



9.18.18

NIGERIA | Boko Haram Executes Hostage

The al Barnawi faction of the Boko Haram terrorist group executed one of three female humanitarian workers it seized in May and threatened to kill the remaining hostages, including school girl Leah Sharibu, unless the Nigerian government responds to its demands.

Midwife Saifura Hussein Ahmed, 25, who worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was abducted March 1 along with fellow ICRC worker and midwife Hauwa Mohammed Liman, and nurse Alice Loksha Ngaddah, a UNICEF employee. Their abduction followed an attack in Rann, Borno state, in which two humanitarian workers from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), one from the ICRC and another from UNICEF, were murdered.

In the video depicting her execution, Ahmed is wearing a white hijab and is shot from behind. An unidentified terrorist spokesperson proceeds to complain that the government ignored written and audio messages and describes the murder as “a message of blood.” He goes on to state that “the other nurse and midwife will be executed in similar manner in one month, including Leah Sharibu.”

Fifteen-year-old Leah Sharibu was the sole Christian among 110 girls abducted from their school in Dapchi, Yobe state. She remains in captivity for refusing to convert as a precondition for release.

Toward the end of August, a “proof of life” audio recording emerged in which Sharibu called on the Nigerian presidency to facilitate her release. A similar recording was later released in which the three health care workers tearfully pleaded for assistance, saying the terrorists had given them their “final warning,” and had informed them that “after this they will take action that will shock everyone.”

The execution of Ahmed, who leaves behind a husband, a two-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter, was condemned “in the strongest terms” by the ICRC, which also appealed for the release of the remaining hostages. The UN’s Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Edward Kallon, described the execution as “a cowardly heinous and despicable act.”

In a statement, the Nigerian presidency said it “strongly condemns this reprehensible and inhuman act adding, “No religion permits the killing of the innocent.” The statement went on to call on countries or groups with influence to prevail on the terrorist to “cease these acts of barbarism,” and reiterating the government’s commitment to ensure the return of all hostages.

A seemingly resurgent Boko Haram has been inflicting casualties on the military. In July, soldiers were killed in attacks in Jilli in Yobe State and Bama in Borno State. In August, 17 soldiers were reportedly killed in an attack on a military base in Borno, during which the arsenal was looted. On Sept. 7, soldiers and civilians were killed when the sect overran, looted and briefly raised their flag over Gudumbali Town in Borno. On Sept. 16, terrorists ambushed troops of 222 Battalion but were fought off after a “serious exchange of gunfire.”

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “CSW extends its deepest condolences to the family of Saifura Hussein Ahmed, whose pain and devastation can only be imagined. This cruel, senseless and inhumane act has deprived a young family of a devoted mother and wife, and the world of a dedicated aid worker. The cowardly murder of an innocent young woman who served humanity selflessly, and the threat to murder three more, highlights the wanton disregard for the sanctity of human life on the part of both factions of Boko Haram, and the heinous lengths to which they will go to extort and to garner attention. Once again, we call on the government, which has primary responsibility for the protection of Nigerian citizens, to expedite the release of Hauwa Mohammed Liman, Alice Loksha Ngaddah and Leah Sharibu, to secure the release of the 112 remaining Chibok girls as a matter of urgency, and to ensure that the armed forces are fully equipped to address this brutal insurgency.”