

CSI partner in Nigeria released after 51 days in Boko Haram captivity

Father Daniel Alphonsus Afina was kidnapped while serving Christian communities in dangerous northeastern region

ZURICH, ZH, SWITZERLAND, July 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Christian Solidarity International (CSI) welcomes the news that Father Daniel Alphonsus Afina, one of its project partners in Nigeria, has been released from captivity 51 days after he was [abducted](#) by the terrorist group Boko Haram.

Father Afina, 41, was released to Nigerian security forces, along with 10 women who had also been held captive, on Monday, July 21. That evening he was returned to the diocese in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state in northeastern Nigeria, where he is resting.



Father Alphonsus Afina distributing food aid to victims of Boko Haram terror. photo: csi

In a [press statement](#), the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) in Maiduguri Diocese stated that Father Afina is receiving medical attention after his ordeal. They requested privacy for Father Afina, “to ensure his physical and mental well-being during this period of recovery.”

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Joel Veldkamp, CSI

The JDPC, for which Father Afina serves as deputy executive director, expressed “profound gratitude to God for Fr. Afina’s safe return” and “heartfelt appreciation to the security agencies and the local authorities, for their tireless efforts towards ensuring Fr. Afina’s freedom.”

They also thanked foreign diplomats who advocated for his release, the media agencies which drew attention to his kidnapping, and their donors and partners for their prayers and support.

In a message to CSI, the executive director of the JDPC Maiduguri, Father Vincent Okoye, thanked Christian Solidarity International “for the relentless prayers, advocacy, support and solidarity with us and the diocese of Maiduguri during this tempestuous time.”

Father Alphonsus Afina was abducted on June 1, after his convoy was ambushed at a military checkpoint between Liman Kara and Gwoza town, near Takaskala village, an area where Boko Haram and affiliated Islamist militias maintain a stranglehold.

The attack claimed multiple lives, including JDPC staff member Zion Japhet, another CSI partner. In its statement, the JPDC called for continued prayers for Mr. Japhet’s family.

Father Afina and two other JDPC staff were taken captive by the terrorists, who forced the priest to make a brief phone call to his bishop. In that call, Father Afina confirmed his capture and requested prayers. Nothing more was heard from him until his release.

Just months before his abduction, in December 2024, Father Afina had personally led CSI's food relief project for Christian widows in Maiduguri, a region which has borne the brunt of Boko Haram's campaign of terror against Christians since 2009.

Bishop John Bakeni, the auxiliary bishop of Maiduguri, [described](#) Father Afina’s release as miraculous, noting that the armed groups who carry out kidnappings are dangerous and unpredictable, and many kidnappings in this region end with the captives being killed.

Father Afina's abduction is far from an isolated incident. So far in 2025, 15 religious leaders have been kidnapped in Nigeria. Some are held for ransom while others have been executed.

“We are overjoyed by the news of Father Alphonsus’ release,” said Joel Veldkamp, CSI’s director for public advocacy. “Father Alphonsus’ life is an example of solidarity for the entire Christian world. He left the safety of his life in the United States to serve the church in one of the places where it is most severely persecuted. Our prayers are with him as he recovers from this trial.”

“Nigeria remains the deadliest country in the world for Christians,” Veldkamp continued. “Reports of attacks on Christian villages in the Middle Belt continue to arrive on almost a weekly basis. The Nigerian government must end the impunity with which Fulani militia groups and jihadist groups like Boko Haram wage war on Christians and other civilians in this country. Nigeria’s allies, especially the United States, must make this a priority in their dealings with Nigeria.”

About CSI

Christian Solidarity International is an international human rights group campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity.

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