

New film will reveal true extent of violence and kidnappings by Islamic extremists in Nigeria

A new film which reveals the true extent of violence by Islamic extremists in Nigeria will be screened in London.

The director Desmond Ovbiagele will be making a special visit to answer questions from politicians and Nigerians living in the UK at the one-off showing.

The Milkmaid follows the story of two sisters who endure a harrowing ordeal at the hands of Islamic militants in rural Sub-Saharan Africa.

Desmond said: “The religious extremist insurgency that has raged in northern Nigeria for almost a decade has reduced human lives in the consciousness of the general public to mere statistics, typically nameless and voiceless.

“I felt a strong obligation as a filmmaker to harness the considerable tools available within the medium of cinema to help give a voice to those, living or dead, who are not in a position to speak for themselves.”

He added: “The film portrays the quest of the two sisters to preserve a sense of personal dignity – and even sanity – in the face of formidable opposition.”

Faced with an insurgency from radical Islamists as well as abductions from Fulani militants and bandits capitalising on the lucrative kidnapping industry, Nigerians are experiencing terrible insecurity in the country.

This year, between 1 January and 31 March, 1,884 lives were claimed in attacks by Islamist groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), extremist Fulani herdsmen, bandits and violent gangs, according to a report by Nigeria-based research firm, SBM Intelligence.

Meanwhile, more than 8.4 million Nigerians in the northeastern region alone are in need of humanitarian assistance with half of them facing a food crisis, the UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has said.

In June 2021, the US council on Foreign Relations (CFR) reported that Nigeria had reached a point of no return and had shown all signs of a “fully failed state”, including the inability of the government to protect its citizens, widespread violence and festering insurgency.

Director of Advocacy at Open Doors UK and Ireland, Dr David Landrum, said: “Nigeria is now having to face up to a powerful triumvirate — some would say, a three-headed monster — as Boko Haram, its breakaway group ISWAP and Fulani militia are evidently acting in cooperation with one another.

“The rise of jihadism in Nigeria and in the surrounding region is dangerous for any person refusing to take on board the insurgents’ radical Islamic agenda.

“This danger threatens a vast number of moderate Muslims but is particularly acute for the Christian presence which jihadists aim to uproot.”

CEO of the International Organisation for Peace-building & Social Justice (PSJ UK), Ayo Adedoyin said: “By showing The Milkmaid to UK decision-makers and policymakers we are hoping for them to gain a much better understanding of the scale and reality of violence that ordinary Nigerians are confronted with.

“In towns and communities across the country - but particularly in the north - people are being abducted by extremist groups capitalising on the nation’s porous borders and culture of impunity which has allowed a boom in the lucrative kidnapping industry.

“A picture speaks a thousand words, but a film can do even more, bringing alive a depiction of the horrifying reality that hundreds - possibly thousands - are faced with.

“Dapchi schoolgirl Leah Sharibu, whose fifth birthday in captivity is on Saturday 14th May, is one of those people but there are many, many more who are suffering, and we don’t even know their names.”

[THE MILKMAID TRAILER](#)

