

Kidnapped Christian Leah Sharibu Reportedly Has Newborn Son

Reports surfaced over the weekend that kidnapped Nigerian teen Leah Sharibu has a newborn son and that her family is still begging for her release.

Save the Persecuted Christians (STPC), which advocates on behalf of the more than 300 million followers of Christ facing heavy persecution worldwide, has worked on behalf of Sharibu, who was taken captive and held as a “slave for life” by terrorists in February 2018.

“The news that Leah may have a newborn son broke as Americans were marching for life in Washington, D.C.,” said Dede Laugesen, executive director of Save the Persecuted Christians, who collaborated with the International Committee on Nigeria and the Leah Foundation to bring Rebecca Sharibu, Leah’s mother, to the nation’s capital in June. “The child, said to be the son of a top Boko Haram commander who holds Leah captive, is born into the life of a young teenager a world away. Her life is a constant horrific state of terror, violence, mental anguish and rape. The story of Leah, the missing Chibok girls and the Christian girls of Pakistan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq who are taken, tortured and killed cannot be forgotten. During Sanctity of Human Life Month, Christians who defend life must defend it even for the least of these mothers—no matter how they came to be mothers.”

Save the Persecuted Christians tweeted Sunday: “#FreeLeah Leah’s family presses on. Calls recent reports rumors. Demands ‘proof of life’ video. Wants Leah alive. @IRF_Ambassador @SecPompeo @realDonaldTrump.”

An STPC Facebook post implored further prayers for Leah and

her family: "The family of Leah Sharibu have discounted news of her giving birth to a baby boy after a forced conversion and marriage to a top Boko Haram commander as a rumor. They demand a 'proof of life' video and simply want to know she is alive, with or without a baby. They want her home again. It's been nearly two agonizing years since Leah was taken captive Feb. 19, 2018, with over 100 other girls. Leah was kept, when all the others who were still living were released, because Leah refused to renounce her Christian faith. Leah will be 17 in May. Please keep praying for Leah! Pray for her family too. #FreeLeah #SaveUs"

A new article today quoted Leah's father, who said his daughter's ordeal will not cause him to stop attending church or serving God. He also said the Nigerian government knows Leah's whereabouts.

STPC has urged a U.S. special envoy to Nigeria and the Lake Chad region because of extreme and heightened violence against Christians there, and in fact is delivering an open letter to President Donald Trump about this urgent need today. At least 1,000 Christians were killed in 2019, with more than 5,000 killed since 2015, according to a U.K. report.

The mission of Save the Persecuted Christians is to save lives and save souls by disseminating actionable information about the magnitude of the persecution taking place globally and by mobilizing concerned Americans for the purpose of disincentivizing further attacks on those who follow Jesus.

One way is through STPC's newest traveling exhibit titled "Warfare on Women," which reveals the specific terror-tactic used to demean and degrade female believers to instill fear into the heart of Christian communities. The banner titled "Kidnapped" tells Leah's story. "Warfare on Women" highlights multiple stories of Christian women, many from Nigeria, who are harmed by religious violence.

The exhibit's "Kidnapped" banner, which focuses on Nigeria and the abduction of Leah Sharibu, states: "Nigerian girls are being terrorized and enslaved by three of the world's most dangerous extremists, including Boko Haram, ISIS in West Africa Province and Muslim Fulani herdsmen. Thousands of people are reportedly held captive in northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt, where kidnapping and banditry fund the terrorists' genocidal agendas. UNICEF reports 8 million Nigerian children refuse to go to school for fear of being kidnapped."

The exhibit's information banner further states: "In a growing number of countries, Christian women face many forms of discrimination and violence including: restrictions on freedom of dress and movement, employment and legal discrimination, violent assault, widowhood, forced abortions or death of children, false accusations, sexual harassment, forced conversion and marriage, kidnapping, rape, human trafficking and murder. If they survive and return, brutalized women and girls often face shame and exclusion from their families and communities. This must stop."

Joining the "Warfare on Women" exhibit is "The People of the Cross," which features images, facts and quotes about the persecution of Christians in multiple countries, including Nigeria. Additional banners feature countries such as Turkey, North Korea, China and others. A majority of the nations highlighted on the banners are high on Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List, including Nigeria at No. 12.

With so much of the world's Christian population being imprisoned and/or harassed for their beliefs, the need has never been greater for the sort of grassroots campaign STPC's SaveUs Movement is working to foster. Its efforts are modeled after a miraculously successful one that helped free another population suffering from heavy persecution—Soviet Jews—by penalizing those in the Kremlin responsible for such repression. Through this movement, Save the Persecuted

Christians endeavors to provide American policymakers with the popular support they need to effect real change worldwide and alleviate systemically the suffering being experienced by so many of those following Christ.