

## The Sisters of St. Joseph and the People of Chad

In this tenth week (March 14) of our 2022 calendar of Global Coordinating Group Prayers, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and pray for the nine Sisters of the San Giuseppe Congregation who minister in **Chad**, and for the people of that nation.

The [Istituto Suore de San Giuseppe](http://www.istitutosuoredisanigiuseppe.it) was formed in 2006 when the Congregations of Turin, Novara and Susa joined together to form the Sisters of the San Giuseppe Congregation (in English, the Institute of St Joseph). Today, the Congregation has communities in three African nations, including Chad. Below is a previously shared text by the Congregation's General Secretary who also at the time expressed heartfelt gratitude for our prayerful support:

“The Institute of St. Joseph of Italy is present in Chad in three small communities in the south, within two different dioceses: two communities (Djoli and Danamadji) are in the Diocese of Sarh [and] the third is in the Diocese of Goré in the town Laramanaye. The sisters are very active in parish work, in different movements (children, youth, Legion of Mary, catechesis). They also



work in women's development, teaching in a school for mothers and their primary children. Some serve in the health clinic helping to decrease illness in the villages and homes through education and teaching about hygiene. The sisters live in very simple houses which are owned by the dioceses. Each community also does vocational ministry in collaboration with the parishes and the Diocese. This is very sensitive

work because of the large number of Muslims, and the attachment to traditional customs. The sisters try to live attentive to the people, those of other religions and especially with the poor. The problems are grave, [and] daily they confront poverty, lack of water and electricity, and poor means of transportation. The parishes extend for miles, with many villages and very poor roads.” (photo source: <http://www.istitutosuoredisanigiuseppe.it/node/41>)

Country Background: The Republic of Chad is the fifth largest country in Africa and has several regions: a desert zone in the north, an arid belt in the center and a more fertile zone in the south. Lake Chad, after which the country is named, is the largest wetland in the country and the second-largest in Africa. With a population of 17.4 million (2022), Chad is home to more than 200 distinct ethnic and linguistic groups. The region



know today as Chad has been inhabited for millennia with human populations having moved into the Chadian basin in great numbers beginning in the 7th millennium BCE. By the end of the 1st millennium AD, a series of states and empires had risen and fallen in Chad's Sahelian strip - each focused on controlling the trans-Saharan trade routes that passed through the region. France had conquered the territory by 1920 and incorporated it as part of French Equatorial Africa. In 1960, Chad obtained independence under the leadership of François Tombalbaye; however, resentment towards his policies in the Muslim north culminated in the eruption of a long-lasting civil war in 1965. Since 2003 the Darfur crisis in Sudan has spilled over the border and destabilized the country, with hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees living in and around camps in eastern Chad. In April 2021, Lt Gen Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno was named as the country's new political leader, after his father Idriss Déby was killed during a battle with rebel forces. Today, Chad continues to be plagued by political violence and recurrent attempted coups d'état and is considered one of the poorest and most corrupt countries in the world. In this [2021 report](#), Human Rights Watch cited election violence, abuses by armed groups, serious international human rights violations, and intercommunal violence as major and growing concerns.



United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 7850 Sisters, 5700 Associates, 34 Agrégées in 44 countries, listening to the heart of the world.