

Christian Pastor Murdered as Nigeria Declares a State of Emergency

Nigeria continues to own the shameful title of being the deadliest place to be a Christian. In 2012, 70 percent of Christians murdered due to persecution were killed in Nigeria. This deadly fact is characterized by the brutal murder of the Rev. Faye Pama Musa, who was followed home by suspected Boko Haram militants and shot. News of the murder spread hours after Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three of Nigeria's northern states most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency.

Christian Leader in Northern Nigeria Gunned Down

After finishing his evening Bible study at his church on May 15 in Borno state's capital, Maiduguri, Musa, the secretary of the Borno state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), began traveling home for the night. According to the Rev. Titus Dama Pona, the chairman of CAN's Borno chapter, gunmen suspected to be Boko Haram militants followed the pastor home.

After the pastor entered his house, the gunmen climbed over his fence and broke in. The gunmen then dragged the pastor out of his home and shot him outside. According to a report by *Morning Star News*, Musa was executed in front of his daughter, who followed the assailants outside, begging for her father's life.

Musa was likely targeted by the militants attached to the Islamic extremist group because of his outspoken criticism of Boko Haram's targeting of Christians and the discrimination against Christians in northern Nigeria. In a 2007 interview, the pastor said he would not leave Borno state even though the

state was a safe haven for extremists who posed a danger to both his life and his ministry.

“Being [an officer in CAN] and being so vocal, he must have been a marked man,” Mark Lipdo, director of the Stefanos Foundation, observed in an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network.

At the age of 47, Musa is survived by his wife and three children. Fearing further attacks, the pastor’s family is unsure what to do or where to go next. “I am right now with his family, and they are still consulting on what next to do,” Pona told *Morning Star News*.

Nigeria Declares a State of Emergency

Hours before Musa was murdered, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three of Nigeria’s northern states, including the state where the pastor was killed. This declaration followed a gun battle between the military and Boko Haram in Borno state last month that some claim killed more than 100 civilians. Borno state Gov. Kassim Shettima reportedly told senators and military officials that Boko Haram was on the verge of seizing control in his state.

The state of emergency will allow the federal government to send more troops into the states where the emergency has been declared and use special measures to try to curb the violence being perpetrated by Boko Haram. Similar tactics have failed to establish peace and security in the past and in some cases have actually had a negative effect. Widespread reports of abuses by the Nigerian military and other security forces have helped increase Boko Haram’s recruiting pool and have often turned local populations against government forces. Whether this most recent state of emergency will yield a different result remains to be seen.

Murder and insecurity continues to define the lives of many Christians living in northern Nigeria. Like Musa’s family,

thousands of Christian families have been devastated by the violence unleashed by Boko Haram as they attempt to establish a separate Islamic state where they can impose their strict interpretation of Sharia law. Without effective action taken both by the Nigerian government and the international community, Nigeria is likely to continue to be the deadliest place to be a Christian in 2013.

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