

ACLJ Intervenes for Persecuted Nigerian and Middle Eastern Christians at UN

This week—through our affiliate, the European Center for Law and Justice (ECLJ) – we delivered two critical oral interventions at the U.N. Human Rights Council on behalf of Christians facing the humanitarian crisis as a result of the ISIS genocide, as well Christians facing violent attacks at the hands of Boko Haram and the Fulani Herdsman.

In our oral intervention on the victims of the atrocities being carried out by Boko Haram and the Fulani Herdsman, we told of the dangers children, especially Christian children, face on a daily basis. We told stories of how these groups attack children at school, church and even result to kidnapping girls from boarding schools. We also told the story of Liya Sharibu, who was kidnapped and remained captive simply because she would not renounce her Christian faith.

You can read our oral intervention on Nigeria below:

In Nigeria, children are the most vulnerable victims of the attacks being carried out by Boko Haram and the Fulani Herdsmen. These groups have been known to attack churches, schools and even resort to kidnapping Christian school girls in order to marry them to Muslim men. Already this year, Fulani Herdsmen have murdered over 6,000 Christians, many of whom are women and children.

Reports indicate that since 2013 Boko Haram has abducted approximately 1,000 children in northeast Nigeria. These attacks and kidnappings have been carried out when kids are at school and are most exposed. It is estimated that Boko

Haram has killed over 2,000 teachers and has destroyed more than 1,400 schools. They routinely attack girls' boarding schools in order to kidnap the students.

In February of 2018 Boko Haram insurgents abducted 110 students from a girls' boarding school. A month later Boko Haram released 104 of the students. One schoolgirl, Liya Sharibu, however, continues to be held captive simply because she refuses to renounce her Christian faith.

Attacks carried out against school children are especially heinous. Children should feel safe and secure at school. In Nigeria today, this is not the case. Children go to school fearing that they may be killed or kidnapped. The UNICEF representative in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall, stated, "These repeated attacks against children in schools are unconscionable ... Children have the right to education and protection, and the classroom must be a place where they are safe from harm."

This body must act now to ensure that children are free to be children. They should be able to attend school, learn, and grow without the constant threat of death. We must act now to put an end to these atrocities being carried out by Boko Haram and the Fulani Herdsmen.

In our oral intervention on Christians in the Middle East, we reminded the U.N. that even though ISIS is on the run, there is still much to be done to address the needs of the victims. The U.N. must work to ensure the lasting recovery and resettlement of the victims; and in order to do so, it is imperative that the U.N. recognize these atrocities as genocide and further provide meaningful assistance and security for the victims on the ground.

You can read our oral intervention below:

ISIS' systematic pattern of widespread murder and sexual

abuse has forced thousands of Christians from the Middle East. The acts that have led to the nearly wholesale destruction of Christians as a group in the region include massive deportations, widespread killings, and countless rapes.

These atrocities have forced thousands from their home and the victims are facing a grave humanitarian crisis. In addition, continued conflict within region poses a hindrance to the lasting resettlement of the victims. The victims of the ISIS genocide in the Middle East deserve the recognition and protection from the international community, yet the world's premier international body has failed to recognize that they are in fact victims of genocide. Time is running out and we must take action now.

The action we request today is two-fold. First, it is imperative for the U.N. to declare that the atrocities ISIS has been carrying out against Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities constitute genocide. A declaration of genocide is necessary because it will open avenues of aid that would otherwise be unavailable to the victims of genocide. Second, the U.N. must provide the assistance and security necessary to clean-up the destruction caused by ISIS's genocide and to allow for the lasting resettlement of the victims of ISIS' atrocities, including those who survive the genocide. {eo}

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