

## Nigeria: Freed Chibok Girls Held

Elizabeth waited three years for Boko Haram to release her youngest daughter, 20-year-old Mariam. Today, months after Mariam gained her freedom, Elizabeth is still waiting to bring her daughter home.

Government officials are holding Mariam and the other 81 girls released with her in Nigeria's capital, Abuja. Elizabeth said she and other families aren't being told why they can't have their girls back. Since Mariam's release in May, Elizabeth has only seen her daughter for about 24 hours.

"We are not angry because there is nothing we can do," Elizabeth told a [VOM worker](#). "But we would love to have her at home. There is nothing we can do and nobody is communicating with us. We don't know anything that is happening, but we know that they are safe now."

**Boko Haram abducted Mariam and 218 other girls** around midnight on April 14, 2014, as they slept at their boarding school. The Islamist group then traveled with the girls for about four days to its headquarters in the Sambisa forest. During her recent time with her daughter, Elizabeth learned the girls didn't eat during the journey. More than once, they slept among snakes.

"The only thing that saved them was God," said Elizabeth, who has three other children. "They shouldn't be alive. Mariam was telling me, 'Mom it is only God that rescued me. Only God.'"



Elizabeth hasn't heard the details about Mariam's life under Boko Haram's control. She does know, however, that her daughter's faith is still intact. The night of the abduction, Mariam managed to grab her Bible and a hymnal. During her time in captivity, she hid the books from her captors, reading them as often as possible. The day of her release, Mariam held the books in her hands. "Mom, I depend on God and nothing else," she told her mother during their brief reunion.

Prior to the 82 girls being released, **other "Chibok girls" had been released** following negotiations with the Nigerian government. Others were able to flee on their own. Today, 113 girls remain in custody.

“Our cry is still for those remaining to be rescued,” Elizabeth said. “Our prayer is that God would rescue them.”

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