

Report to Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Medhanealem Church of Montreal



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## **Introduction / Situations of IDPs**

Enormous number of civilian members of the Amhara community who lived in East Wellega Zone, West Shoa Zone and other parts of Oromia region were displaced by months-long violence, persecution and brutal atrocities. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) said that unidentified gunmen were attacking residents and religious institutions. The local authorities gave a deaf ear for the atrocities and destructions. IDPs expressed that their properties and houses were turned to ashes. They have lost many of their loved ones. There are still family members being kidnapped and whose whereabouts is unknown. Those who managed all the challenges through their ways were arrived Debre-Birhan and sheltered in different IDP settings.

In order to help IDPs, Adheno's Debre-Birhan coordination office has paid courteous visits and conducted needs assessment on IDPs sheltered in public halls located in 03, 04, 06 & 08 Kebeles in collaboration with Plan Commission of Mayor's office of the Debre-Birhan town. The major purpose of the needs assessment was to provide emergency food support donated from Dir Biyabir members and supporters.

More than 30,000 ethnic Amhara have been facing brutal atrocities; their wealth has gotten looted and destroyed; and they were forced for displacement into different districts of the North Shoa Zone of the Amhara Region mainly due to their identities. As a result, they have been sheltered in different IDP sites. Some of the IDPs have been in Debre-Birhan since the assassination Artist Hachalu Hundessa. Aftermath of the killing of Artist Hachalu Hundessa, huge numbers of ethnic Amhara was displaced from Arsi, Bale Robe, Dodola, Shashamane, and Zeway. As a result, these IDPs have been staying in the town of Debre-Birhan.

Some of the IDPs in these sites told that they escaped from atrocities in their place of origin and came to Zenebework, Addis Ababa. Officials from Addis Ababa City Administration accompanied with Security forces sent them to Arjo Desert in Oromia region. However, situations got worsened in the new place. They said that they stayed in forests with their children for three days. Finally, they decided to move to Amhara region for their survival and they made it to Debre-Birhan. When they arrived in Debre-Birhan, they were welcomed by the people and the Debre-Birhan town administration. They are thankful for being still alive and they feel like home except limited access to essential services such as sleeping area, food items, and hygiene and sanitation services. The shelter is very crowded where elders, children, women and girls are living together. It was also witnessed that lactating mothers who gave birth in the last two months. From the IDPs, a priest told that they were targeted because of their identities and the region they follow. He told that they brought 80 covenants with them and put somewhere in the IDP center.

During the assessment, ADHENO learnt that IDPs who are sheltered in Kebele public halls are not getting enough supports from government and aid organizations unlike IDPs sheltered in factories that do not start operations. Having considered their immediate need of food support, ADHENO was able to get funding from its longtime partner Dir Biyabir - Ethiopian American NGO based in the United States of America.

### **Phase 1 Relief Supports**

On March 18, 2022, ADHENO has delivered Phase 1 emergency food supports to 644 IDPs sheltered in four Kebele public Halls of Debre-Birhan town which was donated from *Dir Biyabir members and supporters in the USA*. The four Kebeles include 08, 06, 04 & 03 where each Kebele contains 318, 94, 73, & 159 IDPs respectively. The provisions included 100 quintals of Teff flour, 500 liters of oil, one quintal pepper and four quintal roasted beans for making Shiro.

### **ADHENO & Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Medhanealem Church of Montreal (EOTMCM)**

The relationship between ADHENO and Medhanealem Church of Montreal started when Tsigemariam Negussie communicated Selomie Hailu (Head for Finance and Human Resource of ADHENO). Tsigemariam lives in Canada. When she came to Ethiopia, she met Selomie. In the meantime, Selomie briefed her on what ADHENO is dedicated for - integrated rural development which includes environmental rehabilitation, rural livelihood improvements, promoting basic quality education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) activities. Besides its developmental activities, Tsigemariam learned that ADHENO has been providing emergency humanitarian relief to IDPs in North Shewa zone of the Amhara region. As result, Tsigemariam has visited the IDP sites in Debre-Birhan. Since then, there have been formal and informal communications with her.

When she went back to Canada, she shared the situations of IDPs in Debre-Birhan with members of Medhanealem Church of Montreal. Having taken the issue seriously, they have been raising funds from members of the church and volunteers to support the IDPs. Finally, they were able to raise about 260,000 (Two hundred sixty thousand) ETB. Then, they sent the money in the name of *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Medhanealem Church of Montreal* for slaughtering oxen for the Easter Holiday to IDPs sheltered in different shelters of Debre-Birhan town.

On 21 April 2022, ADHENO has bought and delivered six (6) slaughtering oxen with the financial support of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Medhanealem Church of Montreal members and other volunteer donors to these IDPs for the Easter Holiday in the presence of representatives from Debre-Birhan Mayor's office and Office of North Shoa Zone Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church.



*Picture 1: The six slaughtering oxen*

### **Messages from ADHENO Staff and Guests**

Ato Isayias Fikre, ADHENO's Project Coordinator, stated that the purpose of provision of the slaughtering oxen is to make IDPs feel good that significant numbers of individuals and organizations are



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on their side and to spend the Easter Holiday at least with joyous and good feelings. In this regard, ADHENO has bought six (6) oxen with a 260,000.00(two hundred sixty thousand) Birr a donation from Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Medhanealem Church of Montreal, Canada.

Ato Yonathan Fikre, Executive Director of ADHENO, on his part, said that even though ADHENO has been dedicated for environmental rehabilitation, integrated rural development and improving rural livelihoods for long time, this time demands cooperation and supporting one another particularly to IDPs who are in desperate need of lifesaving supports. As a result, ADHENO is trying its best in raising funds by partnering with Dir Biyabir (in USA) and Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Medhanealem Church of Montreal (in Canada). Moreover, he stated that ADHENO has delivered phase2 emergency support successfully in four IDP sites taking into account the Easter Holiday. Finally, he expressed that ADHENO is getting prepared and looking for more funds for phase 3 humanitarian supports to these groups of IDPs.

Ato Bedilu Wubshet, Deputy Mayor of the Debre-Birhan town, spoke that more than 18,000 IDPs are staying in different IDP settings in Debre-Birhan town who have been displaced from different parts of the Oromia regional state. Furthermore, he said that these IDPs have been getting emergency lifesaving supports such as food, clothes, shelter and other essential services from volunteers since they came into Debre-Birhan. He also stated that these IDPs used to live better lives and they shall not continue in this condition. Also, he said that different efforts are being taken by high level officials from both the regional and federal governments in finding sustainable solutions to these IDPs.

He has also forwarded his gratitude to ADHENO and its partners for providing essential lifesaving emergency supports to IDPs in phase 1. He also told that ADHENO in partnership with funding organizations came up with phase 2 emergency supports which include in kind provisions and six slaughtering oxen to help IDPs feel better and joyous on the Easter Holiday.

Finally, Ato Bedilu calls the international humanitarian organizations to support IDPs sheltered in Debre-Birhan who are in desperate need of more emergency supports.



*Figure 2: Ato Bedilu (Deputy Mayor of the Debre-Birhan Town) and Ato Yonathan (ADEHON's ED) pictured second and third from the left respectively*

### Messages from Priests /Religious leaders

During the provision of the six oxen, Priests and clergies from Office of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of North Shoa Zone gave benedictions and blessings where IDP representatives from the four

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Kebele IDP sites, representatives from the Office of the Mayor of Debre-Birhan Administration and other volunteers were in attendance.

Priests forwarded their appreciation and [many thanks to Megabi Mistr Yitbarek](#) (from Medhanealem Church of Montreal) for coordinating members and volunteers at Medhanealem Church of Montreal to contribute for IDPs sheltered in Debre-Birhan town. They also wished [good health and successful life](#) for each of the contributors who showed us that love and humanity do not have any boundary. On the same day, other essential [food and non-food items](#) were also distributed to IDPs donated from Dir Biyabir's second phase of the emergency support concerning to the Easter Holiday.



Figure 3: Religious leaders giving benedicts



Figure 3: Ato Yonathan & Ato Isayias during buying the oxen at the market