

SPECIAL CAMPAIGN FOR ETHIOPIAN ALIYAH

Jewish Federations take great pride in their role in the Aliyah and absorption of Ethiopian Jews. This historic effort began decades ago and continues today. Over 97,000 Ethiopians have made Aliyah with the support of Jewish Federations through their partner The Jewish Agency for Israel.

This year, the Israeli Government will admit over 3,000 more Ethiopian olim (immigrants). This next stage of Aliyah began in June 2022 when Federation leaders, together with The Jewish Agency, accompanied the first 180 new Ethiopian olim to Israel on June 1.

At the same time, thousands who remain waiting in Ethiopia to make Aliyah face a humanitarian crisis. Malnutrition, inadequate medical care, and a lack of housing have been exacerbated by Covid and a civil war.

Jewish Federations are raising \$9 million to support Ethiopians olim, as well as those continuing to wait in Ethiopia.

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-KEFALE ADDIS

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Yaliganesh Addis moved to Gondar, Ethiopia, with her parents and seven siblings to wait for approval from the Israeli government to make Aliyah. After a decade, the approvals started coming and many of the Addises were able to make Aliyah. Soon all the Addises had been able to move to Israel except Yaliganesh. She was left behind, along with her husband and children in Ethiopia, to continue waiting. In late 2020, the Israeli Government finally approved Yaliganesh and her family's Aliyah application, through Operation Zur Israel. “I have been longing for this moment for 10 years,” said Kefale Addis, Yaliganesh's little brother. “We never thought we would be separated and that Yaliganesh would be left to suffer in Ethiopia alone all this time.” Finally, the Addis family will reunite in Israel, never to be separated again.

This includes \$5 million to The Jewish Agency, over and above annual campaign funds, to prepare, transport, and help resettle these new olim on their arrival in Israel – and \$4 million to Struggle to Save Ethiopian Jewry (SSEJ) to provide two years of urgent humanitarian relief, including food and medicine, for thousands of people waiting in Ethiopia.

Background – The Historic Aliyah of the Ethiopian Jewish Community

The Ethiopian Jewish community – “Beta Israel” – was separated from the rest of the Jewish world for thousands of years. While fearing that they were the only remaining Jews, the community always longed to return to Jerusalem.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Beta Israel members began to make Aliyah secretly, heroically, and at great personal cost. These efforts culminated in Operation Moses in the mid-1980s and Operation Solomon in May 1991, with over 22,000 Ethiopian Jews arriving in Israel. Aliyah efforts continued into the early 2010s, through the work of the Israeli Government and The Jewish Agency, supported by Jewish Federations.

Thousands of people with Beta Israel ancestry or lineage remain in Ethiopia hoping to make Aliyah despite not being eligible under standard Israeli law. The Israeli government has periodically issued decisions admitting these additional Ethiopian olim on the basis of family reunification. Those awaiting Aliyah have been eagerly anticipating, some for more than a decade, to fulfill their dreams of living in Israel with their family members. Although living in harsh conditions, they have maintained a strong Jewish identity and carry out Jewish rituals as

part of daily life in this ongoing limbo.

In the past 10 years alone there have been over 200 flights chartered from Ethiopia to Israel. Even when Israel's borders were closed for Covid, Jewish Federations helped bring over 2,100 Ethiopian Olim home to Israel between December 2020 and May 2021 as part of Operation Rock of Israel.

Aliyah and Absorption: The Work of the Jewish Agency for Israel in Ethiopia and Israel

Jewish Agency services in Ethiopia includes pre-Aliyah education and preparation classes, security for approved immigrants, medical and vaccine distribution, local documents needed from the Ethiopian government, transportation within Ethiopia, and plane tickets to Israel. The Jewish Agency also supports SSEJ's humanitarian work in Ethiopia.

Once new immigrants arrive at an absorption center in Israel, The Jewish Agency provides an array of services and programs to help them successfully integrate into Israeli society. This includes housing, Hebrew ulpan classes, assistance in integrating children into educational institutions, employment guidance, and counseling services. In addition, new immigrants also receive employment trainings, and workshops on family-life management, economic management and more. Moreover, each absorption center offers lectures and classes on Israel and Israeli culture, and guided tours around the country, all with the aim of strengthening immigrants' Jewish identity and heritage.

As of August 2022, there are 5,300 Ethiopian Olim

(including 2,900 children) living in one of The Jewish Agency's Israel Absorption Centers. As they integrate into Israeli society, Ethiopian immigrants often remain in a Jewish Agency absorption center for 2 to 3 years.

Critical Humanitarian Relief: The Work of Struggle to Save Ethiopian Jewry (SSEJ)

Jewish Federations' support for SSEJ focuses on its lifesaving food relief programs, as well as medical assistance.

According to SSEJ, most people waiting to make Aliyah in Ethiopia live below the international poverty line, with rampant chronic malnutrition and severely limited access to adequate medical care and shelter.

This past year, SSEJ provided:

- Twice daily meals to 500 children under five years old, as well as 200 pregnant and nursing mothers;
- Emergency food distributions – in 2021, SSEJ gave over 14,000 people a month worth of grain four times during the year;
- Healthcare, including medication, to all 1200 Jewish children under the age of 5 in Gondar and to 900 adults over 50 in Addis Ababa and Gondar.

With funding from Jewish Federations, SSEJ seeks to:

Expand its daily meal program to cover 720 more children under five years old and 50 pregnant and nursing mothers;

- Initiate a program to feed approximately 350 children age five and six;

- Increase the frequency of grain distribution;
- Add 750 children to its school lunch program;
- Provide healthcare to the entire community by adding to its medical programs children under the age of 5 in Addis Ababa, as well as children and adults between 5 and 50 in Addis Ababa and Gondar.

Additionally, SSEJ provides educational assistance and runs Jewish community activities.