

Kidnapped Christian Girl in Sudan Escapes, Traumatized

Hiba Abdelfadil Anglo, 16, has escaped from a gang of Muslims who kidnapped her last year, but it may be a long time before she recovers from the trauma.

As she told Compass how the kidnappers beat, raped and tried to force her to convert from Christianity to Islam, she broke into tears for nearly half an hour.

"They did many bad things to me," she said, tears streaming down her eyes.

Abducted on June 17, 2010, she was reunited with her family on July 10.

"Several times I was warned that if I do not convert to Islam, then I risk losing my life," she said. "The man who put me in his house on several occasions tortured me and threatened to kill me. He did not allow me to pray Christian prayers. He even insulted my family as a family of infidels."

Hiba said that after a year of captivity, she had given the unidentified man who housed her enough of an impression that she had converted to Islam and accepted her fate that he left her unguarded. She was able to leave the house in the Soba Al Aradi area south of Khartoum and beg a motorist to take her to her home two hours away, she said.

"I had tried to escape three times before, but they captured me every time and beat me a lot," she said, sobbing.

Her widowed mother, Ikhlas Omer Anglo, told Compass the kidnappers targeted them because they are Christians, members of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Khartoum. The girl's mother said that when she went to a police station to

open a case, officers told her she must first leave Christianity for Islam.

“Right after my daughter was kidnapped, one officer told me, ‘If you want back your daughter, you should become a Muslim,’” she said. “I thank God for enabling my daughter to escape before the start of Ramadan, though she is now traumatized.”

Hiba said the kidnappers moved her to various locations in Khartoum over the initial eight months, threatening to kill her if she tried to escape.

“Even if you call the government, they will not do anything to us,” her abductors warned her, she said.

She was initially locked in a room and beaten until she was unconscious. The leader of the group raped her, and she is still suffering pain in her right eye from a blow he recently dealt her, she said.

“Apart from abusing me sexually, he tried to force me to change my faith and kept reminding me to prepare for Ramadan,” she said. “I cannot forget this bad incident, and whenever I try to pray, I find it difficult to forget. I ask believers to pray for me for inner healing.”

At the same time, Hiba said prayer was the only effective option while in captivity.

“I was praying to God to keep me and my family safe,” she said.

Last year the then-15-year-old Hiba was kidnapped while going to the Ministry of Education in Khartoum to obtain her transcripts for entry into secondary school.

“One of the kidnappers was monitoring me as I was going to the Ministry of Education,” she said. “He pretended to have been working in the Ministry of Education.”

Two days after she was abducted, the family received threatening telephone calls and SMS (text) messages from the kidnappers telling them to pay 1,500 Sudanese pounds (\$560) in order to secure her return.

“Don’t you want to have this slave back?” one of the kidnappers told her mother from an unknown location by cell phone, Anglo said. She lost her job after taking time off to search for her missing daughter last year, she said, as her employer initially gave her time off in order to seek her daughter but later used the absence as a pretext for firing her.

“It is good that those who prayed for us to know that their prayers were answered, and that my daughter is back at home with me,” Anglo said. “I also need prayers because I am jobless since the time my daughter was kidnapped.”

Hoping to study to be an accountant after missing an academic year, Hiba said her future is unknown as her family is unable to afford school. She also fears the Muslim criminals might still be trailing her.