



# World Bulletin

Spring 2015

Prepared Exclusively for Special Friends of Salesian Missions  
A Written Testimony Of How You Bring God-Saving Grace To A Troubled World

## Salesians Rescue Child Soldiers from Abuse

Recent news out of Nigeria is grim.

Since this past January alone, three young girls – one just *seven years old* – detonated bombs in crowded public spaces. Hundreds of innocent people were either killed or maimed. Even more horrific, these bombs were strapped to the girls’ own bodies. The children had been enlisted, against their will, as suicide bombers for Boko Haram.

These incidents represent only a small percentage of a particularly insidious, yet widespread, form of child abuse: the recruitment of young girls and boys into armed conflict.

Sadly, these children make easy targets. Some are so desperately impoverished that joining the military offers a certain relief – meals, and a place to lay their heads. Others are kidnapped outright by regimes who know that youth are impressionable, obedient, and easy to feed.

With as many as 50 distinct groups actively recruiting youth



into conflict in 19 different countries, Salesian missionaries are redoubling their efforts on behalf of child soldiers.

Thanks to decades of experience in this area of ministry, the Salesians are well positioned to make a big impact. In Sierra Leone, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, specialized programs have focused on the rescue and rehabilitation of child soldiers – with a particular emphasis on education.

Hundreds of girls and boys, once facing futures without hope, have successfully overcome the physical, psychologi-

cal and social traumas of their experiences. Almost as many have completed traditional or vocational school, and have secured decent employment far from the fields of war.

Replicating these programs, then, is a top priority for the Salesians in countries with emerging crises.

In addition to direct intervention, Salesian missionaries serve as a key voice for child soldiers at the United Nations. They urge member states and other international organizations to implement guidelines and programs to prevent the use of child soldiers, and to take appropriate actions against groups who continue to do so.

This is not a “war” that will end overnight. Wherever and whenever children are forced into conflict, our Salesian missionaries will be there. They will offer the emotional support, education and job placement services that will help put abused and exploited youth on the path to a brighter future.

## This Month’s Child



Name: Cilanda

Home: Mbuji-Mayi,

Democratic Republic of the Congo

She was hardly recognizable as a young girl when a group of children discovered her in the middle of the street. Caked in dirt and her own blood, starving, thirsty and unable to speak, her name was Cilanda. She had been brutally tortured and dumped on the road by parents who believed she was a witch.

The children who rescued her have also been victimized by such deeply-rooted cultural beliefs – so they immediately knew what to do. They brought her to the Salesian House in the city, where hundreds of other innocent girls and boys are recovering from such trauma.

Today, Cilanda is improving

in an environment where she is safely housed, fed, and offered the love of a family who accepts her. Notably, the other children have assumed an active role in nursing her back to health.

“They have developed empathy and are coming to understand their own rights, and how to apply them in society,” explains Fr. Mario Perez, a Salesian missionary who serves at the house.

Salesian missionaries are taking a vocal and visible lead in countering the heartbreaking phenomenon of children accused of witchcraft – one child at a time.

To watch a video about this tragic situation, please go to:

[www.salesianmissions.org/iamnotawitch](http://www.salesianmissions.org/iamnotawitch)

## This Month’s Call For Prayer

Millions of abused, neglected and impoverished children are desperately crying for help. Please pray that we can come to their aid and ease their suffering so they can experience the miracle of life to its fullest.



# Monthly Missions Report...

## In Ecuador...

The Salesian Polytechnic Institute in Quito, Ecuador, is opening new doors and opportunities, for the country's indigenous youth.

Traditionally, such youth face significant barriers to quality education and the economic advantages it provides. Distance and geography often mean they are unable to attend schools usually located in urban areas away from their home villages.

They are also trapped in a rural family lifestyle that generates very little income to even provide basic daily needs.

It is precisely these conditions that the Polytechnic Institute aims to address. Today, 37 indigenous students are pursuing practical courses in management, communication, psychology, biotechnology and other fields – with the goal of securing decent employment in profitable sectors upon graduation. In addition to their education, housing, transportation and meals are also fully provided for the students.



## In the Philippines...



About a year and a half ago, Typhoon Haiyan resulted in devastating destruction in the Philippines so unprecedented – and so vast – that people around the country are still struggling to recover.

But thanks to a recent partnership forged between the Salesians and EMotors, Inc., residents of one of the hardest-hit villages now have reason for hope.

EMotors has replaced all of the e-trikes – three-wheeled motorized bikes – swept away by the storm. The new hybrid vehicles provide a three-pronged benefit: they restore much-needed access to transportation; provide opportunities for residents to get back to work; and help reduce unhealthy air pollution.

“In any major disaster, our top priority is helping victims get back on their feet and resume earning a living,” says Salesian Father Eugene Maglasang, who is involved with the project. “Our collaboration with EMotors is a significant step toward this goal.”

## In Senegal...

In the capital city of Dakar, Senegal, educational and gender disparities limit young women's access to decent jobs.

To address these critical issues, Salesian missionaries recently opened Center Kër Don Bosco – a new educational, vocational training and apprenticeship program for disadvantaged teenage girls and young women living on the outskirts of the city.



In addition to coursework in the areas of food production, tailoring and yarn-dyeing, students will receive hands-on training from local professionals in their chosen field. They will also have access to special literacy classes and safe spaces for studying.

By connecting with their peers and honing their academic as well as practical skills, young women can develop the confidence and preparation they need to improve their employment prospects.

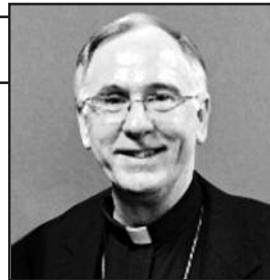
## Missionary of the Month: Fr. Thomas Brennan

Fr. Thomas Brennan is a voice to the voiceless, working for the salvation of marginalized youth around the globe. Since 2007, he has served as the official representative of the Salesians at the United Nations.

Serving as a powerful advocate for human rights, Fr. Brennan regularly convenes world leaders and calls on them to be agents of change on behalf of society's most vulnerable. Recently, he organized “Responding to the Needs of the

Young and Those Living in Poverty: A Salesian Multi-Dimensional Response.” Held at U.N. headquarters in New York, the conference examined key issues that threaten the wellbeing of youth around the world.

“The situation in which many young people find themselves is very serious,” he says, “and their cries too often go unheard. Their misfortune weighs on the conscience of a society that seeks to globalize the economy, but not to promote



the dignity of each human being.”

Every day, Fr. Brennan lives his faith and works to achieve his vision: “Before it is too late, let us save the young, the future of the world.”

To learn more about the Salesians at the U.N., go on-line to: [www.salesians-un.org](http://www.salesians-un.org)

## Saying “Yes” to a Brighter Future

Dear Friend,

As children here in the United States anxiously anticipate summer vacation, I can't help but think of the hundreds of thousands of precious girls and boys who, at this very moment, are violently engaged in war. They are the world's child soldiers, forced into combat against their will.

This is a cause in which our Salesian missionaries around the

globe are passionately involved. As I know you do, these dedicated men and women believe that childhood should be a time of school books and play, not of weapons and war.

Together, we are helping to empower abused children. We are giving them a voice to say “no” to the conditions that discriminate, impoverish and exclude – and to shout a resounding “yes!” to edu-



cation, decent work and brighter futures.

Thank you for your generosity, kindness and prayers, which makes our work on their behalf possible. May God bless you!

*Fr. Mark Hyde, sdb*

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