

Ministry Sends Powerful Message of God's Love to Nigerian Muslims

Radical terrorists in Nigeria are using the coronavirus pandemic to their advantage as they take over territory in the country's Christian South. Judd Saul of Equipping the Persecuted reports that Boko Haram, now known as Isis West Africa, is destroying villages, burning churches and killing pastors.

"With COVID, Boko Haram has been taking full advantage of the situation," Saul says. "The government's focused on trying to keep the markets down and keep people from socially gathering, but Boko Haram doesn't care. They've continued and increased their attacks during this crisis."

Children may be suffering the most.

"Kids are becoming orphans because of violence, and there's a need within these communities because other families and friends are now taking these kids in," Saul says. "There [are] not enough orphanages for these kids."

When Boko Haram devastates Nigerian villages, the people become "internally displaced persons" and are taken to refugee camps. And because the government has instituted a lockdown due to the pandemic, people are not able to fend for themselves in what Saul calls their "daily hustle" to make a living. As a result, hunger is setting in for people at a low economic level.

Radical Muslims in the country have been persecuting Christians for years.

"If they find a Christian who can't recite any verses of the

Quran, they'll kill them," Saul says. "They like to target churches, and they like to kill pastors. They like to kidnap pastors, and they like to destroy because in Islam, if you have a mosque in an area, that is a sign of dominance. It's a sign of, "We've conquered the area when we put up a mosque.' So when they see churches, they see those as places they need to destroy."

In May, after Boko Haram violently took over a Christian area, some who identified as Christians decided to retaliate by killing Muslims in a village that was not implicated in the attack on Christians. As a result, Equipping the Persecuted stepped into a dangerous situation and provided aid for the affected Muslims.

"They welcomed our people, they welcomed the aid and they even allowed our team to share the gospel," Saul says. "But we sent a message, and we demonstrated the love of Christ."

Saul believes the Muslims will now be more open to the work of Equipping the Persecuted.

"They'll be more receptive to what we have to offer and what we have to say," he says. "They'll be less skeptical, but it's also sending a message to the area, that Jesus loves everyone."

Learn more about opportunities to help through the Equipping the Persecuted website. Listen to the final episode of the *Equipping the Persecuted* series on the *Charisma Connection* podcast to find out more about this ministry that works only with the local people to help Nigerians in need.