
Persecuted Christians. Women victimized by Boko Haram: "Christians caged like animals in Nigeria"

"Nine years of slavery! Nine years of torture! Nine years of agony! Those cold-hearted, ruthless people inflicted enormous suffering on us. For nine years we watched them slaughter my innocent Christian brothers, killed by people who give no value to life. They killed without remorse, as if it were normal. There are no words to express what I went through." This is a passage from the testimony of **Maria Joseph**, a 19-year-old Nigerian woman, to Aid to the Church in Need, the Pontifical Foundation that invited her to Italy, together with **Janada Marcus**, 22, also from Nigeria, to mark International Women's Day in the framework of the initiative "March 8, listen also to their cries."



[Their story.](#) In the recent past, the two young women, of Christian faith, endured the cruelty of Boko Haram terrorists, responsible for the death of more than 75,000 Nigerians killed over the past 13 years. Maria Joseph managed to escape from the Boko Haram militiamen in August 2022, after having been held captive for nine years. She was abducted in 2013 along with 21 people following an attack by the terrorist group on her community in Bazzar. She was only 9 years old at the time. Two of her brothers were later brought to the same camp where she was imprisoned. One of them was killed, while the other is still held captive. Janada and her family managed to survive two Boko Haram attacks unscathed, first in Baga, in Nigeria's Lake Chad region, and then in Askira Uba, in southern Borno State, where their home was set on fire and several family members were killed by the Islamists. Unfortunately, while she was working with her family on a farm in Maiduguri, she was captured and tortured, and witnessed her father being beheaded with a machete. Both young women, they told ACN, were sheltered by priests and medical professionals at the Trauma Center in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State in northeastern Nigeria. The facility is run by the local diocese and was erected with the financial support of benefactors from Aid to the Church in Need. In the facility, survivors of terrorist violence receive medical care and attention by a team of trained health care professionals.

