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Nigerian Islamist extremists kill aid worker 'for work for Red Cross'; Christians 'slaves for life'

World Watch Monitor (16.10.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2PwHdL7> - In Nigeria, a faction of Boko Haram – the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) – has killed a second aid worker kidnapped 8 months ago. It's also threatened to keep 15 year old Leah Sharibu and Alice Loksha Ngaddah, a Christian nurse with UNICEF and mother of two (boy, 5, and a girl, aged 2), as slaves for life.

Hauwa Leman, 24, was killed as the ISWAP's ultimatum expired yesterday.

"We have kept our word exactly as we said, by killing another humanitarian worker, Hauwa Leman, who is working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)" it said, in a statement reported by Nigerian online magazine The Cable.

Hauwa Leman was abducted during a raid on a military facility in Rann, Kala Balge in March 2018, with two other aid workers, Saifure Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa and Ngaddah.

In September, ISWAP killed Saifure Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa.

"Saifura and Hauwa were killed because they are considered as Murtads (apostates) by the group because they were once Muslims that have abandoned their Islam the moment they chose to work with the Red Cross, and for us, there is no difference between Red Cross and UNICEF" said the group. "If we see them, we will kill the apostates among them, men or women, and choose to kill or keep the infidels as slaves, men or women."

"From today", Sharibu and Ngaddah "are now our slaves. Based on our doctrines, it is now lawful for us to do whatever we want to do with them," The Cable reported the group as saying.

On Sunday, 24 hours before ISWAP's deadline, ICRC urged the group to free the women.

"We urge you: spare and release these women. They are a midwife, a nurse, and a student. Like all those abducted, they are not part of any fight," said Patricia Danzi, Director of ICRC Operations in Africa. "They are daughters and sisters, one is a mother – women with their futures ahead of them, children to raise, and families to return to."

Nigerian Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, described the killing as "dastardly, inhuman and ungodly", saying "nothing can justify the shedding of the blood of innocent people...."

"We are deeply pained by this killing, just like we were by the recent killing of Saifura Ahmed, the first aid worker. However, we will keep the negotiations open and continue to work to free the innocent women who remain in the custody of their abductors".

World Watch Monitor has learned that Ngaddah's mother, Sarah, died of trauma just two months after Alice's abduction.

Prior to the Oct 15 deadline, Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria begged the group not to kill Leah Sharibu, as it had also threatened. She was among 110 schoolgirls kidnapped by ISWAP in Nigeria's north-east town of Dapchi, in Yobe state, on 19 February 2018. Within a month, all the others had been released, but not Leah – the only Christian – as she refused to renounce her faith.

In Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory, FCT) at the weekend, the Chairman of 19 Northern States and FCT of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Rev Yakubu Pam and the Imam of Apo Legislative Quarters Mosque, Sheikh Mohammed Nuru Khalid, said it had been "improper" to release the other students without Leah Sharibu.

"The two major religious and traditional rulers are here to talk about peace. But we are also here to talk about the abduction of innocent teenagers, most especially Leah Sharibu. We've heard what the abductors have said and that is why we are here...to appeal to their conscience to release her," Pam said.

Yesterday, in Abuja, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion, Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, took part in a pre-election interfaith peace conference, as the Anglian Communion News Service reports.

Giving the keynote address at the "Religious Harmony in Nigeria: Towards the 2019 General Elections" conference, Archbishop Welby told the audience "Peace requires justice...Attacks cannot be treated with impunity. Truth needs telling, and arriving at the truth that is to be told is a complex process."

The Archbishop also held separate meetings with President Buhari and newly- announced opposition Presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar.

Two weeks ago (on 29 September) Leah's mother, Rebecca Sharibu, had called on President Buhari to secure her daughter's release.

In response, President Buhari spoke with Mrs Sharibu, to reiterate his determination to bring Leah back home safely. "The thoughts & prayers of all Nigerians are with the Sharibu family, & the families of all those still in captivity. We will do everything we can to bring them back" he said in a Tweet.

In recent months, ISWAP has issued a number of messages aimed at putting pressure on Nigerian authorities to pay ransoms for the release of Leah and the kidnapped aid workers, without success.

In a video posted last month, also seen by The Cable, the insurgents claimed they had contacted the government over the captives but did not get any response.

"So, here is a message of blood," said a spokesman of the group, announcing the killing of Khorsa. "The other nurse and midwife will be executed in similar manner in one month, including Leah Sharibu," he added.

In August, Leah Sharibu, in a separate 35-second audio recording, asked Nigeria's president for help for her family and herself:

"I also plead to the members of the public to help my mother, my father, my younger brother and relatives. Kindly help me out of my predicament. I am begging you to treat me with compassion. I am calling on the government, particularly the president, to pity me and get me out of this serious situation. Thank you," she said.

Muslim Lawyers Reject FCT High Court's New Dress Code

All Africa (10.04.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2HrdfVJ> - Muslim Lawyers' Association of Nigeria (MULAN) has rejected the new dress code for lawyers by the FCT High Court and the ban of hijab in the Law School.

In a statement released at the end of its National Executive Council meeting in Benin City, Edo State on March 31, MULAN condemns the directive that prohibits the use of any apparel underneath wigs by lawyers and by extension the hijab by female Muslim lawyers.

In the release signed by its president, Dr. Kamal Dawud, Esq., the association said the new rule ran contrary to the 2004 resolution of the Body of Benchers which allowed female Law School students and legal practitioners to use head cover underneath their wigs.

"On this ground and by the provisions of Section 38 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, this directive is unfortunate, draconian, illegal, unconstitutional and unlawful," Dawud said in the statement.

"MULAN NEC condemns the directive in the press release in the strongest term and urges the FCT High Court to reverse its decision contained in the press release forthwith."

On the hijab controversy, MULAN said the constitutional provision affirmed the religious rights of citizens, and resolved to design a hijab compliant collaret with bib for use by Muslim female legal practitioners to conform with the tradition of the legal profession.
