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## SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

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Addis Abeba, Christmas 2023

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The approaching of Christmas makes us reflect on the great Gift that God wanted to make for us by Incarnating His Son Jesus Christ in the history of Humanity. It is certainly a history made of joys and happy moments but also of lots sufferings as we missionaries in Africa can observe. However, the Child Jesus who humbly born in the Cave of Bethlehem does not want to be a beautiful space and Christmas decorations passively animated, but rather pushes us to actions that make us in **solidarity with all the needy children of the world in need of help.**

Once again let our **sincere and heartfelt THANK YOU** reach for being near to us and enabling us to help so many suffering people.

Therefore, we Missionaries of Don Bosco here in Ethiopia feel very near to so many people who suffer. Yet, we thank the Lord that despite so many problems we observe some improvement in some parts of the Country. This said, lots of things still remain to do. Currently, there are **three challenges that we need to face:**

- **Providing food** for so many families that cannot return still to their own respective homes and live in displaced people shelters.
- Helping so many babies/boys/ youth in order to **resume school activities** after three years' closure of Schools in the Tigray Region. This year most of the schools have resumed their activities and so many students need to be helped.
- **"Trauma Healing"** So many people have been traumatized because of the armed conflict and its consequent destruction, suffering and deaths. It is of paramount importance to organize meetings at various levels to **alleviate the sufferings of so many traumatized people.**

Once again let our **most sincere THANK YOU** reach you for being near to us and enabling us help so many people who suffer. We always relay on your help and **wish that the Christmas 2023 give us all so much peace and that the New Year 2024 becomes a year of serenity and well-being for all.**

With best wishes for Happy Feasts and cordial greetings,

Cesare Bullo, SDB

Salesian Missionary in Ethiopia



## Tigray Region Emergency Crisis update – December 2023

The Humanitarian crisis in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia has been escalating since November 2020, when a conflict erupted between the federal government and the regional forces. According to the United Nations, more than 5.2 million people, or 90% of the population, need urgent assistance, and more than 400,000 people face famine as a result of the conflict.

Due to the war in Tigray over the past three years, much of agricultural infrastructures have been destroyed, precious assets of farmers looted, burned and substantial number of people displaced from their homeland. Following the Peace Agreement signed in Pretoria, though the gun shot and airstrikes has been silenced, the social and economic strata has not shown much improvement at all. Instead, the situation worsened by the lack of access to basic services, such as health care, water, sanitation, education and forced displacement.

The Interim Administration of Tigray Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources has done rapid assessment on drought, agricultural hazards and response plan (Sep. 2023) and reported that South, Southeast and Eastern Zones are severely affected by drought and other hazards. Data collected from 27 districts and survey conducted on crops, livestock and natural resources indicated that there is a shortage of food and water.

The Interim Government of Tigray Regional Administration has officially declared that the region is in an Emergency situation and reported that more than 400 people have already died and among them 25 are children.

It also declared that more than two million people need immediate emergency assistance whilst more that 5.2 million are in need of food assistance. Correctly speaking more than 90% of the population of Tigray region is in need of food assistance. Many argue that the famine situation in the region is said to be worse than the famous 1984 – 85 famine where the world has extended its full fledge assistance and many lives have been saved.

The Interim Administration of Tigray established cross section committees with the representatives from NGO's, Religious leaders and government leaders to response to the crisis.

History repeate itself and the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Catholic Church in general are now again faced with the similar challenge of saving lives with very limited resources.



  
Brother Cesae Bullo, SDB  
PDO Executive Director