

## Week 3: Pray for Leah Sharibu (Nigeria)



Leah Sharibu (17) was the only Christian among 110 schoolgirls abducted in February 2018 when militants from Boko Haram faction Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) raided Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi, Yobe state in northeast Nigeria. The other girls abducted with Leah are Muslims and were released after a month but the militants said they would only release Leah if she converted to Islam, which she refused to do. Five of the kidnapped girls died in the packed truck during the long journey to the Lake Chad region and were buried in the bush.

Leah's Christian schoolmates managed to escape the raid and hid in the bush but she was delayed caring for a sick roommate and the militants caught her. Leah's mother Rebecca Sharibu said her heart was broken when she searched through the released girls and could not find Leah. On hearing that her daughter had not been released, Rebecca collapsed from shock and was taken to hospital. She later said, *"I am so proud of my Leah because she did not denounce Christ"* and Leah's father Nathan Sharibu said, *"I am very sad... but I'm also jubilating too because my daughter did not denounce Christ."*

Since Leah's abduction the Nigerian government and security forces have been heavily criticised for failing to rescue her. In September 2018, ISWAP militants said they would kill Leah and two other hostages if the government did not pay ransoms and the following month they killed one of them, midwife Hauwa Liman who was a Muslim but considered by the militants to be apostate because she worked for the Red Cross.

After Hauwa's execution the militants said they would keep Leah and UNICEF nurse Alice Nggadah (a Christian who had been abducted in March 2018) as *"slaves for life"* because the government had not paid ransoms. In January 2020, Nigerian media reported that Leah had recently given birth to a baby boy, fathered by an ISWAP commander.

### Family

Leah's mother Rebecca Sharibu is a primary school teacher in Dapchi, while her father Nathan Sharibu works as a civil servant in Yola. She has one brother, Donald. They are members of an evangelical church.

### Latest News

Nigerian media reported that Leah's distraught mother Rebecca fell ill on Christmas Day 2020, just as she had at Christmas 2018 and 2019, and was hospitalised for observation.

## Prayer Diary

- Sunday** Pray for protection and good health for Leah and her baby.
- Monday** Pray that they would be released soon.
- Tuesday** Ask God to encourage Leah in her Christian faith.
- Wednesday** Pray for comfort and hope for Rebecca, Nathan and Donald.
- Thursday** Pray for protection and release for Alice Nggadah.
- Friday** Ask for the release of the terrorists' many other captives.
- Saturday** Ask God to grant the Nigerian government wisdom.



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