News 19 November 2026 | English article

Today: 17 Christians Die in Captivity After Easter Church Abductions in Kaduna, Nigeria

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

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic death of 17 more people from those taken hostage from Ariko and Awon communities."

(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

Seventeen of the 37 worshippers abducted from three churches in Ariko, southern Kaduna State, on Easter Sunday 5 April 2026 died in captivity. The deaths were disclosed by Rev. Dr Yunusa Nmadu, chief executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide Nigeria, during a presentation at ECWA Goodnews Church in Kaduna on 2 November 2026, and reported by Open Doors UK on 17 November.

They had gone to church to celebrate the resurrection. Instead, they spent months chained together in a forest camp, going weeks without food and surviving only on boiled water. By the time the last eight were freed, nearly half of the congregation taken that morning was dead.

One of the dead was Joy Samuel. She died on 28 August 2026 after giving birth in the captors' camp, in conditions survivors described as deplorable. Her newborn died too, and the two of them never saw freedom.

Easter Sunday Attack On Three Churches In Ariko, Kaduna

Gunmen struck the three churches in the Ariko community of Kachia Local Government Area while services were under way on Easter Sunday. Five people were killed on the spot, and 37 worshippers were taken away - mostly women and children, according to the reports.

The numbers tell the rest of the story in a few stark lines. Of the 37 abducted, 12 managed to escape at different times, 17 died in captivity, and the remaining eight were freed after about five months. For every person who came home, roughly two did not.

The attack was not an isolated raid. It was part of a pattern of violence against Christian communities in southern Kaduna that has left families burying their loved ones and churches counting empty pews. Latest: 12 Worshippers Abducted During Church Service in Kurmin Wali, Kaduna reported another Kaduna church abduction earlier in 2026, and Today: 14 Christians Killed in Fresh Plateau State Attacks in Nigeria covered fresh killings in neighbouring Plateau State.

Chained Together And Starving: What The Survivors Endured

Those who came out alive described conditions that are hard to read without flinching. Hostages went weeks without food, surviving only on boiled water before their captors eventually gave them corn flour to make porridge. Several died of illness and starvation in the camp.

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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