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Kidnapped Christian Girls Die Days After Release in Nigeria

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"On Nov. 3, Just a day after tasting freedom, she died,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Silvia Samuel, 4, and Hasana Bulus, 13, died shortly after their release on 2 November 2026, following nearly seven months in captivity in Kaduna state, Nigeria. They were among eleven Christians kidnapped by armed Fulani gunmen from Awon village, Kachia County, on 20 April 2026. Freedom came too late for both girls, and for the families who had prayed for them every day of those seven months, the homecoming turned into a funeral.

Hasana died first. She was taken to hospital in Kachia after her release, and on 3 November, just one day after tasting freedom, she was gone. "On Nov. 3, Just a day after tasting freedom, she died," said Reuben Buhari, co-founder of the Resilience Aid Dialogue Initiative, which has been tracking the case.

One day of freedom. That is all she got.

Silvia's story is even harder to hold. She turned four years old while in captivity, a birthday marked not with cake and songs but with hunger and fear in the bush. Her pregnant mother, Joy Samuel, died in captivity on 28 August, shortly after giving birth.

The newborn baby died too. Silvia came home an orphan, and then she died as well.

The eleven Christians were taken from Awon village on 20 April, in an attack that tore through an ordinary farming community and left it shattered. For nearly seven months, their families heard almost nothing. They waited, they prayed, and they scraped together ransoms they could not afford, because that is what families do when the people they love are in the hands of gunmen.

Five of the captives were finally released in early November, on 1-2 November. Alongside Silvia and Hasana, the freed hostages were Hanatu Yusuf, 52, Celina Maichibi, 46, and Faith Kefas, 14.

The price of their freedom, according to area resident Jethro Daniel, was three motorcycles plus two million naira, about $1,482, per person freed. That is the going rate for a human life in Kaduna state.

Not everyone lived long enough to be ransomed. Devine, 14, Rachel Bulus, 14, and another girl named Faith Kefas, 14, died in captivity. So did Yusuf Bawa, 34, and his five-year-old son, who succumbed to severe illness and hunger.

The names blur together if you read them fast. Read them slowly. Each one was a child, or a father, or a mother, and each one died far from home.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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