**NPR: 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' Raises Hackles As Well As Dollars**

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The newest version of Band Aid's "Do They Know It's Christmas?" raised a $1 million within a few minutes of its release on Tuesday. Critics say the song still sends the wrong message about Africa.

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

Now let's hear the new generation of an aging song. It's a song produced 30 years ago to raise money for people in Africa.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?")

BAND AID: (Singing) And there won't be snow in Africa this Christmas time.

INSKEEP: Pop stars ranging from Bono to Bananarama recorded "Do They Know It's Christmas?". The occasion was Ethiopian famine. Now the song's co-writer, Bob Geldof, has released a new version. It's raising money to help the fight against Ebola. NPR's Neda Ulaby reports it's also raising the blood pressure of its critics.

NEDA ULABY, BYLINE: Maybe partly because Bono is back - because of course he is, along with fresher faces like One Direction.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?")

BAND AID 30: (Singing) It's Christmas time.

ULABY: At a press conference earlier this month, Bob Geldof said he updated the lineup of musicians as well as the actual song.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

BOB GELDOF: We had to tweak the lyrics so that they're less about hunger.

ULABY: But Geldof's critics say he just swapped a bunch of cliches about famine in Ethiopia for ones about disease in West Africa.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?")

BAND AID 30: (Singing) Where a kiss of love can kill you, and there's death in every tear.

AARON BADY: Where a kiss of love can kill you, and there's death in every tear. It's kind of an amazing line.

ULABY: Amazingly dumb, says Aaron Bady. He studies African literature and wrote an essay about the song for Al Jazeera online.

BADY: It turns Africa into a kind of cartoon.

ULABY: Robtel Pailey agrees. She was born in Liberia - the country most affected by Ebola. She says "Do They Know It's Christmas?" reduces Africa to a place of despair and Africans to helpless victims.

ROBTEL PAILEY: And in need of Western saving.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?")

BAND AID 30: (Singing) And in our world of plenty, we can spread a smile of joy.

ULABY: The song's patronizing, says Pailey, beginning with its name - "Do They Know It's Christmas?"

PAILEY: Yes, we know it's Christmas.

ULABY: Pailey also points to Geldof's nearly all-white lineup. How hard would it have been, she wonders, to have included a few of the African musicians who've been singing about Ebola?

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "AFRICA STOP EBOLA")

COLLECTIF AFRICA STOP EBOLA: (Singing) Ebola. Ebola. Invisible enemy.

ULABY: Profits from this song are going to Doctors Without Borders. Compared to "Do They Know It's Christmas?", it's less schmaltzy and less successful. According to Bob Geldof, his song raised more than $1 million within a few minutes of its release. Neda Ulaby, NPR News.