

TRANSCRIPT

Save the Persecuted Christians & Save Nigeria Group
A JOINT WEBINAR

Nigeria Update: Episode 5 The Abandoned & Forgotten Children of Nigeria's Genocide

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Media File: Nigeria_Update_5_Children.mp4

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

[00:00:00] **Dede Laugesen:** Welcome, everyone. Thanks for being here today. I'm your host, Dede Laugesen, president and CEO of Save the Persecuted Christians. Today, we are joined by leaders in Nigeria and the United States who are advocating for and providing education and shelter to some of Nigeria's millions and millions of at-risk and orphaned children.

Orphans are typically defined as children under eighteen who have lost one or both parents. Orphans and vulnerable children is a broader category that includes not only orphans, but also children facing extreme risks from poverty, HIV/AIDS in the family, armed conflict, displacement, [00:01:00] disability, or inadequate care, even if both parents are alive.

In 2008, Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development estimated 17.5 million OVCs, roughly one in every four Nigerian children at the time. Then, as the violence ramped up, Nigeria stopped counting the numbers. That old and irrelevant figure continues to be widely cited nearly two decades later, even as the country's total population has grown fifty-four percent to an estimated 242 million in 2026, with nearly 110 million children and adolescents.

Since 2014, more than 2,500 Nigerian students have been kidnapped from no fewer than thirty-one schools [00:02:00] by insurgents and bandits, according to reports. These numbers are conservative. Many attacks go without official reports being filed or are filed with mis- and malinformation to muddy the waters.

The Nigerian political cabal is very deft at crafting confusion to cover up the horrific reality that is happening in Nigeria today. Indeed, news broke this week that the 360 captives from Noki taken in March were all rescued by the military. Then news came that only Muslims had been released and the Christians were being kept as slaves. Then news broke that the Muslim captives weren't rescued by the military and they weren't from Noki. Their relatives had paid the ransoms and they were released. The military had nothing to do [00:03:00] with it.

Bandits and terrorists, they are jihadists. The government uses that term, bandits, to distract and confuse the narrative around the violence. The last thing they want to do is to highlight the Islamists, the jihadist groups driving the resurgence in school attacks since 2019 and spreading that phenomenon well beyond the North.

Fake news. Nigeria has mastered fake news to dispel the genocide of Christians. Right now, tens of thousands of children, possibly hundreds of thousands, are missing in Nigeria. Young boys are taken and forcibly recruited to the jihadist groups. Girls and children of all ages are taken from village raids and banditry and schools attacked.

These schools are routinely attacked. Remember in December, it [00:04:00] was St. Mary's in Kwara where over 200 children were taken and then later released. We hope they were released. It's so hard to confirm these stories, and the government lies more often than not. We rely on on-the-ground reporting from independent reporters working for truthnigeria.com for the facts, and we hope you will too.

My cohost today is Stephen Asomugha of Save Nigeria Group, who is leading the U.S.-Nigeria Civil Society Coalition that Save the Persecuted Christians is a part of. They are hosting the rally at the White House in ten days. That's right, on June 20th, Saturday, June 20th, from 10 to 3 p.m. Eastern, we will be at Lafayette Park across from the White House, urging more action to end the violent jihad raging across Nigeria's north and central regions and rapidly expanding south.

We urge everyone [00:05:00] here to come and stand in solidarity with Nigeria's Christians. We need you to be there.

Our guests today have seen it all. Some are victims of violence who are now caring for the next generation of Nigeria's forgotten children. Others have left high-paying positions to care for the least of those, the little ones ground down in the ongoing genocide of Christians in Nigeria.

First, our friend and coalition partner at Save the Persecuted Christians, the good Reverend Dr. William Devlin, or Rev Dev, or simply Bill as he's known to his friends. He runs Widows and Orphans, and he's been over in Nigeria several times in the past few years to advocate for a group of Christian orphans taken from their Christian orphanage by the state and placed into a Muslim school and under the care of Muslims.

Tell [00:06:00] us, Dev, about that case. Any developments over the years, and what's the current status for these children?

[00:06:09] **Rev. Dr. William Devlin:** Yes. Dede, thank you so much for having me be a part of this critical discussion. And I have been to Nigeria twenty-one times in the last four and a half years. I was there four times in 2025, not only working with this case study which I'm presenting this morning, but also the release of Sunday Jackson.

And I, as a pastor, as a human rights advocate, as a peacemaker, I'm all about results. So as many of you heard, Sunday Jackson, ten-year death sentence. He was on death row ready to be hanged by the Nigerian Supreme Court, and he was actually pardoned by Governor Fintiri of Adamawa State on December 25th, Christmas 2025, and released on December 28th, 2025.

So [00:07:00] I use that—

[00:07:00] **Rev. Solomon Folorunsho:** Praise Jesus.

[00:07:01] **Rev. Dr. William Devlin:** Thank you, Jesus. And so I'm all about results.

So when I was asked to engage over a year ago on these children that were kidnapped from Du Mercy Orphanage in Kano State, originally twenty-seven children, and I don't know if you can put the PowerPoint up yet, but my case study, 2019 to 2026, because it's still ongoing, and again, I think as we do these rescue attempts, we need to be focused on prayer, fasting, and results.

And so my case study is forced abduction of Christian children in Nigeria as a means of converting them, or conversion to Islam. And that's what happened. On Christmas Day 2019, there were twenty-seven orphans in the Du Mercy Orphanage that were taken [00:08:00] by the state police. Imagine that, by the local authorities in Kano State.

If you know Kano State, it's way up north. It borders with Niger, and it's run by, along with eleven other states there in northern Nigeria, Sharia law.

And just to give you a very quick background, there's been ninety-one press accounts, print, television, radio, et cetera, not only in Nigerian press, but also in worldwide press. Ninety-one. So if you go into a search function and type in Du Mercy, D-U space M-E-R-C-Y, that's the name of the orphanage, Du Mercy Orphanage children kidnapped. Christmas Day, twenty-seven children kidnapped.

The husband and wife, Pastor and Mrs. Tarfa, Pastor Solomon Tarfa, they've been in orphanage work for some thirty-five years, and Mercy Tarfa, his [00:09:00] wife, she was jailed for two weeks, and then Pastor Solomon Tarfa was jailed for two years, if you can imagine that.

And I'm very grateful to my colleague, who may be on the call today, Barrister Emmanuel Ogebe. He's the one that invited me to Nigeria back in October of 2020, and now God has used us to get results going up against the Islamists and jihadists. And so I'm very grateful to Barrister Emmanuel Ogebe and just leading at least the litigation efforts, and I do my best to fund these efforts.

So in conclusion, our first visit to Kano State was March 5th, 2025, to seek the release. So twenty-seven children originally kidnapped by the state, by the state authorities, by the state police, and some of them were leaked out, some of them [00:10:00] aged out, and they were transferred to Nasarawa Children's Home. I call it Nasarawa Islamist Home.

The young girls, all the girls, were forced to wear the hijab. Their names were changed from Christian names to Muslim names. They were beaten if they didn't memorize verses in the Quran. And so forced conversion is going on of these Christian children kidnapped.

We eventually got Pastor Solomon Tarfa out of prison after two years. The reason for this supposed raid on the Du Mercy Orphanage in Kano State is the Islamists said, "Well, this pastor and his wife are running a human trafficking outfit," which was totally bogus. And then we got Pastor Solomon Tarfa out after two years, and we're grateful for that.

So our first visit, March 5th, [00:11:00] went to a court where we received a court order to get now sixteen children, because some of them have aged out. And so from twenty-seven, now in March 5th of 2025, we're dealing with sixteen children. We went to the court. We got the court order, of which I have a picture there on the PowerPoint, March 5th, 2025. Those were some of the sixteen children that we were seeking to get released with this court order.

I came back to the U.S., and then I got a call. "You need to come back to Nigeria. There's been a settlement agreed upon by the commissioner of social affairs, the attorney general of Kano State, the Islamist orphanage, and our local attorney, Barrister Gideon."

So March 19th, 2025, we are there with the terms of the settlement, and that day the children were to be released [00:12:00] to us at 2 p.m. with the commissioner of social affairs. There's a picture of the commissioner of social affairs, who is an Islamist, Commissioner Amina Abdullahi. And we waited on that day, March 19th, 2025, for five hours for her to appear.

She finally gets up. It was during Ramadan. And there we are, myself, Barrister Emmanuel Ogebe, Barrister Gideon, and there we were waiting for this commissioner. Five hours, she finally shows up. She's very angry. She's blaming me for missing an

iftar dinner with the governor of Kano State. And I turn to her and I say, “Madam, we’re here with a court order, and you must, with respect, release the sixteen children to us, to me and to my two attorneys.”

And she turned to me and [00:13:00] she said, “Pastor, you go to hell. You’ll never get these children.”

So I backed off a little bit. She then went over to the sixteen children that were waiting for us. She began to berate them. “If you go with that pastor from America, that white pastor, we’re going to find you, we’re going to kill you, and you’re going to go to hell.”

I mean, these children were frightened. So she’s over excoriating the children if they leave with me, and I’m filming the event on my cell phone. And then after a few minutes, they began speaking in Hausa, the tribal language, and I turn to Barrister Emmanuel. I said, “What are they saying?” He said, “Put your cell phone away. They’re asking permission.”

And there’s a picture there of the Islamist commissioner of social affairs in the middle, by a pile of rocks, and the mob that had gathered and some of her entourage, she had a military attaché there with her, were asking [00:14:00] permission to take up stones and smash my phone, smash the car we came in, and smash us.

So myself, Rev Dev, Barrister Emmanuel Ogebe, and Barrister Gideon, we immediately got in the car and left, and of course, without the children.

So I said to the Lord, “Lord, if you want me to go the way of Saint Stephen on behalf of these children, I’m willing to go.” But God sent forth a party of his angels, and we were able to escape.

Fast-forward, another court order was given. This is on the PowerPoint. August 13th, 2025, eight children were released to the Du Mercy Orphanage, and that was a great victory. But it was through litigation. My responsibility is helping to fund the litigation and also being a presence.

I really want to ask all of you, if you haven’t been to [00:15:00] Nigeria, you’ve got to come to Nigeria. The Ministry of Presence, MOP, Ministry of Presence. I always say I just want to be a mop for Jesus.

So now eight children released August 2025. Fast-forward to late January of 2026, one of the young children, David Tarfa, thirteen years old, complained of stomach pain. He went to the director of the Islamist home, Nasarawa Home in Kano State, and they said, “Look, go back and go to sleep. We’re not going to spend the money to take you to the hospital.”

That child, David, thirteen years old, died of sepsis that night in late January 2026. They then immediately prepared him to be buried, this young kid, as a Muslim. We had to get an order of stay and litigate the fact this child is not a Muslim, he's a Christian, and you're not going to bury him by [00:16:00] Islamic ritual.

So we even had to litigate for this poor young boy, and that poor young boy, we also demanded an autopsy, and that boy, as we sit here today, is still in the morgue in Kano State.

And finally, on April 15th, went back because we heard that the remaining seven alive children and one deceased child were going to be released to us. We got to the courthouse, myself, Barrister Emmanuel Ogebe, and Barrister Gideon, the local attorney there in Kano State, and the commissioner of social affairs was there with the seven living children and said, "All of the children have converted to Islam, and they don't want to go to Du Mercy Christian Orphanage."

She stood up and left with the children. And we're like, "What just happened?" And so as a result of that, and it was very interesting, none of the children had any of their belongings with them, so [00:17:00] we knew that the fix was in even when we went to the courtroom.

Afterwards, after the commissioner of social affairs, Amina Abdullahi, left with the seven living children, we immediately... I said and demanded, "I want to meet with the attorney general of Kano State." Within fifteen minutes, we had a meeting with him. There's a picture of that. Myself and Barrister Ogebe, Barrister Gideon, met for approximately thirty minutes, and we said, "Attorney General, your name is on that court order for the release of the children, and you saw, or at least heard, what happened today, and we demand that these children be released in Jesus' mighty name."

Well, it didn't happen that day. The following day, we went back to Abuja. I wrote a letter to the federal AG, and also that day, we held a press conference at the Federal Department of [00:18:00] Justice in Abuja, Nigeria.

So the seven children are still being held. You can see a picture of our press conference there at the Federal Department of Justice in Abuja. We were up on the second floor. We actually did it in a hallway. It was widely covered.

So as I conclude, just pray for these seven remaining children to be released. They are being forced to convert to Islam. They're being beaten if they don't, and so pray for them. And that's my last slide there, is pray for the remaining eight Du Mercy children to be released, seven living children, and thirteen-year-old David Tarfa, deceased, and pray in Jesus' name that as we continue to grind along, and, you know, Nigeria's one of those places, as those of you who've been there and as Dede knows, it's one of those places you just have to hang in.

So Dede, thank you so much, and God bless, and I'll take any questions if anyone has any. [00:19:00]

[00:19:00] **Dede Laugesen:** Great. Thank you. We'll reserve questions until toward the end. I don't know if Barrister Emmanuel Ogebe is with you and Barrister Gideon, but please give them our regards, and great thanks for the work that they have been doing arm in arm with you, Rev Dev.

I love the Ministry of Presence, and that is truly what we all need to be, mops for Jesus, mops of presence. Eric Metaxas, who sits on our board, wrote the Letter to the American Church, encouraging American Christians to truly take a stand. We have become so comfortable in our faith here in the United States. And faith in Nigeria is faith on fire. Truly, Nigerians are among the world's greatest and most devoted Christians.

Rev Dev, you can go ahead and mute while I introduce our next guest, [00:20:00] who I had the privilege of meeting in Nigeria when I was there, just outside of Jos in Plateau State.

Bamshak and Makayla Dagwer have opened up a school called Seeds of Hope. It's built with beautiful red brick buildings, and just the love and care and attention they put into their campus is phenomenal. And the children have good beds and good showers and good bathrooms and good food to eat, and a sense of security.

But all around, in the farmland, the grazing land around their school, are the Fulani herdsmen, and they're there with their cattle. And I know you guys live in friendship and in community with a lot of Fulani, as they are a large tribe in northern Nigeria. But you, [00:21:00] Bamshak, are a child of Boko Haram violence. I heard your testimony in Nigeria, and it is just chilling what you went through. And I'll have you share some of that.

But also, most importantly, how you came to be a child of violence now caring for the next generation of Nigeria's forgotten children, and how you brought Makayla in with you to serve their needs. I know you guys are both just recently relocated to the United States for your children's education, and so they can know Makayla's family as well.

But share with us your vision, your life, what brought you here, and tell us about the children.

[00:21:49] **Bamshak Dagwer:** Thank you so much, Dede, for all you do with Save the Persecuted Christians. It is a pleasure to be able to share just a little bit about what God has [00:22:00] been doing in and through us.

In 2001, I was growing up in a Muslim-dominated area in Jos. It's called Angwan Rogo. It's one of the most fanatic Muslim communities in Jos. And so all of a sudden, when it started, we thought it was just one of those things that happens when we play a soccer

match with a Muslim team and they come throwing stones over the church building, and you know.

So we thought it was one of those. But that turned out to be way more than we had ever expected, because they have a saying that staying with a chicken does not all of a sudden stop you from deciding to kill it and eat it. Which for the Muslims there, it simply means that them staying with Christians doesn't mean that they can't all of a sudden decide to kill them if they don't conform to their ways.

And so when that [00:23:00] started happening, hundreds of people, lots of people, ran into the church my dad was pastoring. It was a church of about 2,000 people. And sadly, they came, attacked, shut the doors and windows, and poured gas around the church building and set it on fire.

On a particular day in my life, I lost a lot of loved ones, people that I played with on the worship team, who were all of a sudden gone, were killed. Even in the process of trying to escape, I saw how they were brutally killing Christians. It was so devastating.

If they catch you, they beat you with stakes, with hundreds of nails interwoven in them, till you die, or they throw stones on you, they stone you to death, or they put a tire around your neck and pour gas on you and set you on fire. So whatever horrible ways you can imagine that somebody [00:24:00] would get killed were the ways they were actually using to take away the lives of Christians.

And so when I was trying to run and escape from that situation, my thought was, "I need to get over to the other part of town," which was mostly Christian. So in the process of doing that, I knew that if I kept running, I was going to get killed as well. Because in Nigeria, we know, based on facial features, who is a Muslim or who is a Christian, or if worse comes to worst, if you don't know, if you ask the person to say one or two words, based on your accent, we can tell if you're a Muslim or a Christian.

And so I knew if I didn't seek safety at that particular moment, I was going to get killed. So I had to lift a cement slab where all the sewage passes through. Now, this isn't as fancy [00:25:00] as the ones in America. So I lifted that slab, went underneath. My thought was if I could stay underneath here and wait till it gets dark, I could get out and keep running across town to get to safety in a Christian community.

And so I did that for two days, got so close to a Christian community. But the situation became so bad that at that point in time, the government gave the military personnel the go-ahead to kill anybody they see out there. It got to a point whereby even some of the military personnel were killing their fellow Christian military personnel and opening fire in Christian communities to kill Christians.

And so I was caught by a Muslim military personnel with a bunch of other guys. We were beat up to the point that I thought I was going to die. I was lying helplessly on the ground. And then he started calling us one by one [00:26:00] and would ask you to run and then shoot you down, and then call the next person and ask him to run and then shoot him down.

While that was happening, I just couldn't believe what I was seeing, you know? And it was literally as if, at that moment, I was seeing the Bible stories just flash right before my eyes. Growing up in the church, hearing all the Sunday school Bible stories and so on and so forth, I was literally seeing that just flash right before my eyes.

And even the story of Stephen, how he was stoned to death, I could just imagine how that happened and was seeing all those flash before my eyes. And one particular story stood out for me, and it was the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

And at that point, one of the commanders of the military was driving past that particular place, and then he stopped and asked the [00:27:00] military personnel who we were. And so the guy just said, "Oh, they're just a bunch of exhibits."

Now in Nigeria, if they call you an exhibit, it means you're a deadly criminal. And what they do to people like that sometimes is they take them straight to a firing squad and kill them without any court case or interrogation. And then the commander said, "Kill them."

And then he raised his gun, hit me, and I fell. I was lying helpless, just watching what was unfolding before my eyes and hearing a commander say, "Kill them." And he raised his gun, hit me down.

And then I felt as if something... Because at that particular moment when the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came to mind, I was reminded by how they stood strong and did not bow down to the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar raised and asked everybody to worship.

But what stood out for me in that Bible story was what the three guys said. They said, "We know our [00:28:00] God is powerful to save us," but even if he doesn't, they were willing to die for what they believe.

And so I just prayed a little prayer at that moment. I said, "God, I know you have the power to save me from the hand of this man. But even if you don't, if I die, I want to be with you tonight." And all of a sudden, that was the first time in my life that I felt the power and presence of God. I grew up in the church, never felt anything, but at that particular moment, I felt like something just came and lifted me up to my feet.

And then the military personnel guy was staring intensely at me as if he was seeing something inside of me. And then he looked at me and said, "If you love yourself, run."

Now, all I was thinking was he was going to shoot me anyway. The moment I started running, he was going to shoot me. And so, to my greatest [00:29:00] surprise, I took off, and he didn't shoot. And that was how I escaped that particular scenario, crossed over to a Christian-dominated community, and passed out for some days and got up and realized that I was still alive.

[00:29:16] **Dede Laugesen:** It truly is one of the most amazing stories I have ever heard, and you tell it so well, Bamshak. I know there's a little bit more to the story. Please go ahead, and then we'll hear from your wife, Makayla, how it is to hear of the horrors that you went through.

[00:29:34] **Bamshak Dagwer:** So to fast-forward, while this was happening, my family and I ended up, and thankfully, God spared the life of my dad and two of my brothers. My sister was at school at that point. My mom was at work. She worked at one of the big hospitals in Jos, and so she was safe.

We reunited at a refugee camp, at an IDP, internally displaced people's camp, and that was [00:30:00] how we had to start life all over again. But to cut the whole story short, there my dad was transferred to another church. But in 2008, I left the country, and in December 2008, he called again and said they attacked again, and this time around they burned the church as well, and they narrowly escaped.

So at that point, here I am in the Philippines. I love the country. I was serving with Youth With A Mission in the Philippines. I broke down in tears in the middle of the mall, just weeping, wanting to just go back. And I felt at that moment that God was saying, "Do you want to go back and take the lives of your family, the safety of your family, into your hands, or do you want to just allow me to protect your family?"

But truly, we have seen the hand of God throughout the whole thing that has been happening in Nigeria since 2001, when it badly started hitting [00:31:00] Plateau State. But to fast-forward, that was when I met my wife, Makayla, in the Philippines. She can say a little bit about that and about the ministry, or Seeds of Hope, that we started.

[00:31:15] **Dede Laugesen:** Makayla, what drew you to Bamshak? What an experience, and to meet in the Philippines after such... Wow. Just tell us, how did you come to love Bamshak and draw into the ministry in Nigeria?

[00:31:32] **Makayla Dagwer:** Yeah. So I felt from a young age called to the field of missions, and I felt a heart for Africa. But, you know, as that develops, as you grow and gain skills in life. So I had gone to the Philippines to become a midwife, trained to be a midwife, and we happened to meet each other in a church.

And he had been in the Philippines for a year or so and had not had anybody [00:32:00] been to Africa or really understand his culture and place. Well, I had just been to Africa

on missions for some time and came to the Philippines. And so my heart was missing Africa while being in Asia, and so we met that way and were like, "Wow, this is incredible," and kind of hit it off that way.

And then over time, he began to share his story of just how the Lord was restoring him from this place of violence and saying that, "I never want to go back to Africa." You never say never, but he did say, "Lord, I am not doing that. I have been so traumatized, and I can serve you in other places of the world, but I just can't go back there."

He just wasn't in that place of being able to do that. And my heart was like, well, I want to go back to Africa. That's where I'm called to serve.

And fast-forward, we fell in love and got married in the Philippines and then decided to move to [00:33:00] the U.S. And in 2016, we decided to go meet his family, because at that point we hadn't seen his family, even since we got married, since they weren't able to attend the wedding in the Philippines.

And so we went to visit his family with our first daughter in 2016, and when we were there, we began to go from one IDP camp, or internally displaced camp, to another within Plateau State. And when you see something so devastating, you can't unsee it, you know? And everybody has a conscience, but with the Spirit of God within us too, we were like, well, we can't just turn our eye and not be a source of blessing or a source of resource or a voice for the voiceless.

All of these people, all these women and children that have been not only displaced, but living with the trauma of having most often lost their husband or father, and they lost their community and [00:34:00] livelihood and all these things. And so we go for this family trip thinking that we're going to buy a property and build this little house so whenever we go back to see his family, we can stay in this house.

Well, we come back to the States, and we are just so broken, and we're like, Lord, what do you desire for these people? And we just felt like the Lord was saying, begin to do one thing, and feed them. They're hungry. Just feed them, and speak words of life over them as you feed them.

And so we started raising money. We had got the idea from the Philippines. They do a lot of feeding programs. And so we raised money, and we started that way, of feeding the children on a regular basis, hundreds at a time. And we would go into the IDP camps, and we did that for about two years.

And then we felt like, well, this isn't enough. We need to provide a safe place. I mean, there's no real shelter, there's no [00:35:00] education, there's no opportunity. It's just this stagnant ground. And so many lives are even being taken within those IDP camps because of just lack of resources.

And so the Lord planted in our heart this vision of planting seeds of hope in his name, of providing safety for the children. So our next step within Seeds of Hope was to build a safe house, or an orphanage, rather, where we would take the children in the most vulnerable situations and bring them in to have a safe place to begin to heal from the traumas that they had experienced.

And so we did that. And then once we had the children, we were like, “Now we have to send them to school. What do we do?” So we had relocated our family in 2021 to Nigeria. And then in 2022, we were like, “Wow, we need a source of [00:36:00] education for these children.” And so that’s where Seeds of Hope Academy came into place.

And it was a miracle. We didn’t have the resources for it, and within six months, the school not only was built, but it was fully up and running for the children.

And now, fast-forward to 2026, we have fifty-four residents, or children living in our home, and we have about seventy students in our Seeds of Hope Academy that are also sponsored community children that have been locally affected, not just from all the rural villages, but even the village that our safe home is in, they’ve experienced loss themselves.

And so those children are then sponsored to come alongside the orphan children within our orphanage to gain the same opportunities, to find hope in Christ and to begin to heal and to be able to share those horrifying experiences. I mean, Bam has a [00:37:00] terrible story, but some of the stories that these kids share, it’s hard to keep yourself composed when they’re just telling you how they’ve seen their parents slaughtered right before their eyes, or just the miracles of God, even Muslim men and women being actually units of God’s mercy on their lives, being those agents of protection.

And so when people pray for angels or that type of thing, there are testimonies over and over again of how the Lord has used people and angels of just incredible protection to save the lives of these children and spare them for the acts of good that the Lord has already planned for them to do.

[00:37:50] **Dede Laugesen:** Wow. Wow. You two are truly my heroes, and I cannot be in your presence without shedding multiple tears and wiping [00:38:00] them away constantly. It’s a joy in my heart to know that you are there for them, and I know that you’ve left Seeds of Hope, the academy, in good hands. I met your teachers and your staff and the people who are on the ground with these children, and I know that the Lord has put this call on your heart. And I thank you for answering it and being there for the children.

Well, next up is a very good friend, Reverend Solomon Folorunsho. He is in Edo State and has Home for the Needy. He’s probably been running an orphanage for the longest

of anybody here, since back in the '90s. And Home for the Needy has some 5,000 children from the violence in the North. But still, with an organization as large as Reverend Solomon's, it's only a drop in the bucket. [00:39:00]

Everywhere, everywhere in Nigeria, the children are all over the streets, and they are in need of care from far more people than are on the ground caring for them now. Many people don't know that during COVID, the Christian ministries that were serving in Nigeria closed up shop and left and did not come back.

And now that President Trump has made waves over the violence in Nigeria, you see a whole bunch of organizations saying, "Hey, we're in Nigeria. We've been in Nigeria. We're in Nigeria. We're..." They're just now coming back to the scene of the crime. They left. They abandoned everybody.

There were very few Christian organizations that stayed on the ground in Nigeria after COVID. So what you're seeing on here are the people who have served. Doesn't matter the time of day, doesn't matter what's happening in the world, they are [00:40:00] there and they are serving.

Solomon, 5,000 children you call your own. You are the father to them. Tell us your story.

[00:40:12] **Rev. Solomon Folorunsho:** Thank you so much. I'm so happy, and I want to thank you for standing for Nigeria. We love to call you Mama Nigeria.

I thank God for my brothers and the pastors who have spoken. In fact, I'm so happy that there are persons who love Nigeria like you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

When I gave my life to Christ, because of all I went through, I decided that I was going to use whatever God gave me to help children who are abused, children who are underprivileged, children who are vulnerable.

I was doing this since 1992 quietly. And then in 2012, I was in Germany [00:41:00] ministering the gospel when I had a call that someone from the north was calling me and wanted to speak to me urgently. I got the number and called back. He was a brother, a pastor, a missionary from the Gwoza axis of the Northeast.

He was weeping, asking me, why are Christians in the South not helping them? That they are suffering and see how Boko Haram is killing their people. In fact, when he started speaking, I broke into tears. And he told me that I should please come and help, that they have thousands of children whose parents Boko Haram have killed, and nobody to care for them, and they are dying daily.

He said our rivers are being filled with dead bodies of Christians and all that. So I rushed down to Nigeria and invited him, and what he showed to me broke my heart.

And then we said, "Okay, the first thing we are going to do, let's start [00:42:00] relocating those Christians, those that were saved from death, to different centers in the north."

But everywhere we relocated them to, Boko Haram would also come and attack. So we agreed we must bring them to Benin City.

The first set of children that were gathered together were 2,000. And these 2,000 children, they are children of pastors, Christians, deacons. I was having about 700 children at that time from the south and the middle belt.

The thing was, how are we going to feed them? Thank God we had a center of over 50 hectares, but we didn't have the infrastructure. How are we going to feed them? How are we going to house them? Then after that, what are we going to do with them?

And knowing Nigeria, knowing what Nigeria is, that the Islamists are the ones controlling and ruling the government of Nigeria, we were thinking of safety. How do we keep them from the eyes of their enemies?

So by faith, we said, "Let's start." So we started with [00:43:00] four children, late 2012. And then from there we started with forty. Like that, we were bringing them quietly. We were doing it secretly because we knew if they got them on the way, they would kill them.

So that was how we started until the army, the police, got aware. They started detaining the children. They detained them several times in jail, took them to the army barrack, arrested me, interrogated me. Sometimes I would spend the whole day in the police station, interrogation: "What are you doing with these children?"

We were fighting the battle like that until we had 3,000 in our center, 4,000. Then I ran out of funds, because I was actually using my own funds, what I had. I ran out of funds, and then [00:44:00] it was difficult to do the work.

Until one day a pastor came. He's a friend of a journalist, and he said God sent him to me. "Look, if you don't allow me to do what I want to do, you will die and you will not be able to take care of the children, because I can look at you and see that you're so traumatized."

I said, "What do you want to do?" He said he wanted to invite the press. He wanted to put everything in the press.

I was so scared, not even for my life, but for the children. I pleaded with him. I said, "Please don't announce us, because I don't want them to come here and kill these children."

He said, "Pastor Solomon, the world just needs to know so that those who can help can help."

So that was how he did it, and we were in all the major newspapers. We were there on TV. And the more we got to be known, the more people wanted to come. At that time, the Muslims in Nigeria became angry. They became furious. They were sending all kinds of threats. They would call me in the night and tell me to [00:45:00] prepare for death. They said they put a fatwa on me, that I'm under death sentence. Anywhere they find me, they are going to kill me.

I continued doing the job I was doing. And then a time came, they did an audio in Hausa language and spread it in the north, saying that a pastor in the south had come to carry Muslim children, and he had forcefully converted them to Christianity. This was not true. It was just propaganda and lies just to stop me, just to get me apprehended.

So while this audio was going around in the north, then the federal government came against me. They sent DSS. They sent all manner... In fact, there are a lot of things I went through. I wouldn't even talk of mine, because that of the children is even more horrible.

But in the midst of all that, we were able to use buses quietly, bringing them, bringing them. At a time, we were 7,000. At a time, they were 8,000. Then it got to a time we could not [00:46:00] manage them. So those that couldn't go to school, we started relocating them to safe places in the south. Those that can farm, some said, "We can do farming." So we go rent land, get them a house, just like that. That's how we were doing it.

Then it was only northeast. After a while, the Fulani started their genocide against Christians in Katsina, in Sokoto, in Kano. In fact, everywhere in the northwest, down to Jos. Right now in the south, they are already in the south operating.

So everyone wants to come to our center, but we couldn't take care of everybody. So what we did was we started working with other partners, creating clusters, places around Abuja, Nasarawa. Anywhere we found to be safe, we just create. They can be just like thirty in [00:47:00] a community, we just create a place for them.

And most of them are children and widows, because most of the men have been killed. So it was now left with children and widows. So the widows will be taking care of the children, while the children will try to put them in schools. So this is how we've been doing it for years.

And several times they will send terrorists to our center. We have our internal security. We just find a way to catch them and hand them over to the police. Thank God we have some police who are friends.

And then one day in the morning, somebody showed up at our gate. He said he has a friend in our center, and that he wants to come and live among us. So we asked him questions, and our children were able to ask him, "Which tribe are you from?" He was not from any of their tribes. So while they were talking with him, the children were able to identify him, that he was Boko—

[00:47:55] **Rev. Dr. William Devlin:** Haram. Yeah.

[00:47:55] **Rev. Solomon Folorunsho:** Then we quickly got to DSS, and DSS [00:48:00] came. They interrogated him. He actually said he was sent to our center, one, to come and live among us. Two, to initiate those children and train them to become Boko Haram. And three, to make sure that they attack our center and destroy it.

So DSS took him away, and the first time they got to DSS, he didn't open up for one month. They interrogated until he opened up. For the second month, he told them a lot of their plans against our center.

So we thought they were taking their eyes away from us. So from then, we started seeing more and more penetration. They will come in the night and break in and steal things, different things, vital things that we have in store for the children.

So recently, they came in just a few days ago. They stole armored cables from the transformer that was donated to us. They stole the water pump in the secondary school where the children [00:49:00] attend. They stole it.

So when we saw the threat that was coming, we had to call the police commissioner, who graciously came. He's new. He's a Christian. The wife had visited our center. He came. He brought a police helicopter. They did surveillance. They tried to scare these people away.

I want to say that the children in our center have different stories to tell about how their parents were killed, about how their parents were slaughtered. And anytime you hear these stories, it's so traumatizing, you can't eat.

They tell you how their parents were slaughtered like little, little pieces of meat. Like one I just heard a few days ago told me about her grandmother, so old she couldn't run when Boko Haram came. They poured fuel on her, and while she was burning, she was calling them, "My children, what did I do to deserve this treatment you are giving to me?"

And the children told me that when [00:50:00] Boko Haram came to their different communities, the old people, the handicapped, those that were crippled, those that were sick could not run. All these people were burned to death. So many stories.

And right now, we are under threat. They are coming more and more. They've even come to villages that are not far from us. So we're just hoping that God will protect the children.

Our center has over 5,000, and when they came, we thought, "What do we do with them?" Food, shelter was the first, then trauma treatment. And how did we succeed? We love them, we care for them, they live with us, we eat together, we do sport together, we do everything together.

Then after that, we think, "What else do we do?" Nigeria has abandoned them. The government has abandoned them. The military cannot protect them. What do we do with these children? We thought education, giving them good education, will be very good, [00:51:00] so we started giving them good education.

Today, we have over 500 of them in different universities. We have some who are already studying outside Nigeria. And then we have 180 that have already graduated. Among these are eleven medical doctors. We have over twenty-five who are now lawyers. We have over eight who are nurses. Just on and on and on. This is how we've been caring for them.

And now people are coming from other states, states like Plateau. Then there is another state that nobody is talking about, Kebbi State. This Kebbi State, there are many local governments that are occupied by Fulani terrorists. Every day, they are going from one village to another to kill Christians. Nobody's talking about it. Nobody's helping them. There's no military, no police, nothing.

They go to a community, they kill the men, they rape the women. Like the recent one that happened. After [00:52:00] raping the women, they start putting all manner of objects into their private parts. Yes, those are the things that are going on right now. They are just clearing villages, clearing those towns with nobody helping them.

And all of them want, the ones that are saved, or that fled, want to come to our center, but our center is full. We don't have the—

[00:52:24] **Dede Laugesen:** Capacity right now.

[00:52:25] **Rev. Solomon Folorunsho:** Yes, yes, right now. Because the thing is, in different states, it's not only northeast anymore, it's now in different states. People called us from a community in Katsina. They told us that they are Christians, they are not Muslim, that they fled, they don't know where to go, and they asked us to help them. Where do we put them?

Nigeria has become filled with genocide victims. IDPs everywhere. If you come to Benin City, go to Lagos—

[00:52:53] **Dede Laugesen:** Yeah. You don't have to search for them. They're everywhere around you from the time you land on the [00:53:00] ground.

Reverend Solomon, let's finish up your comments. I cannot begin to tell you what it must be like to have 5,000 children in your care and have the terrorists coming closer and closer every day. And even though you have friends in the police, they're not there twenty-four/seven, and your children are at grave risk, as are all the children here who are being cared for by people who love them and are devoted to them.

But unless more people, especially in America and the West, provide for these children, Nigeria's future is very, very, very dark, because children who are not in school, children who are threatened, children who don't have their daily needs taken care of are ripe to be radicalized.

Next, I want to go over to my friend, Reverend Dr. Oluwasayo Ajiboye. He is a former president of [00:54:00] an RCCG, Redeemed Christian Church, seminary in Texas. And really, he has given up everything. He has sacrificed all for the children that he cares for in his orphanage. He's had them in Kaduna, he's had them out of country. He's brought them back now to his place in the south, and they are being hounded by terrorists as well, ever drawing closer to his campus.

Dr. Shayo, you and I have been friends in this since Save the Persecuted Christians was stood up in 2018, and we've walked arm in arm. We have advocated in Washington, D.C. for Nigeria over and over, and you are truly one of my best friends in Nigeria, and I stand in awe of you. Sir, you are a mountain of a man, but a teddy bear with a heart of gold, and your children [00:55:00] are everything to you.

Tell us your perspective, sir.

[00:55:04] **Rev. Dr. Oluwasayo Ajiboye:** I really honor all the people that have spoken before me: Reverend Dev, Reverend Bamshak and Makayla, and just now, Reverend Folorunsho. And all I can say to all they are saying is yes and amen.

I had a very cushy job in Texas, by my own standard, but the stories got to me, and all I could do was weep. In my office, I wept till I could not weep again. And then the Lord said to my heart, "Well, what are you going to do about it now that you have wept?"

I'm not talking of weeping for one day. I'm talking of weeping continuously for nearly a year or more. When I get [00:56:00] inside my office, I just cry. I just cry because of what my brothers are talking about, the experiences of people in northern Nigeria at that time.

Well, like my sister said, in 2018, I went back to Jos, to Kaduna State, Kafanchan, and the Fulani sacked a community, and I began to partner with that community while they were in the IDP camp. They went back to their homes, and we just worked with them till they got their health back. We built a school there. Within two months, we were able to

build a whole school at that [00:57:00] time. And the school is still there, the children are there. We have about 200 children in the school right now.

The challenge has not ceased. Actually, yesterday I got a list of children that the head of school wanted me to take down south with me, because what has happened is all those places, like my brothers have said and my sister Makayla, they are not safe. Nigeria is an open field of genocidal operators, everywhere you turn.

I brought the children from Kaduna, from Benue. I brought them down to my community, my compound in Osun State, saying, "Oh, these [00:58:00] children would have peace here. They will be safe." And then the Fulani, the Lakurawa, began to press into the forest of the southwest.

You might have heard the story that they captured forty-six children and their teachers, and they beheaded one teacher to create terror. That's less than 150 kilometers from my house. We have whole towns that have been emptied in the southwest. A whole region emptied, nobody living there again because of the terrorists.

But we are trusting God for our center in Osun State. We have about 200 children there, and they live at the school. We try to give them [00:59:00] as sane a life as possible.

I have heard the stories of my brother, and I don't know whether it is useful for me to retell those stories. Actually, it's very difficult for me to tell it because I begin to cry. Those stories are heartrending, and they're real. They're true.

Just this April, one of my orphan boys, the father was saved, and then the mother was killed by the Fulani. So the father married another woman, and that woman became like his mother. The Fulani came back, and they [01:00:00] killed this new woman just this April. I didn't know how to tell him that your new mother has been killed again by the Fulani.

This is what we live. Like Brother Folorunsho was trying to tell us, we live with this all the time.

So we have children from Gombe, we have children from all over Nigeria really, from Kaduna, from Plateau, from Benue. We brought them to southwest Nigeria to give them a sense of stability, to give them a home, to be a father to them. And they're there. They're thriving.

The children, I found out, don't really want to talk about their trauma. They don't want to revisit it. It's extremely, extremely painful, [01:01:00] extremely traumatic. And of recent, you must have heard about Yelwata in Benue State.

[01:01:06] **Dede Laugesen:** It was this time last year that Yelwata was attacked, a Catholic mission in Benue, and over 200 people who were in the IDP camp were

murdered just mercilessly. Many of them burned to death, as we've heard today. One night. In one night, yes.

[01:01:24] **Rev. Dr. Oluwasayo Ajiboye:** In one night, over 200 people were slaughtered. But Yelwata is not a small community. It's a large community abandoned by the federal government.

So one young man from that general area came to meet me in Imesi and said, "Look, I just give you the name of my community." Like Brother Folorunsho, we try to be very careful. Like, you will never see my children on social media. We don't [01:02:00] advertise because it's dangerous. It's extremely dangerous. They will come after them, and they will kill them. Well, God has protected us.

So the people in Yelwata came to me and said, "Look, our children, it is now over two years, as at that time, that they've been out of school. What are we going to do?"

And I said, "Okay, let's see what we can do." And I was hoping that maybe we can get fifty children to come, and we can help them. One day, 400 children showed up.

[01:02:37] **Dede Laugesen:** Oh, goodness.

[01:02:39] **Rev. Dr. Oluwasayo Ajiboye:** Four hundred children. And I said to the man that brought them to me, "What are we going to do?" He said, "The Lord has sent you here. We have to take care."

So we had to start a whole school in one day for 400 children, K through 12, [01:03:00] just two or three months ago, in Yelwata. The building that the Baptist church built, but out of fear, they abandoned it. This young man went there, gathered other young men around him. Incidentally, all of them were graduates. They were well-educated.

And I said, "By the grace of God, we will stand with you if the community will stand with us." So we started a school for those children. The joy. The joy. The joy. It's like God came to heal their pain, and all we can do is pray.

So we have our school in Yelwata. We have a school in Kafanchan. About 200 children. In Imesi, [01:04:00] we have another 200 children. We have a partnership with a base in Bokkos. Bokkos is another place where about 200 people were killed in one night, and they are still killing them up to today. Brother Bamshak and Makayla will probably know about it. They're still killing people.

And our center there, we are still working with the ECWA church in Bokkos, the English chapel. We provide food. Maybe the largest portion of our expenditure is food. Teenagers can eat.

[01:04:47] **Dede Laugesen:** Yeah, they sure can. Dr. Shayo, thank you so much for sharing your story and your children with us today.

All of you, it's just phenomenal the work that you are doing, and you're [01:05:00] all heroes and an inspiration to us. But our audience needs to know that all the people here are just ordinary people. They just have a call on their heart from Jesus.

And if Jesus is calling you today to enter into the situation in Nigeria and to stand in solidarity with Christians, they're being persecuted in an archaic, brutal fashion. We can't imagine the type of life they are living in our modern world. We must do more to stop this. We Americans must stand up and take action.

And so I'd like to invite my co-host, Stephen Osemwegie, with the Save Nigeria Group, as I explained earlier, running the U.S.-Nigeria Civil Society Coalition that's hosting the rally at the White House on June 20th, to round this out for us.

Stephen, the children of Nigeria, where is the world? Why [01:06:00] is the world silent about the millions of children in Nigeria who need us today?

[01:06:06] **Stephen Osemwegie:** Thank you so much, Dede. Very delighted to be here. For worries, I'm parked, so I'm safe, but I had to join in the car because this is very important.

So let me start by thanking our guests for very important information. And I want to thank those who continue to watch over Nigeria's children. So Dede, you are Mama Nigeria. You have a lot of children, and I thank you for putting this together and inviting me to host this with you.

As Save Nigeria Group USA, our organization is new in this space regarding the displaced community and what Nigerian Christians and other minorities are facing at the hands of extreme terrorism. So I'm very delighted to meet veterans in the field, and I see Pastor Solomon from Home for the Needy, and we look forward to welcoming [01:07:00] him in D.C. very shortly for the event.

For those that do not know, my name is Stephen Osemwegie. I'm the president of Save Nigeria Group, a 501(c)(3), that has come into this big issue of humanitarian crisis and religious violence targeting Christians in particular and many other groups in Nigeria.

We're really, really glad that this webinar is happening, and many other forums are beginning to bring out the information. Everywhere I go, Dede, people say, "How come we're just learning about this?" For some reason, thanks to the current administration, we have to give him that, President Trump, more attention is now being brought to the fore.

Before now, many people could not point Nigeria on a map. They still can't, but at least the information is trickling out, which is why we're coming together in a form of a coalition. Because I learned that one can chase a thousand. The Bible says two can chase ten thousand. [01:08:00]

We formed the coalition we call the U.S.-Nigeria Civil Society Coalition, which includes faith groups. Of course, Dede, Mama Nigeria, is there, Equipping the Persecuted, and many, many more organizations, both here in the United States and at home in Nigeria. Home for the Needy is also part of our coalition.

And we are doing the rally on June 20th here in Washington simply because we want to make sure that the world knows, the public, the American public that has not been fed the right information, finally hears the truth, finally knows what's happening on the ground in Nigeria.

Because some people think this is political. "Oh, these people are just being political." No, it is not. The reality is that when you visit Nigeria, like our brothers and sisters on the call, our pastors who are missionaries taking care of this at the front lines, you will not remain the same. And we want to make sure these voices are heard in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, June [01:09:00] 20th.

So definitely, we want to make sure those on the call, those watching, and those who watch the replay can join us at McPherson's Lafayette Park at 10 a.m.

While we are doing this rally, again, we're titled Save Nigeria's Rally. We could have called it Save Nigeria's Children's Rally. You've heard about the scale of the crisis. I can tell you, from what I know, that those that are in these camps are even privileged, as sad as that sounds. There are many more that the scale is too much. And it's so sad that we don't even have proper census. But there are ranges between six to eleven million displaced in Nigeria, and we still cannot get the world to pay attention.

But this rally that we're doing is going to help create more awareness. And our effort is to continue things like this webinar. Every avenue we have, we have to speak and say, "What is happening in Nigeria? What's happening to women and children?"

I've been to some of [01:10:00] these camps. We know the majority is children, children and women and a few men. The reason why that is, we believe that they target the men, they kill the men, and they want to do all sorts with women that we can't even describe on this call.

But God is beginning to hear our prayers. The world is gradually, perhaps grudgingly, starting to pay attention. So I want to commend everyone that is doing the work. I want to commend those who are praying for us here in America to advocate for this issue and raise awareness. But beyond that, we must double our effort to continue to press home what is happening.

The media, we've invited them for the rally. If you have media sources, let them come and listen and hear. It's going to be a lot of prayers. We've invited churches around the DMV area, and some are coming from New Jersey and other parts of the country. But

we want to say prayers for those children, the women, those keeping the camp, the missionaries.

We also want to pray for God's divine intervention because I believe that what is [01:11:00] happening is spiritual. It is not possible that this is a physical issue. It's a battle that the body of Christ is facing in Nigeria and elsewhere. And we feel that Nigeria is like a major, like Magono would say, epicenter, where if we fail, 240 million population with 70 percent young people. Seventy percent of Nigeria are young, under forty-five. Seventy percent. A lot of people.

We cannot afford that the terrorists will succeed to take over such a country. That is why we must put hands together to ask that the United States take more steps. Yes, we're grateful for the 200 troops that the U.S. has deployed. It's much more than that. I believe we can use the partnership with the United States and around the world to really crack down on what is leading to the displacement.

Yes, we can do humanitarian effort. We can take care of IDPs. But the real solution is when they can go back home, when [01:12:00] every single IDP can go back home safely, and that means defeating Boko Haram, ISIS, and the dreaded and evil Fulani Islamic militia, which is responsible in the middle belt in particular, and now moving down south.

Dede, before I round out, I'm going to hand back to you. I just wanted to draw attention to the plight of the students, the children that were kidnapped in Oyo State. They took some teachers and about forty-two students and all that. But the sad part is the math teacher was beheaded on video, and that has led to some protests in Nigeria.

There have been protests now, and people are waking up. Maybe it's too late, but at least people are beginning to realize that this crisis is not a northern issue. I'm from the south. We're guilty of not paying attention to what is happening in the north for a long time. But that is changing, and I want to thank God, and it's because of the effort that we're all putting together.

So I look forward to welcoming those that can make it on June 20th, and I want to thank Dede for all she's doing. Save [01:13:00] Nigeria Group and the coalition are grateful for all the support. Our website is savenigeriagroup.org if you want to RSVP for this event, and I look forward to welcoming you guys to Washington.

Thank you so much, Dede, for hosting this. I apologize I had to do this in the car. I hope I came across very well.

[01:13:18] **Dede Laugesen:** Oh, you're very handsome today in your car. You look very dapper, and we're happy to have you here. Any way you come, Stephen, it's always good to have you on board, and we can't wait to be together with you, with Dr. Gloria

Puldu from the Leah Foundation, and so many others who will be with us in Washington, D.C., June 20th and for that week. We look forward to seeing you.

It is really important that Americans pay attention to what's happening in Nigeria. Nigeria is not an Islamic republic as so many of the other nations that mandate death for apostasy are. Nigeria is a federal republic, very much like the United States, though all [01:14:00] policing and security is operated through the federal government and not at the local level. And that's why you have people coming in from all over, doing policing in communities that they don't know, nor do they care about, and that they may be willing to destroy.

So it's important that Americans engage, because that drive for a caliphate, those jihadists are worldwide, and they are coming to America. We have to fight the battle in Nigeria and stop it there in order to truly counter it here in the United States. We cannot ignore our Christian brothers and sisters where they are suffering.

Stephen, I see you have another comment for us.

[01:14:47] **Stephen Osemwegie:** Yes.

[01:14:47] **Dede Laugesen:** Come on in.

[01:14:48] **Stephen Osemwegie:** I just wanted to say that on the 23rd, for those that are coming to Washington, we have a U.S.-Nigeria Faith Heroes Award gala. I forgot to mention it, but it's kind of focused on leadership, [01:15:00] clergy, so it's not more for the general public.

So there are leaders here that can come to Washington. We have the Faith Heroes Award where we want to thank U.S. leadership and also some outstanding clergy that are at the front line of this crisis. And I just wanted to surprise Dede that we have an award that we've set aside for Leah Sharibu.

[01:15:21] **Makayla Dagwer:** Leah's Rainbow.

[01:15:21] **Stephen Osemwegie:** Leah's Rainbow is going to be receiving an award, and I believe, Dede, you will present the award to the Leah Foundation president, Gloria Puldu, at the gala.

Just wanted to mention that. We want to thank Riley Moore, Representative Chris Smith, Pastor Ezekiel Ochonu, and also the soldiers in Nigeria in the front lines that have died. We want to honor their work.

[01:15:42] **Dede Laugesen:** I am so excited for the red carpet on June 23rd in Washington, D.C., where we're going to recognize President Trump and the Trump administration, Secretary Rubio, for taking note of what is happening to Christians in

Nigeria. [01:16:00] Certainly, others are also suffering, but Christians are persecuted at a rate five times higher in the north of Nigeria, even though they are the minority.

So it is definitely targeted to Christians. It is religious in nature. It is political in nature because Islam is political, and it seeks to conquer, and the Christians are their target. And this is religious warfare in Nigeria that is increasingly present here in the United States as well, and in the West.

I thank you all for joining us today. I thank you for being here for the children, and I ask you to please do something today. Take the next right step to stand for your brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering for love of Jesus. They suffer joyfully, and all suffering for Christ is glorious. But these children, they need hope for tomorrow, hope for their [01:17:00] future, and we are the only ones who can bring it to them.

So join us in helping save the children of Nigeria. Love to you all. God bless, and stay safe. Until next time. In two weeks, June 24th, we'll be back for our sixth episode, sixth and final episode of the Nigeria update this year. Thank you so much. God bless, and goodbye.