

KENYA

Annalena's Legacy

Photo by Bruno Zanzottera

Text by Anna Pozzi





Wajir (Kenya). Left - A passage from Psalm 42:3 written on the well of the hermitage that Annalena Tonelli built in Wajir. Right - A portrait of Annalena Tonelli on the walls of the facility she set up in Wajir. This was location of the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), as well as being her home.

20 years after her murder, Annalena Tonelli's work in Wajir has not been forgotten and her memory is as present as ever.

Annalena Tonelli (1943-2003) was a lay missionary who lived for more than 30 years in Africa. She always resided in areas inhabited by Somali Muslim populations, first in Kenya, then in Somalia and finally in Somaliland, where she was killed on October 5, 2003. She was a free and independent woman of great intelligence and faith, and she left an indelible mark on the places she went and especially on the people she met. This is still particularly visible today in Wajir, in eastern Kenya. It's a region that's still very poor, in addition to suffering the effects of a very long drought and being made unsafe by Somali Al Shabaab terrorists. Annalena arrived here in 1969 and remained until 1985 when she was expelled for exposing

the Wagalla massacre by the army. Many local people remember her and benefited from her help in order to be able to study or be treated, particularly for tuberculosis – about which she had become one of the world's foremost experts – or for various forms of disability, that still have social stigma attached to them. Her home, the rehabilitation centre, the TB centre, the school for the deaf, the hermitage, but most of all her "sons" and "daughters," whom she looked after and helped to study, and the many people who remember this dynamic woman who was totally dedicated to the poorest and most abandoned: all this is testimony to the fact that in Wajir Annalena is not just a memory: she is a living memory.

Wajir (Kenya). Camillian Sisters who now live in the house that was Annalena Tonelli's home during her time in Wajir, in a moment of prayer.





Wajir (Kenya). Left - A photo depicting Annalena Tonelli and the hermitage she wanted, under construction. Right - Sister Rosemary, the mother superior for the Camillian Sisters who now live at the centre that was set up by Annalena Tonelli, in the hermitage room that Annalena built during her stay in Wajir.



Wajir (Kenya). A little girl at the school run by the Camillian Sisters who now live in the centre that was set up by Annalena Tonelli.



Wajir (Kenya). Left: A young woman on her way to Sunday Mass at the Wajir church.
Right: The chapel with a sculpture of Christ that was damaged by Islamic extremists in Wajir church.



Wajir (Kenya). Noor was born thanks to Annalena Tonelli, who took care of his mother during her pregnancy after she had several miscarriages.



Wajir (Kenya). A physiotherapist at the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), which set up by Annalena Tonelli, massages a child suffering from polio.



Wajir (Kenya). Left - Annalena Tonelli's epitaph and her ashes, which were placed in the wall of the hermitage she built during her time in Wajir. Annalena Tonelli was murdered in Somaliland on October 5, 2003.
Right - The courtyard with the well seen from the hermitage room that Annalena Tonelli built during her time in Wajir.



Wajir (Kenya). Wajir church altar boys in a procession for Sunday Mass.



Wajir (Kenya). Left - The physical therapy room at the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), which was set up by Annalena Tonelli in the early 1970s.
Right - A handmade tool for helping children suffering from polio at the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), which was set up by Annalena Tonelli in the early 1970s.



Wajir (Kenya). Qali Mohammed, who studied thanks to Annalena Tonelli, is now the head teacher at the school for the deaf.



Wajir (Kenya). Left: A child during Sunday Mass at the Wajir church. Right: A sacred image on the walls of the Wajir church.



Wajir (Kenya). A patient at the Wajir TB centre. It was set up by Annalena Tonelli, and is now a state facility. Before today's brick cottages, patients were originally housed in huts similar to those inhabited by nomads of Somali origin living in the region.



Wajir (Kenya). - Left - The communal graves where Annalena Tonelli helped bury some of the victims of the Wagalla massacre (in 1984) which was perpetrated by the Kenyan army against the Degodia tribe. Annalena distinguished herself in treating the wounded and recovering bodies, as well as publicly denouncing the incident, which made her persona non grata in the eyes of the Kenyan government.
- Right - A white-headed buffalo weaver on the branches of the trees above the communal graves.



Wajir (Kenya). Qali Mohammed, who studied through Annalena Tonelli and is now the head teacher at the school for the deaf, addresses some of the students using sign language.



Wajir (Kenya). The grounds around the rehabilitation centre which was set up by Annalena Tonelli in the early 1970s. In the background is the tower of the hermitage where Annalena spent periods in prayer and silence.



Wajir (Kenya). An elderly lady of Somali origin at the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), which was set up by Annalena Tonelli in the early 1970s.



Wajir (Kenya). Left: The laundry of the Camillian Sisters living in the home and rehabilitation centre that was set up by Annalena Tonelli.
Right: A curtain on the windows of the home and rehabilitation centre that was set up by Annalena Tonelli. It is now inhabited by Camillian Sisters.



Wajir (Kenya). Every day children with polio and other disabilities, together with their mothers, visit the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), which was set up by Annalena Tonelli in the early 1970s.



Wajir (Kenya). – Left: One of the Camillian Sisters living at the centre that was set up by Annalena Tonelli, lighting a coal stove. Right - A sheet metal wall of one of the buildings at the rehabilitation centre (the Walaal Farahsan Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled), which was set up by Annalena Tonelli in the early 1970s.



Wajir (Kenya) - Sunset over the tower of the hermitage that Annalena Tonelli built in Wajir.

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