

After Boko Haram Murders Her Family, Young Girl Stands Strong

One month ago Thursday, 276 school girls were kidnapped as they slept at their Nigerian boarding school. The kidnapping has raised renewed awareness of the notorious Boko Haram terrorist group.

For more than five years now, Boko Haram has committed countless atrocities against Christians and others.

One Nigerian schoolgirl CBN News met told of how she overcame a murderous assault on her family.

Deborah Wakai Peters played with some of the schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram. She said her mother once attended the same school in Chibok where the girls were kidnapped.

But Peters has experienced her own horrors at the hands of Boko Haram.

Trauma Upon Trauma

One night just before Christmas 2011, she watched as three gunmen entered her house and killed her father after he refused to deny Christ. They also killed her 14-year-old brother Caleb.

“So, they go ahead and shoot him twice in his chest so he fall. When he fall he started like moving, so they go ahead and shoot him again in his mouth and then he fall down and he died,” she explained. “I was in shock. I didn’t know what was happening.”

Peter’s mother, a former Muslim, was away from home at the time.

Shortly after, American Children of 9/11 Victims invited Peters to attend a camp in the United States. But while she survived a terror attack, she could not make it through the bureaucracy of the U.S. State Department: Her visa requests were denied twice.

“The reason she was denied a visa was they said to her—and you can’t make this stuff up—they said to her, you don’t have family ties,” attorney Emmanuel Ogebe, with Jubilee Campaign USA, explained.

So, they essentially re-traumatized a girl whose family was exterminated by terrorists.

Boko Haram’s Islamist Motivations

This is the same State Department that only recently labeled Boko Haram a terrorist organization.

The Hudson Institute’s Nina Shea said until last November, State Department officials like former Assistant Secretary for Africa Affairs Johnnie Carson, rejected the idea that Islam motivates Boko Haram.

“I remember I was dumbfounded,” Shea said. “It was after an attack on another church in 2012 and he gave a speech before CSIS think tank in town here saying that it had nothing to do with religion.”

Ogebe said U.S. officials are mistaken if they think Boko Haram fighters are rebels.

“They are anarchists, they are jihadists. And when you frame it in the right context, when you have a right problem statement, then you can have an appropriate response to that,” he said.

When Peters talked to CBN News last October, she made it clear why Boko Haram targeted her family. She mentioned the group’s adherence to the Islamic holy book.

"In the Koran, they say that any Muslim who turns to Christianity, the punishment is death," she explained.

That meant her mother would have been targeted if she been at home.

"They were targeting her, even now they are looking for her," she said. "If they see her, they will kill her."

Peters explained that the terrorists killed her father because he was a pastor.

"(And) when he married my mother he turned my mother to Christian so they were angry with him," she said.

Peters said her father had also led many Muslims to Christ.

Standing Strong

Ogebe suggests world leaders take a more aggressive response in order to stop these attacks.

"This is a make or break time for Boko Haram," he said. "If the world cannot unite and snuff them out now, they now know what will get our attention and they are going to keep, you know, putting it in our faces."

As for Peters, she finally received a student visa and now attends school in the United States. So, what does she want people to learn from her story?

"They will know more and more of what God said and they will like understand what it means to stand strong," she said.

This from a 15-year-old Nigerian student, standing strong in victory over Islamic terrorism and praying that her Christian friends will soon be reunited with their families.