



IOCC

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

Ethiopia Drought Threatens Survival Of 10 Million People

February 4, 2016

Baltimore, MD — International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is responding to the urgent needs of families in Ethiopia suffering through the most severe drought in 30 years. More than 10 million people face severe hunger and loss of livestock across the dry and barren plains of western Ethiopia.

Tilahun, a 53-year-old cow herder, is at risk of losing his two newborn calves and only source of income. The cows in his small herd have stopped giving milk due to lack of water and feed. The father of nine children says each day becomes more uncertain. "We've had drought before but we would move our animals to graze in the neighboring Afar region, or they came to us when they had drought. This year both regions are affected and the drought is affecting both people and animals, which makes it difficult," said Tilahun.



Lule, a mother of ten children, lost 25 of her cattle because of the drought, and struggles to save her remaining two. Ethiopia is in the grip of the worst drought in 30 years. IOCC, an ACT member, is providing much needed water for livestock, the only source of income for many rural families in the drought stricken country. *photo: WFP*

IOCC, an ACT Alliance member, is working with church partner, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission, to install five large capacity water tanks in the country's hard hit North Shewa Zone of the Amhara region. IOCC is also providing water needed for livestock in remote, drought-hit communities where little emergency relief assistance is currently available.

The arrival of water is desperately needed to spare the small herd of cattle owned by Shiferaw, 75. The nearest water source in the region is a six-hour round trip walk from his home. "I don't remember this kind of drought in my living memory," he recalled. "Due to the long distance to the river, our animals are able to reach water only once every three days." The poor harvest of teff, a nutritious staple grain in the Ethiopian diet, has also severely cut Shiferaw's income and a valuable source of food for his wife and three children. He had to sell one of his seven cows to buy food for his family.

The lack of rain during the country's short but critical rainy season has led to a severe shortage of water, and caused widespread crop failure and the death of over 400,000 livestock – a stark reminder of how fragile the food supply can become when growing conditions are severely impacted.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help the victims of poverty and conflicts around the world, like those suffering from drought in Ethiopia, by making a financial gift to the International Emergency Response Fund which will provide immediate relief, as well as long-term support through the provision of emergency aid, recovery assistance and other support to help those in need. To make a gift, please visit iocc.org or call toll free at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622), or mail a check or money order payable to IOCC, P.O. Box 17398, Baltimore, MD 21297.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has delivered \$580 million in relief and development programs to families and communities in more than 50 countries. IOCC is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of more than 140 churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy, and a member of InterAction, the largest alliance of U.S.-based secular and faith-based organizations working to improve the lives of the world's most poor and vulnerable populations. To learn more about IOCC, visit iocc.org.

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