

Later Fr. Bonaventure, the Superior and Provincial of the missionaries of Africa Congregation drove the remaining small car and left for Addis Ababa. He reached safely Addis Ababa after great difficulties, it took him 5 days.

We also receive information from the individuals who recently left both towns of **Komboleha** and **Dessie** that looting has continued from Government, Private companies, NGO's Cars and Hospitals, Medical centers, Factories, small and big shops and supermarkets, universities, schools... etc. we do not have exact data on how many civilians are killed in this situation. We need to wait until communication starts to understand the magnitude of the crisis.

#### **5. METEKEL ZONE GUMUZ – bordering the Amhara Region and the Nile Dam**

The ongoing conflict between the Gumuz and the non Gumuz begun in April of 2018 in Mambuk which is closer to Gublak. Recently, in spite of the conflict, I have been in **Gilgelbeles**, the zonal city of **Metekel** Zone where the Missions of the **Comboni** Fathers and Sisters are located, to celebrate the feast of the parish of “**Mary Mother of the Church**” and the feast of St. **Comboni** together. **I also gave confirmation for 13 persons** who were not able to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on time because of different reasons including the COVID 19 and the recent ongoing conflict. Actually, this is the First Evangelization mission area run by the Comboni Missionaries. Being able to celebrate such a feast in a peacefully gives us a sign of hope that peace is coming closer to us.

The mission in **Gublak** which is around 60 km far from Gilgelbeles toward the Nile Dam, with 10 chapels are still closed and some of the chapels are being used as a residence for the armed Gumuz groups, who are fighting against none - Gumuz. The chapels in the surrounding of **Gilgelbeles** and **Mandura** are also not functional, some are demolished partially or completely including a school, a clinic in Mangarie chapel. There were very few opportunities for us to be able to provide food items and other needs for many diverse reasons like the **Gumuz** are still in the forest, the war is still going on, once in a while. Moreover the reconciliation process is not yet conducted. This also has become a big obstacles.

In the same Zone adjacent to Pawe wereda the mission of Capuchin Fathers who have 14 chapels are relatively peaceful mission but still affected by the conflict and the war between GUMUZ and NON-GUMUZ. **Four** of the chapels at **Hidasie** and **Abay ber Village** were completely closed and the people are totally evacuated and integrated into the other 10 chapels. They are waiting for the right moment to come back to their places.

#### **6. DEBATI BULEN BURBER AND WENBERA and the following WOREDAS**

The **Dibati** wereda is where the first evangelization mission of the Eparchy of Bahir Dar Dessie and with a Parish Priest assigned in this mission. The Parish priest used to live in Dibati town alone and is very much disturbed and stressed of where there are shooting and fighting daily, they even entered into his residence and get his desktop and good enough he was not there at that moment. Because of these tensions and situations the Parish Priest had to rent a house and shifted to the closest Amhara town called **Chagni** where he can be safe but still can follow up the mission traveling every other day for Debate, 47 KM far. There are sporadic fighting happening between the armed groups and civilians in Debate town and recently there were two incidents which claimed the lives of 6 people. Our guard in Debate St. Michael parish is also killed. Within this situation we are trying to assist our catechists, hostel youth and church people to get pastoral support and food support.



## 7. AFAR - Bordering to Tigray to the north and Amhara to the west.

Afar is also highly affected by the war. It is Bordering also to Kobo town. The war was started simultaneously with the town of KOBO and the border of Afar. There is a famous place called **Galicoma**, where many innocent civilians were killed during the war. In this zone of Afar region many have been displaced. Our church is not present in this particular Zone, but we have been actively engaged to support the displaced people. In Semera Town, the capital city of Afar region, we have social service which is run by St. Mother Teresa sisters (Missionary of Charity) working with the destitute people and Kindergarten. The Eparchy have also Nativity of Mary Catholic elementary school and the parish church of Nativity of Mary of Afar.

## CONCLUSION

### “The Lord hears the cry of the poor and the sufferings”

In general, at the moment our movements are limited only in **Gojam** and **Gonder** for the reason of these two main situations:

1. The war between **Gumuz** and **non-Gumuz** in Metekel Zone of the Regional Government of Benishangul Gumuz. This has greatly affected our Evangelization mission. Previously we were baptizing more than 1,000 a year but this time no one.
2. The war between TPLF and Federal Government, which are all located in all Amhara boarder places, to Tigray, the whole **Wello** and all Afar bordering to **Tigray**.
3. As I mentioned on the first page, I am afraid that many people might have died of starvation for there is no humanitarian support entering into these towns occupied by TPLF since their occupation.

We kindly ask your generosity & understanding to support the suffering people accordingly in all the possible ways to address the difficult issues which highly affected our people. On the other hand, our clergy, missionaries, religious men and women, catechists and Church Lay leaders are highly affected too as mentioned above.

We are grateful for all the kind prayers and support that we have been receiving throughout this difficult time from our Catholic Church authorities, generous partner organizations, friends in groups and individuals from all over the world.

As the crisis is expanding the magnitude of the suffering of people is increasing daily and therefore we need to scale up support to respond to the humanitarian crisis and massive rehabilitation work in our Eparchy in the near future.

We need to work hard to rebuild peace among our communities, promote healing and social coexistence and reconciliation. As a Church, we had been working successfully in this aspects of the mission for the last decade. We believe at this it is highly needed to renew the relationship among the citizens and once again give hope of “new heaven and new earth” which the Lord has promised for us all.

I hope and pray that peace may come soon to our country in particular in the Regions of our Eparchy where the major fighting take place currently. May our merciful and loving God continue to protect us all as we respond heartily in this mission. We really need your fraternal solidarity, ardent prayers and the divine intervention now more than ever.

Thy Kingdom Come,



+ Bishop **Lesanuchristos Matheos**  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Bahir Dar-Dessie

