



Faithful in the fire

Militants tried to destroy Asabe's family and her faith. Instead, God is using her testimony to inspire forgiveness, resilience, and hope

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Asabe* still remembers the words from the armed

herdsmen: *"Where is your God? He should come down so that we will kill Him before killing you, His followers."*

On 14 April 2025, around midnight, militants stormed her community in northern Nigeria's Plateau State. She and her children were asleep in different rooms when they woke to the sound of gunshots. Before she and her husband, Moses*, could

respond, the men were at their door.

That night, the militants brutally killed Asabe's 14-year-old son, Jerry*, along with his younger brothers, James*, 10, and 2-year-old Jacob*.

Asabe, her young daughter Joanna* and her mother-in-law remained huddled inside the bathroom. Moses hid in the ceiling, knowing he would be killed next.

The attackers set the house on fire and left Asabe and her remaining family to burn. When the heat from the flames grew unbearable, she decided to risk it and get out. When she screamed for help, villagers came to their rescue. Then she remembered Moses was still in the house...

"I stood and watched my neighbours carry my husband out in their arms," she says. That night, Asabe became a widow and a single parent.

*Representative name used

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Asabe and her 6-year-old daughter, Joanna

**“God is the one
who selected us
[to be widows],
and He knows
how He will take
care of us.”**

A child's comfort

Altogether, 52 people were killed that day – only one of many mass killings in Nigeria last year. The violence is meant to cripple the Church. Husbands are targeted because they are the providers and protectors and often leaders in the Church and community. Young boys are killed to erase a part of the future generation of the Church.

The day of the mass funeral, Asabe was in no condition to attend. This unavoidable absence has made grieving extremely difficult for her.

But the young mother is thankful for the comfort that Joanna, her youngest, brings. Though only six years old, the little girl reminds her mother of God's justice and eternal hope. “Joanna says to me, ‘A day is coming that God will gather the evil and punish them.’ We have been rescued, and I will one day see [Joanna's] dad and her siblings.”

A widow's faith

For Asabe, the trauma brought depression and high blood pressure. At one point, she even considered ending her life. The anger and bitterness could have easily consumed her. But six months after the attack, Open Doors' local partners invited Asabe to be part of a five-day intensive trauma care programme.

At the trauma centre, she received Scripture-based counselling and walked with caregivers who safely took her through the process of grief and forgiveness.

“What has strengthened me in life is attending fellowship in church and church programmes,” she says, adding that the Word of God has also brought solace.

“Sincerely, when I came back from healing, I was so happy for the teaching I received,” she says. Today, Asabe is even able to speak to Fulani people and talk about God with them.

She continues to receive support and care from Open Doors partners, is more motivated to serve others and is part of a widows' group.

“God Himself chose me and set me in a group of widows ... so that we can encourage each other,” she explains. “We tell God we're grateful because we did not pick ourselves to be widows. But He is the one who selected us, and He knows how He will take care of us.”

This faithful widow's prayer is clear: “God has left me [here] for a purpose, and I'm asking Him to help me fulfil it.”

In northern Nigeria, Christians like Asabe require integrated help to remain faithful witnesses. Through relief aid, trauma care, widow support and socioeconomic development, Open Doors is helping Christians live lives that glorify God.

To learn how you can stand with them, visit https://www.opendoors.org.za/campaigns_and_events/arise-africa/

Your support at work

A snapshot of how your gifts and prayers are helping persecuted Christians in sub-Saharan Africa

“SEE THESE GIFTS!”



Representative photo.

A month after the deadly attack on Asabe's community in northern Nigeria, Open Doors local partners assessed the need and, in addition to trauma care, provided food support and brought other living essentials, like clothing, that families need to begin again.

About 150 Christian families, including Asabe's, received 100kg of maize, 25kg of rice, 25kg of beans and money to buy seasonings and oil.

It was a sombre yet joyful moment for the grieving community as they recalled their pain but thanked God for providing the aid. Together, they praised Him for sending this unexpected help, a tangible reflection of Jesus's love for them.

“I thank God for the Christian faith,” says Asabe. “I have been supported with food. Even this clothing I wear, I didn't use my own money to buy it. See these gifts, everyone is doing this because of God. While we receive it, may we be strengthened in our faith.”

Through this support, suffering believers know they're not alone and that the worldwide Church is standing with them.

Looking at her 6-year-old daughter, Asabe shared how this aid and the generosity behind it are also a powerful message for Joanna.

“Joanna is my youngest, but I will sit her down and tell her that even when the attack happened, the help we got came from people we know and those we don't know. And I will tell her, ‘Do your best so that one day you will help others.’”

GRATITUDE FROM THE DRC



“Often, we must risk our lives to return to our farms for food. Many have been attacked.”

Pastor Lazo's* words are a familiar reality for Christians living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's North Kivu province. Ongoing attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), extremists with ties to the Islamic State group, have left thousands of Christians destitute and desperate.

A father of four, Pastor Lazo (pictured above) and his family fled their home when the ADF attacked their village. Through your support, Open Doors local partners provided relief packages to more than 233 DRC Christian families. Pastor Lazo and several others shared messages of gratitude for you:

“With the support we've received today, we will buy a pig, which will one day help sustain our children.”
– Pastor Lazo

“A part of this support will feed my children, and the rest will strengthen our small business. Truly, thank you.” – Rosaliya*, mother to seven

“Today I received support and a Bible. Thank you again and again.” – Muindo*, a new believer who was recently cast out by his family for his decision to follow Jesus

“I never expected this help! May your generosity be returned to you a hundredfold.” – Suzanna*, displaced with her family of seven

Another recipient, Tsongo*, summed up the emotion of the day: *“The support we received today will help us survive. May God bless you.”*

Meet Badoo*

When militants attacked her local community in Benue State, Nigeria, she and her family fled their home. Desperate to escape the brutal attack, Badoo, who was pregnant at the time and had five other children, ran through the night.

Eventually, she and her family found safety in a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The camp offered shelter and some security, but little else.

“Life is difficult in the camps,” she says. “There is no running water, no proper toilet systems, and it’s very dirty ... Our temporary house was made from bamboo and a mosquito net. That is how we were living and trying to survive with our children.”

Eventually, Badoo gave birth in the camp. With six children to feed and no income, her family’s future looked bleak.

But that’s when God used your support to care for Badoo and her family.

Through our local partners, Open Doors delivered aid and support to IDP camps and offered 250 families a



livelihood support programme. Badoo was enrolled in vocational training. She also received sewing equipment and financial support to rent a shop.

“I never knew how to sew before,” she shares. “But I have been trained very well.”

The young mother was able to move her family out of the camp and into a small apartment. And she is now able to pay the fees to send her children back to school.

Badoo has a special blessing for you: “May God bless you abundantly for bringing help to the poor and displaced,” she says. “Thank you for bringing light back to my life.”

We need your voice!

Since the launch of Open Doors’ Arise Africa initiative, more than 1,2 million acts of support have reached Christians affected by violence across sub-Saharan Africa (from 2023 to 2025). In 2025 alone, your prayers and gifts brought healing through 345 455 acts of support.

Behind every act of service is a person whose life has been touched – a family receiving emergency relief, a believer getting trauma care, a church rebuilding after an attack.

These milestones are only possible because of faithful supporters like you who pray, give and stand alongside your persecuted family.

If you haven’t already signed the Arise Africa petition, please visit www.opendoors.org.za/arise-africa-petition to add your name. Would you also



Widows find fellowship and healing through trauma care.

consider sharing it with friends? By the end of 2026, we want to present 1 million signatures to world leaders. And we need your voice!

Thank you for being part of what God is doing through Arise Africa.

**Throughout this newsletter, representative names are used for security reasons.*