

Christians Miraculously Survive Boko Haram Terror Attacks

Some Christian survivors of attacks by members of the terrorist Islamic sect, Boko Haram, on Monday, Feb. 4, in Nigeria's capital city, Abuja, recounted how 17 Christians were murdered in cold blood by Boko Haram Islamists and how they survived the attacks to tell the story.

Serana Chinda, a pastor of the All Denomination Church (ADC), Hauran Wanki, Police Barracks in Kano, in northern Nigeria, said eight members of his local congregation were killed for refusing to recant their Christian faith in Jesus Christ. They were among 13 Christians who were killed in a factory. The ADC serves all Christian police officers and other ranks with their family members, alongside other non-police Christian communities in the area as a worship auditorium.

Chinda narrates how the Christian factory workers were killed: "On Feb. 23, 2013, eight out of the 13 people that were killed were my members who worked in a factory. Four men wearing babanriga (flowing gowns) came in a taxi cab and parked in front of our church. They asked, 'Are you not supposed to be in church praying? Why are you not in the church with others?' They answered that some of them were Muslims. The four men then ordered that Christians should go to one side and Muslims to the other side. So they separated them. They were not satisfied and wanted to make sure that no Muslim was harmed. They decided to make inquiry about their names; when they finished getting their names, they killed the Christians. One of our Christian brothers escaped to tell us the story of how these Christians were killed."

Chinda says he went to the scene of the attack and saw the

corpses before he called the police who came to the place to move the bodies to the morgue: "The only one that escaped among the 14 factory workers was the one that went to fetch water. He ran to my house and informed me that they had killed our people. As I prepared to drive to the scene, my wife wanted to follow me but I refused. But when I got there, I saw the corpses everywhere. I made some calls and policemen came and took the corpses away."

Another of the surviving Christian victims, Deborah Shettima, 45, from the city of Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria, said her husband and three of her children were killed in their home by **Boko Haram** members who stormed her home twice and carried out the attacks.

"On April 25, 2012, after work, I went home and discovered that everywhere was quiet. I met my husband sitting on a table. He was preparing to preach to the children at a prayer meeting. He asked me to get him water to bathe. So I went outside and saw a tricycle approaching with five persons inside it. Four of them came down and went into our house. I started running but one of them blocked me while another said they should allow me in and asked me to lie down," Shetima said.

"When I got in," she continued "my husband was praying and I heard him say, 'Lord, today I'm going to visit you. I ask you to please receive my spirit.' One of them said, 'Have you finished praying and you think your prayer is going to save you?' And after that, I heard four shots of gun.

"I said, 'I will be the next target' and started praying, 'Lord they've finished with my husband, here I am, receive my spirit,' but they opened the door. When my two daughters, nine and seven years old, heard me, they started crying, saying 'They have killed our father, they will soon kill our mother,' and as they were crying, they reached out to them and took them away.

“Up till now, I have not seen them. They have not been declared dead or been seen. One of the assailants hit my eye with the gun. I cannot see with the eye. After three months, while marking the death of Yusuf Mohammed, their leader, they returned to my house and killed my last son. Someone came and told me to leave the house,” she concluded.

A vice president of the World Bank and a one-time minister of education in the Nigerian government, Oby Ezekwesili, while speaking and shedding tears laments that Nigeria does not value human lives created by God: “Whatever happens to one of us happens to every one of us. So, if we have become a nation that does not put value to human lives, then we really are in a bad place. Listening to these women particularly and seeing what these women have to carry alone, you almost feel a sense of abandonment for them,” she said.

“We must get ourselves back to a drawing table and figure what we really are; what are we and what we have become as a people and as a nation. Is it right that a mother would watch her husband killed and her two children taken away and does not know where they are up till now and nobody is concerned about it? Three months after, they came and killed her son. I know a nation where this thing happened before. It’s called Rwanda and it didn’t end well,” she cautioned the Nigerian government, stressing that now is the time to act, before the country is destroyed.

The Christian victims recounted their ordeals in attacks by Boko Haram at a press conference in Abuja held by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and representative Nigerian Christians residing in the United States. Dr. Musa Asaki and Laolu Akande, secretary general of CAN and president of Nigerian Christians residing in the U.S. addressed the conference.

Akande, while speaking at the press conference, pleaded that

Nigeria's President **Goodluck Jonathan** become more proactive in the fight against Boko Haram and terrorism in the country.

"I think the government itself has expressed hopelessness, including President Jonathan who has said on several occasions that this problem is big," Akande lamented. "We believe that Nigerian government cannot handle this problem anymore. There are instances of lack of political will on the part of the federal government. The cases of some supporters of Boko Haram, like those senators who have been accused, should be pursued."

Reiterating the importance of fighting **terrorism** proactively, Akande said: "Government can become more aggressive in going after members of Boko Haram and those supporting this sect. Government is not proactive. It must seek support from other countries, like the United States, to deal with Boko Haram. This is an international problem. I wish government could do more in protecting the lives of Nigerians. Some of the cases are not even reported. How can somebody go to another person's house to kill? If government cannot provide law and order, it then becomes worrisome."

He pleads with Nigerians and people of goodwill to "rise up and come to the financial and material aid of the victims of Boko Haram attacks in northern Nigeria." It is the plight of these persecuted Christians he says has made Nigerian Christians residing in America take note of the impact of the actions of Boko Haram: "We are concerned about the widows and are touched by the plight of the orphans. We reckon that many of these individuals are left without a source of livelihood."

Assisting these oppressed Christians, Akande says, is the most important and urgent task facing Christians, not only in other parts of the country, but also posing as a challenge to global leaders in countries like America.

"If backers of terrorists are raising the money to perpetrate

acts of terror, supporters of and advocates for peace can no longer look the other way," he argued. "We want to join with CAN today to call on Nigerian philanthropists, businesses, and captains of industry, well-to-do individuals and all people of goodwill to consider the financial plight of Boko Haram victims and lend a helping hand."

"We are an advocate for innocent and helpless people being slaughtered in their places of worship," Akande said of the decision of their association to speak out in favor of the persecuted. "Christians are being killed, churches are being attacked and destroyed, health workers and doctors are being assassinated, markets are being ravaged, police precincts are being vanquished and neighborhoods are being tormented. This wickedness must stop. We commend the bold leadership of CAN for speaking up in a categorical, courageous and consistent manner on the Boko Haram issue."

In the city of Zaria, where two churches were bombed by suicide bombers last year, a former Christian Nigerian army general, Theophilus Danjuma, expressed sadness over the incessant attacks on Christians and called for a united fight against Boko Haram and other terrorists in the country.

Danjuma, who was speaking at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, said, "Our founding fathers sought to create a united and self-reliant society based on respect for human life and respect for the rights of others, irrespective of tribe or religion. They would certainly be appalled that today the nation is in total anarchy. Human life is very cheap and impunity has become the norm. In the case of the North, the danger is very real indeed. Ladies and gentlemen, we are in the middle of a civil war in Northern Nigeria. There is no defined front in this particular war and, worse still, the enemy is faceless and unknown. There is no immunity for anyone."

Danjuma was speaking to an audience consisting of Muslim and

Christian leaders, academia, and others at the convocation ceremony of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.