 hours at a time. We are almost self-sufficient with solar power. At great expense but we cannot do what we do without it, let alone stay mentally healthy*

Telephone and mobile phone:

*Available but expensive*

Purchasing food, other goods, travel etc:

*All extremely difficult and time consuming and in the end we, and almost everyone, are tired. Most transactions have to be done electronically. All transactions over \$100 attract 2% tax and swiping with a bank card also attracts a bank charge.*

5. Consequences and follow up of Cyclone Idai.

*We hear almost nothing but what we do hear is depressing. Some people have not received assistance or had housing rebuilt and then the rainy season came. Desperate need of psychological help there.*

6. Any other information you can give so that I show a true picture of the situation in Zimbabwe

*The situation is very, very hard but we remain prayerful and hopeful.*