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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, November 25, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Dean Allison**



## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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•(0850)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone. Our order of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), is our briefing on the freedom of religion in Nigeria. We'll get started.

I want to welcome the two guests who are with us here in Ottawa; then we have two additional guests, one via teleconference and one via video conference, as you can see on the screen.

The first individual I want to introduce is Doug McKenzie, who is the chief executive officer of the Voice of the Martyrs. Welcome, Doug. We're glad to have you here this morning. Also, we have Reverend Peter Jardine, who is the chairman of the board. Welcome, Reverend. It's nice to have you here as well.

Joining us via teleconference from the Jubilee Campaign is Emmanuel Ogebe, special counsel. Welcome, sir.

Also, joining us via video conference and also with Jubilee Campaign is Saa Chibok. Welcome, Saa.

What we normally do is start with opening statements, from you, Doug, and then from Reverend Peter. Then I believe there's a quick video as well.

I believe those joining us by teleconference and video conference are there to answer questions, but they don't have any opening statements. Is that correct?

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie (Chief Executive Officer, Voice of the Martyrs Canada):** Yes, that's correct.

**The Chair:** Okay, good.

I will turn it over to you, sir, for your opening statement.

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** Thank you very much for the privilege of being here. We appreciate your consideration of our comments. We thank you for welcoming our guests. We are particularly appreciative of member of Parliament David Anderson, who has made it possible for us to be here today.

As mentioned, I'm the chief executive officer of a charitable organization established 43 years ago in Canada called the Voice of the Martyrs. Voice of the Martyrs is established around the world and has as its prime mandate to come alongside and to care for those who are being persecuted for their faith, for their religious beliefs.

In particular, we are a Christian organization and as such are not only a registered charity but a religious order. Our chairman, Peter

Jardine, who is with me today, will comment in a few minutes. Then we have a brief video for you.

The purpose of our visit is first and foremost to tell you what we have found to be true, or at least what is evolving as a truth as more and more information comes to light, in respect to the nature of persecution.

If we have a purpose here today, it's to be available to you and others to inform you in any way that we can so that you can make good decisions on matters concerning religious freedom and persecution. We believe and want to stress—and hopefully we'll show you some evidence today or have you hear some evidence today, of this fact—that a very large majority of the persecution in the world today is against Christians.

Now, we have a bias, which I'll express right up front: we are a Christian mission wholly supported by Canadian donors who are largely of the Christian faith, and though that is not a restriction, it is a fact.

We are interested in introducing you to one part of what is happening in persecution against Christians: what is happening in the country of Nigeria, the most populous of all African countries and one that is clearly divided down the middle, dividing the north and the south, the south being very largely Christian in heritage and the north being more radical, fundamentalist, and extremist.

The clashes that exist in that country are exemplary of persecution around the world. Today we're talking about Nigeria. You may interchange it with any number of other countries in which these kinds of things are going on, but we thought Nigeria was a good example, and we'll show you some things today that hopefully will support that assumption.

But mostly we wanted to introduce you to a young lady named Saa, who has been very brave throughout many experiences and is also brave enough and thankfully willing to come here today as our guest, and now as your guest, to tell a little of her story and answer your questions.

Emmanuel is somebody we as a mission have worked with who is doing some tremendous work on human rights and religious freedom, particularly in Nigeria. He has been heard by the U.S. Congress on more than one occasion, has spoken at the UN, and is considered to be an expert on Nigeria. We're thankful as well that Emmanuel is with us today. He is the legal guardian of Saa.

I will turn it over at this point to Peter Jardine, who is our chairman. Then we have a short four-minute video for you before we move on with the program.

**Reverend Peter Jardine (Chairman of the Board, Voice of the Martyrs Canada):** Thank you for inviting us this morning to talk to you about persecution.

My experience with persecution began in the early 2000s. Up until the year 2000, I had no idea that it was really happening. I visited Bosnia at that time with a Christian from the west end of Ottawa. He started telling me about persecution in Sudan that he was familiar with. About a year later, I ended up in South Sudan. What I learned there was staggering.

We're talking primarily about Nigeria this morning. I visited Nigeria a number of times in the 1980s, when it was actually very peaceful and there was nothing bad going on in that country that I was aware of, at least not on the scale that it's happening now. The persecution in Nigeria of course comes from Boko Haram, which is a Muslim group.

The persecution in Sudan was coming from the Muslim government in Khartoum. Two million people, primarily Christians, had been killed by the time I made my first visit there. What I learned was absolutely staggering. One of the best things I learned, however, in relation to the persecution was that those Christians who suffer persecution forgive the people who persecute them. In that respect, they have a lot to teach us.

I subsequently went, after about seven visits into South Sudan, to Orissa state in India, where the Hindus had been violently persecuting Christians in an outbreak that really should not have been directed against Christians. It resulted from one of their leaders in Orissa state being murdered. He had been murdered, shot by a communist guerrilla group. They went public and said that they had shot the man, but the net result, the immediate result, was that the Hindus took that as an excuse to start persecuting Christians. They were burning Christians alive in that state.

It came as a very big shock to us, because we didn't think India was anything but a civilized country. Muslims tend to get most of the publicity for their persecution of Christians, but let's never forget that it is happening in other communities as well. It's coming from Hindus. In Korea it's coming from the government.

I think it's probably time now to turn it over to our other guests and to look at the video.

• (0855)

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** This video is a collaboration between our organization, Voice of the Martyrs, and CBN in the States. We often trade video footage. We have people on the ground in various parts of the world who do this reporting for us. This video is four minutes long, and it encapsulates much of what is happening in Nigeria today.

[Video Presentation]

• (0900)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Those are all the opening comments.

We'll get started with questions. We can also ask questions of our friends via teleconference and video conference as well.

It will be seven-minute rounds for the first round, followed by five-minute rounds. We'll go back and forth until all the questions have been asked.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Are we hearing from another witness?

**The Chair:** As I understand it, the witnesses are there to answer questions, but they don't have any opening statements. Is that correct?

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** If you would care to hear from, in particular, Emmanuel, he would be very glad to give you an opening comment.

**The Chair:** Sure.

Emmanuel, do you want to make a quick opening comment?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe (Special Counsel, Jubilee Campaign):** Yes, absolutely.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for the invitation to speak with you today.

I really would have loved to be there in person, particularly because the House of Commons was the scene of a horrific attack in Canada that bears a resemblance to what we have seen in Nigeria on a daily basis. Permit me to use this time to extend my condolences to your dear nation on the recent tragedy.

Let me provide a couple of quick statistics. The first is that more Christians have been killed this century than in previous centuries. The second is that Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world, according to a Pew study. Third, more Christians were killed in northern Nigeria in 2012 than in the rest of the world combined. So Nigeria alone accounted for more than 60% of Christian martyrs in the year 2012.

I also want to describe briefly the character and nature of persecution in northern Nigeria. There are three broad categories. I call them the three S's. One of them is state persecution, another one is street persecution, and the third is sect persecution.

In northern Nigeria you see persecution from state governments that will imprison Muslims who become Christians and that will persecute Christians in employment, discriminate against them, and deny them access to land. Then you have street persecution, where occasionally Muslims will come out on the streets and burn churches because they feel an infidel has done something wrong. Then you have the sect persecution, which is Boko Haram. This is persecution on steroids, where they go out and kill massively. That, in a nutshell, is the nature of persecution in northern Nigeria.

I do want to make a final point here. I'm delighted that Canada designated Boko Haram a foreign terrorist organization. This is a campaign I led in the United States, and I'm glad Canada did it on its own without much advocacy. But designating Boko Haram a foreign terrorist organization is like causing darkness. We now want steps such as lighting a candle. What can we do to end this genocide that is happening on such massive scales in northern Nigeria?

Let me wrap up my comments now by paying tribute to the wonderful Canadian missionaries who have been associated with my family for several generations. We're still in touch with them today. They hide. I want to say that Christianity in northern Nigeria is part of the Canadian legacy [*Technical Difficulty—Editor*] heritage with northern Nigeria, and it is very painful to see the investments of all these great missionaries being looted, burned, and destroyed by this vicious terrorist group, Boko Haram.

Finally, I want to thank you very much for paying attention to this key issue that is happening in a remote part of the world. It's not getting the kind of headlines and attention that ISIS in Iraq is getting, even though Boko Haram has been shown to be the second worst terror group in the world, ahead of ISIS, by a U.S. government terrorism study in 2012.

Thank you very much.

● (0905)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

David.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** I have a suggestion. If Emmanuel is comfortable, I think we'd like to hear Saa's story. If they have a few minutes for that, I think we'd like to hear what she has to say.

**The Chair:** Absolutely. I was just going to say that.

Saa, do you feel comfortable telling us your story?

**Ms. Saa Chibok (Jubilee Campaign):** Yes.

On April 14, 2014, all of us were at school around 11:34 p.m. We were sleeping. We heard the Boko Haram people come into Chibok town. They started shooting guns everywhere. All of us woke up. We didn't know where to go. We all came out of our rooms and gathered together.

I called my father on the phone. I told him what was happening in Chibok. He said we should not go anywhere, but gather ourselves together and pray so that the Lord would be with us. I said okay. I was with my friends. All of the girls gathered together in the hostel.

Boko Haram came into our school. They went through the staff quarters where our teachers lived. Before they entered the staff quarters all our teachers had run away, so they didn't find anybody there. Nobody came to tell us if we should run away or if we should stay. Boko Haram came in through the hostel with our teacher's motorbike.

When we heard them come in, we thought maybe it was our teachers coming to the school to tell us what to do. We didn't know the Boko Haram people. When they came in and found us, they said we should all come together, that we should not run away, and we should not shout. They gathered us together and started asking us where the cement block print machine was kept. We said we didn't know. They told us if we didn't tell them the truth, they were going to kill all of us.

They asked where the boys were. We said that the boys didn't live at the school. They were day students; they came in the morning and went home after school.

They asked where our food was kept. They picked two girls to go with them and show them the store. Then they came with a big truck and packed up all the food.

They asked us again about the cement block print machine, and we kept telling them we didn't know.

They asked all of us to move out of the hostel to the class area and sit together. We all gathered together. They said we should not run or shout, that anybody who shouted or ran would be killed. Then they moved us to the class area.

We sat down, and they started burning everything in the school, our books, our clothes. They asked us why we were in this school. Did we think school was important for us? Why didn't we marry? They said we should move out from the school compound and follow them to the bush.

● (0910)

After that, they all gathered around us. They were beside us, behind us, and in front of us. We were moving together. They said we should not run and that if we did they were going to kill all of us. We followed them to the bush, and they gathered us under a big tree. They brought the trucks that they packed all our food in and they came with a lot of cars. There was a taxi bus and some cars. We gathered ourselves together. We could not climb the truck because the truck was big and long, so they brought a small car and other trucks. They said we should climb this small car and enter the big trucks, that they would go with us and nothing would happen to us. We were afraid to enter the car. They started shooting guns and said that any girl among us who was not going to enter the trucks, they would kill her.

We started to enter the trucks and when we entered into the trucks lots of girls remained because the car was not big enough to carry all of us. They asked some of the girls to move by foot and we started moving. We were on the trucks and some of us were walking. When we reached a small village they asked some of the girls to enter the trucks because where we were going was too far, so they couldn't even reach that place. Some of us were sitting on somebody's lap. We entered and three girls remained.

The three girls remained because there was not enough place for them to sit in the car. They asked the girls one after the other... When they asked the first girl, who was a Muslim, if she was a Muslim or a Christian, she told them that she was a Muslim. They asked the second girl, who was a Christian, but she told them that she was a Muslim. They asked the third one and she told them that she was a Christian. When she told them that she was a Christian, one of them decided to kill her, that they should not let her go. Some of them said, "No, they should not kill her. Let her go." But one of them said that he was going to kill her. He even pointed a gun at her and said that he was going to kill here. Some of them said, no, he should not kill her. They said to the girls that they should run and go home, but if they turn back and look at them, they were going to kill all of them. The three girls ran away and went home.

They started moving us. We were walking in the bush. We were in the middle of forest. In our sight was all forest. We passed another village called Gagelam. Some of the girls started jumping down. Some of them were in front of us and some of them were behind us. They were not among us, but they were on motorbikes behind us. Then there was a little distance between us because we were in the forest in the night, so they couldn't see us. Some of us jumped down from the truck and entered the forest so we could hide. When they passed then we would find our way to go.

I told my friend that I was going to jump down. I'd rather die so that my parents have my corpse to be buried than to go with them because I don't know where we are going with them. She said that she was going to jump down with me and I said okay. We were moving and I jumped down from the truck. She followed me. We entered the forest. The ones that were behind us came past and when they passed we wanted to find our way to go home. My friend injured her leg so she couldn't walk and I couldn't take her. We didn't know what to do in the night in the middle of the forest. We decided to sleep in the bush because we don't know where we are. We moved into the forest and sat under a tree and we slept until morning.

At six in the morning I told her what I was going to do because I couldn't take her. We didn't know where we were and we didn't know where to go. I decided to go and look for help.

● (0915)

I just moved a little bit and I met a shepherd in the forest. I asked him to help us. He was a Muslim. I asked him to help us because she couldn't move, and maybe he could help us and show us the way or take her, or maybe we could find somebody to help us. He said that no, he wasn't going to help us at all and we should wait until around 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m and maybe there would be some people who would pass on the road going to the market and they could help us and take us back home. I told him that because of what happened, if people heard that the Boko Haram had passed by on this road, nobody would be going to market today. He said okay, that he was going to help us. He took his bicycle and carried my friend on his bicycle and he showed us the way. I followed him. We reached the village Gagelam that we passed before and we met one man on his motorbike and he was looking. He had just come out and they were looking for the girls, maybe the ones that jumped out on the way, so that they should help and when we met him, he asked us where we were from and we told him what happened and he took us on his motorbike and carried us back to Chibok. When he took us back to Chibok from there we found an okada man who took us back home at around 11:00 p.m.

That's my story.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

If we could ask some questions, we're going to go around the room, starting with Mr. Dewar for the first round of seven minutes.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you to our witnesses, particularly to you, Saa. You have experienced something that no child should experience. You are brave for telling us your story.

I'm going to share my time with Madam Day, so I just have a question or two and then I'll hand the microphone over to her.

I note that we do, as a government, have an office of religious freedom. We also have funding for different programs.

I would ask my guest, Mr. Ogebe, if he could tell us what he would actually like us to do. I'll just say for the record—and I guess our witness underlined this—that this shouldn't be about a Christian-Muslim narrative. In fact, we heard in the testimony of one of the victims that we have Muslims who are actually supporting it. Frankly, I think we have to be wary of that because if we turn it into that kind of clash of civilizations, we're actually falling into the trap and the narrative of the extremists. I also note that according to the data that has been provided worldwide in the most recent years about who the extremists are affecting, it's Muslims as well as Christians; in fact, and I'll get the data, it's probably more Muslims than Christians worldwide.

I want to be careful. I'm a little concerned about the narrative and I've actually read some of the testimonies and looked at the websites of a couple of our guests.

My question is a simple one for our friend.

What would you like to see the Canadian government do to help support the person you have in your charge and other children and girls who are affected and are vulnerable?

● (0920)

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Thank you very much for that question.

My response generally has been that in the same way a Muslim shepherd helped Saa get out, we are appealing to all moderates and people of good will to help us to isolate the extremists and maintain the civilization we have.

To your broader question, it's true, there is an OORF, office of religious freedom, that has been established by the Canadians modelled on the U.S. office, and we're hoping that they will not make the same mistakes that the U.S. office made. I know there's very limited funding and we're hoping that can be increased. I know that funding is currently going to interfaith dialogue, but the reality of it is that the crisis in Nigeria now is not an interfaith issue; it's really an intra-faith issue in the sense that extremist Muslims need to have a dialogue with moderate Muslims to agree that violent jihad is not acceptable in this day and age. The funding from the Canadian OORF is going towards Christian-Muslim dialogue when indeed Boko Haram is killing Christians and moderate Muslims. So the funding is not addressing the main violent act in the country.

We also want to see things like scholarships. Saa is one of a half a dozen girls we have brought to the U.S. who are going to schools in America. Because Canada has a rich English Commonwealth tradition like Nigeria's, it would be compatible for these girls to have scholarships to go to Canada as well. If we could see assistance from CIDA and so on in that regard, that would be helpful.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Finally, I would mention humanitarian and medical assistance. There are UN camps where people are starving. We would like to see Canada provide help to the UN camps and to relief organizations like Voice of the Martyrs.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Day.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Some French-speaking countries are providing aid and offering their cooperation. I know that your country speaks English, not French. Nevertheless, associations in French-speaking countries with an interest in girls' education are providing funding.

What are the risks of persecution for schoolchildren in Nigeria, especially for girls? Has security in the area been re-established?

[English]

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes. Well, the risk is very, very high. I should say that Boko Haram has killed over 185 teachers in the last few years. They've also attacked over 200 schools. When we are talking about churches, we're talking about hundreds of churches.

Education in Borno state where Saa comes from has been shut down. There are no schools functioning in Borno state. That's why we came up with this program to bring a few of them out who have made a conscious choice to continue their education and to put them in school.

Even before the terrorists were blowing up schools, girl-child education was always a high-risk issue. My mother is the first female doctor from northern Nigeria. She had to go against her own Christian family and even the missionaries to be allowed to go to school. So Boko Haram is rolling us back to almost pre-colonial times with their anti-girl and anti-education position.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Currently, are there other groups persecuting children, or is it just Boko Haram?

[English]

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Well, Boko Haram is the main terrorist group. There's a subgroup called Ansaru, and they specialize in targeting westerners. Ansaru has killed Britons, Germans, Italians, people from about 15 different nationalities.

The persecution of children, however, is also done by state governments in the north. If you are a Christian child and you go to a public school, they will try to force you to study Islamic studies, and if you don't, you are punished. I refer to several layers of persecution, and we do have that certainly happening, even in the educational system in northern Nigeria.

● (0925)

**The Chair:** Thank you. That's all the time we have.

We'll continue with Mr. Anderson, for seven minutes, please.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I want to thank our witnesses for being with us today.

Saa, I would like to know what your community was like before this. Did you and your family feel threatened before this, or was this something completely new for your area?

**Ms. Saa Chibok:** Well, it happened before, because I was in another school before, in Bama, and the Boko Haram attacked the school before I went back to Chibok. We didn't even know that would happen because we were in school and our gate was closed.

We had security that was guarding us, but by the time this happened nobody came to talk to us and nobody came to help us, and nobody came to tell us where to go. Even our teachers—we were together—ran away. They didn't even come to talk to us. We didn't know why this happened to us. Over 200 girls are still in captivity and have been for several months now, and we don't know what is happening with them. Some of their parents have even died. No action has been taken and we don't know what is happening to them now.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Thank you.

Emmanuel, can you tell us a little bit more about the security situation there? I'm just wondering, how does Boko Haram operate in that area? Are they small groups of people who are moving in and out of an area so it's very difficult to locate them? How much support are they getting from local governments? How much structure do they have? How does the government effectively deal with this?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Thank you very much, Mr. Anderson.

I literally just returned from Nigeria last week, and the refugee situation is worse than anything I've seen in years. What has happened is that Boko Haram has captured more than 30 cities. One of them, the largest they captured, is a city of 300,000 people, which about 500 terrorists were able to overrun.

Those kinds of losses are not sustainable. This is exactly what happened in northern Mali when the city of Gao was captured by 1,000 terrorists and the French went in to roll them back because there were 6,000 French citizens' lives at stake.

Sadly, although we've reached the same milestone in northern Nigeria with the fall of Mubi, the French are not coming in to help, because that is not a francophone country. The Brits are also not coming in. We have a really horrific security situation in which these entire cities are taken and we do not hear anything about the people who are inside.

I can tell you about a few of the girls in our program. While I was in Nigeria last week, one of them found out that her uncle and her cousins had been killed. When I came back, this week one of them found out that her brother had been killed. These are people in our girl education program right now. If we hadn't taken them out, they would have been killed as well.

Mr. Anderson, the security situation is very bad. The Nigerian military is not as effective as it should be. We are losing territory, and I think about nine counties have fallen to the terrorists as we speak.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I can go in a number of directions with that, but I guess I'd like to pursue this one a bit. What role does a military solution play here? Coming back to what Mr. Dewar asked you earlier, what role do moderate Muslims play in the resolution of this? How able are they to speak out and to join in? As we heard on your video, if people speak out, they are targeted as well.

There are two things: what is the role of the military in this, and what role do moderate Muslims play in the solutions?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** As far as the military role is concerned, I think that Nigeria has a large enough army that, if it is properly equipped and properly supported, it can do most of its [*Technical Difficulty—Editor*].

• (0930)

**Mr. David Anderson:** We've lost you, sir.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Hello? Can you hear me?

**The Chair:** We are having a hard time here. You are breaking up a little bit.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** [*Technical Difficulty—Editor*]

**The Chair:** Yes, we are still having a hard time hearing you, sir.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Chair, I have two or three minutes left, but I'm wondering—

**The Chair:** You have a minute and a half, actually.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Well, we lost that, but anyway, Peter Goldring has a question, I think, for our witnesses who are here.

**The Chair:** I'll give you two minutes.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Maybe he can deal with that here while we're fixing the connection.

**The Chair:** Sure. Thanks.

Go ahead, Peter.

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Thank you.

I'll pose a question to extend the comment by the witness on the interfaith dialogue. Is there any Muslim authority or leadership that can provide this type of dialogue within worldwide Muslim organizations, or is it something that should or could be established?

It seems to me that this is a question that comes up not only here—I'm not speaking just about Muslims—because we were very much aware of the Christian division before in Ireland. But with Muslims, is there anything worldwide that can foster this kind of interfaith dialogue and can be moderating to the Muslim community worldwide?

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** I guess I'll [*Technical Difficulty—Editor*]

I'm not sure I could give you a fair response. I don't know of anything specific that is structured the way you just described it, but I certainly know that there are people of good will. We like to think of ourselves as being in that category of people who would be more than willing to address that kind of dialogue. That being said, I don't specifically know of an organization or structure that —

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Isn't that something that should be, because it seems to be relevant more than here in Nigeria. It seems to be dealing with, in this particular case, a lot of Muslim situations worldwide, that somehow it can be structured to have this kind of moderating consultation with the community. Most other Christian faiths, orthodox and that, have their ultimate higher consuls who can be approached, but with the Muslims it seems to be not so.

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** I think the overriding principle in my mind would need to be pursuit of religious freedom and the precepts or tenets of religious freedom, which I believe our office of religious freedom is ascribing to. There are moderate groups all over the world

that are starting to take notice of the whole matter of religious freedom as being something that arises from human rights in general.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Is it not something that should be generated from within the Muslim community itself to be the overarching, could you say, consul to guide other Muslim communities in some form of moderation? Has this ever been approached? For us to presume to be this moderating authority outside the Muslim faith is a little bit high-handed, but if you could engage the Muslim faith itself in some way to provide this—

**The Chair:** That's all the time we have right now.

I believe we have a new connection with Emmanuel.

Emmanuel, could we just test the microphone to see if you're back with us?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes, testing one, two, three.

**The Chair:** Okay, that's great. We're going to come back to your questions in a second.

I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Bélanger for his round of seven minutes.

Welcome, sir.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Allison.

I want to say that I'm replacing a colleague, Marc Garneau, so I'm not as familiar with the origins of this particular meeting. If I misspeak, I will apologize ahead of time.

I want to thank Mr. Anderson and Mr. Goldring for bringing up the matter of how the moderate Muslim community can be involved in trying to tone down the extremism of some of its own community. We've seen this happening where the moderates have spoken up on recent events in the Middle East, for instance with ISIL. We've had demonstrations around the world of moderate Muslims speaking out against the extremist violence of ISIL. So I would encourage all religious organizations to engage all faiths in interfaith dialogues.

I'd like to know, quickly because I have a couple of other things I want to bring up, to what extent does your organization, Voice of the Martyrs, do that?

• (0935)

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** We are, as I mentioned earlier, a Christian-backed organization that believes very much in some of the principles that we have been discovering as it relates to persecution in general. What we've unearthed is that there is a predominance of persecution specifically against the Christian church, so the formation of an organization like ours which is supported by the Christian community should not be a surprise to anyone. Moreover, we are very careful to support any effort that is a legitimate bona fide effort such as the office of religious freedom or similar bodies that are going to bring together people of good will and are going to find peaceful solutions that still respect human rights and the ability of a person to believe or choose to believe what they want to believe without the fear of persecution.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** To what extent is your organization involved in the interfaith dialogues, or is it?



**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** I think, to be fair, we'd have to say that our concentration right now does not include a lot of that, mostly because we don't know channels through which we could engage, but we would certainly be open to that.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** The concern I have is that—and I don't have all the statistics that back your affirmation that the Christians in Africa are the most persecuted—I have also seen victims of Christian persecutors. What Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army have done to the children in Uganda, in South Sudan, and in the Congo is absolutely horrendous. That's also going on currently in the South African Republic, where it is Christians who have sometimes been persecuting and extremely violent toward Muslims, moderate Muslims in some instances.

So I would not want to generalize that only Christians are being persecuted. They are, but there are Muslims who are persecuted, Jews who are persecuted, and Falun Gong in China, if you're going to go beyond Africa. You have 43 students who have just been killed—well, we all believe they've been killed—in Mexico by the drug lords.

Persecution is an unfortunate worldwide phenomenon, not only religious-based. It's sometimes economic, sometimes politically driven, sometimes ideologically driven. I think Canadians by and large, in all political parties as far as I can tell, are against all kinds and all forms of extremism, whether it's religious, economic, political, or whatever. We try to engage to attenuate it, sometimes militarily, sometimes with development aid, sometimes with dialogue. That's why I would encourage any organizations that we meet to engage in dialogue, because that's perhaps the most potent method over time of achieving that objective of greater understanding, of openness and tolerance, and brotherly and sisterly love.

I'm sorry, I'm lecturing here, and that's not the purpose of this meeting.

I have a question for Saa. I want to congratulate you for the courage you demonstrated and for convincing your friend to jump off that truck with you. Since you've managed to get back to Chibok, how has your life been?

**Ms. Saa Chibok:** Since I got back to Chibok, my life has been renewed. I know that God loves me; that's why He helped me and He gave me experience to jump out of the truck. My life has changed, because I know the Lord has a reason for my life. That's why He gives me the experience to jump out from the truck. When we jumped out from the trucks, we were a lot, and some of the girls were even afraid to go back to school, because the Boko Haram people, they told us that if we went back to school anywhere in Nigeria, they were going to find us. So lots of girls now are at home here. They were even afraid to go back to school.

Now that I find myself here, I'm safe. I'm not even afraid of anybody, but I think about some of my friends who are still in captivity, the time we used to get out and play, and now they are not here. For several months now, we didn't hear anything about them. I want them to come. I want them to be safe and to come back to enjoy themselves and to be safe the way I am here, but I remember those are the girls who are still in captivity. I'm always thinking about them, because for now I know that my life has changed and I am in a safe place.

● (0940)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you, Saa.

You know, you remind me very much of another young girl for whom the world has a great deal of esteem, Malala Yousafzai, the young woman from Pakistan who was shot because she was going to school, and now she is lecturing around the world. I hope you can take a great deal of courage from her, as she would from you if she heard your story.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bélanger.

We'll now start our second round, which will be five minutes.

We're going to start with Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** I thank our witnesses for their comments. You have all painted a somewhat bleak picture of what's going on, particularly in Nigeria, and it causes me great concern.

Though Nigeria is not one of the 25 countries of focus for Canadian development dollars, it is a development partner country, and we are spending quite a bit of money in Nigeria. I'll just tell you what we have on our website. It says that the "goal of Canada's international development program in Nigeria is to help the country achieve equitable and sustainable poverty reduction by improving the country's ability to use its own resources for development. Canada supports efforts that focus on securing a future for children and youth, and stimulating sustainable economic growth in two states: Cross River and Bauchi."

It concerns me, if what you are seeing is the lack of opportunity for these young people to get to school, that we are not really making a difference. The other area where we are spending a tremendous amount of money in Nigeria is with maternal, newborn, and child health. I'm wondering if you have any comments or if you think that there are, in your opinion, other areas where we should spend our money that might be more effective at this point.

My second question is, because we have a rather substantial Nigerian diaspora in Canada, is there any way that we can have the diaspora speak to the issues that you see in Nigeria right now and be a positive influence?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes. Thank you very much for that question.

I want to thank Canada for the support that they provide to Nigeria in development aid.

Let me mention with regard to the diaspora here that there's a huge disconnect between the south of Nigeria and the north of Nigeria. They're pretty much two separate countries that were amalgamated by the British during colonial rule. You will find that most Nigerian Canadians who you meet are from the south. Most of them do not have any real understanding of or connection to what is happening in northern Nigeria. It's difficult to get them interested and involved in the issue without pertinent information.

What I would recommend with regard to Canadian development assistance is that we really need to see a reorientation of that assistance towards the crisis in the north. We're going to have generational medical needs, generational educational needs, and so on and so forth, that are not being addressed as we speak. I think that there will be a need for a rethink of CIDA's development strategy in Nigeria, particularly in northern Nigeria.

• (0945)

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Ogebe, may I intervene at that point to say that we don't actually go in and just spend money. We work with the Government of Nigeria. Nigeria has its national economic empowerment and development strategy, NEED, that it has laid out until 2020. We have to work with the government that is in place there. Do you have any suggestions how they might rearrange their strategies so that our development dollars could be effectively spent in the north and the south?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes. Now, let me say that the NEED strategy you mentioned was crafted by an earlier administration, and as with all things Nigerian, the next government that comes in pretty much kicks it aside and starts doing their own thing. We have a problem with policy inconsistency.

Again, the government is not the best channel of resources. Some governments have decided that the best way to engage is with civil society organizations and NGOs because they are really the boots on the ground. My thinking is that it would be helpful if CIDA engaged with some of the relief and emergency response groups in the country to actually provide direct assistance to victims of this horrific humanitarian crisis.

Let me give you an illustration really quickly. We have a dozen girls like Saa who we are helping, and not one penny has come from the Nigerian government to help them. Everyone who we're getting help from are individuals—Nigerians, Americans, British—who have just come together to try to help put these girls back in school, but we've not received one dime from the Government of Nigeria. I think that we need to create tracks with civil society to be able to be more effective rather than channelling it through the Government of Nigeria.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Can I just clarify that our money does not go to the Government of Nigeria? We do work with civil society organizations and NGOs on the ground. That is where the money is directed. But we have to work in partnership with the Government of Nigeria, because they are the ones who are setting their own country's strategy.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes.

**The Chair:** That's all the time we have. Thanks for that clarification.

Madam Laverdière, you have five minutes, please.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** First, I'd like to commend you, Saa, on your courage and also your solidarity with your friends during what must have been a very, very difficult moment. My thoughts are with you, and I wish you all the best in the future. I hope you'll have an opportunity to come to Canada so that we can shake hands in the future.

**Ms. Saa Chibok:** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** I would like to briefly go back to the comments my Liberal colleague made a few minutes ago. In his view, the persecution is clearly not always based on religion. As we know, in Nigeria, among other places, one of the minorities facing a lot of persecution is the gay and lesbian population. Like the NDP, the Government of Canada believes that laws criminalizing homosexuality should be abolished.

We now know that the Voice of the Martyrs organization works mainly on religious issues. However, I gather that the Jubilee Campaign organization works on more general issues of human rights. I wonder if this is a subject you have looked at.

[*English*]

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Jubilee Campaign is a human rights group that works on religious minority issues around the world. This issue of the persecution of gays in Nigeria is not one that we are working with, largely because we're.... As I have mentioned, the persecution level of Christians in northern Nigeria is really horrendous. That said, no gay person has been killed in Nigeria. Fortunately, we haven't seen that sort of atrocity occur.

I do want to point out that with regard to a comment I made earlier about persecution, religious persecution is about a belief you hold. For people to be killed for that reason is really unacceptable. I think it's something we can all agree on, that it should not be tolerated. So this is not about bashing Islam. I think it's a global concern that we're seeing in Iraq and other places. President Obama, who has been very tolerant of Islam, recently said at the UN that we cannot negotiate with this kind of evil. An evil that will go out and behead other people just because of their faith cannot be negotiated with.

I think that's something we all can agree on, in Canada and anywhere else on the planet.

• (0950)

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Okay.

Very briefly, I'll come back to the issue of girls' education, which is a very important issue. I understand that Global Partnership for Education is working also with the Nigerian government for girls' education. Is that an issue you have been following, or am I going too far away from your area of expertise?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Well, we have tried to reach out to different stakeholders to assist these girls. We were told that the United Nations was helping the Chibok girls. When we asked them what they were doing, they said they were providing hygiene packages to them. When we talked to USAID, they said they were providing counselling.

We have to take the bull by the horns and provide scholarships for these girls. We're always open to more partners, but we see a lot of rhetoric out there and we don't see enough action. If there are parties who want to work with us, we're more than happy to do that. As I said, Canada is also English speaking, so some of these girls would be able to go to school here and transition quite well if scholarships were provided.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madame Laverdière.

Mr. Hawn, for five minutes.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all of our witnesses for being here.

Following up on the education theme, Saa, what is it you would like to study? What would you like to do in your life?

**Ms. Saa Chibok:** I want to be a medical doctor.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Terrific. Thank you.

Mr. Ogebe, you talked about educational needs in the north, educational organizations and so on, and scholarships in Canada.

Have you approached or are you aware of any effort by any Canadian organization to provide scholarships, or to go down that road, for people like Saa and others?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Frankly, no I haven't, but I'm hoping that when I arrive in Canada in a few hours, through Voice of the Martyrs we may be able to begin to reach out to groups in Canada.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Do you have any idea who you would be reaching out to? Do you have any targets, so to speak?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Very frankly, no, I'm afraid not.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. McKenzie, you talked about other countries in Africa that are in the same situation, or are ripe for this kind of situation.

Which would those be, and do you have any thoughts on any preventive strengthening or something that could be done with civil society in those countries to slow it down or stop it?

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** We bring our services to those who are persecuted right around the world. We're engaged in 50 different mission projects right now in as many as 35 countries. We're responding more to the specific need as it comes up. That often happens from there having been some tragic circumstances, huge displacements, and those kinds of things.

Certainly, we experience a good deal of this in Africa, but also in other parts of the world. We're very involved in projects in Iran, Iraq, North Korea and South Korea, and China. As I said, there is a focus on service and need. That changes from time to time, of course.

● (0955)

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Ogebe, I forget who brought up finance, but do you know how Boko Haram is financed? Is it from within Nigeria or from outside sources? Because these organizations obviously run on finance, do you have any suggestions about what we can do to cut off their finances?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes, absolutely. Boko Haram is a real global terrorist group. It's networked and linked into al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, and a lot of other bad fellows.

Boko Haram has actually trained in Somalia and they've trained in northern Mali. The weapons that flowed out of Libya came into their hands.

Their financing is a bit more suspect, but we've had reports that Turkish Airlines was flying weapons into Nigeria. Iran has sent weapons into Nigeria. So it's a small group of the usual terrorist suspects working to support them.

That said, one key concern for me is the French connection, because France continues to pay off Boko Haram for abducted French citizens. That provides huge funding for Boko Haram to continue to carry out its atrocities.

You see that it has evolved from a group which, a few years ago, used to use machetes and gasoline to bomb churches, into a group that is now using surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft launchers.

It's my hope that working with the UN and other partners, the international community can block the weapons and the funding flows to Boko Haram.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** With respect to ransom and the French, do we have any idea what the total amount of funding would be that they would be getting from ransom?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** It's allegedly in the millions of dollars. They have abducted over a dozen French citizens in the last three years. Those kinds of numbers really add up to a lot of weapons.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That completes our second round.

We'll start round three with Mr. Anderson, for five minutes please.

**Mr. David Anderson:** We watched your video a little bit earlier and towards the end there was a discussion about what can be done. I noticed they talked about praying together, but there was also a discussion of disunity and how the voiceless are not represented because those who should be speaking for them are not united. You gentlemen here can talk about this but, Emmanuel, I'd like you to talk about how the church is coming together to try to address these issues, because I think it probably needs to be part of the solution.

**Mr. Douglas McKenzie:** From our perspective as Voice of the Martyrs we consider our mandate to be twofold. One is to reach out in the direction of those who are impacted by persecution, bringing them practical relief and support, thereby bringing the community together, helping them with their issues of disenfranchisement and disempowerment, and of course the actual physical abuse that is very common.

The other side of our mandate is basically to bring that faith, that conviction, that heroism, that courage, whatever you want to call it, and somehow present it to the Canadian church in such a way that it impacts them and allows them to adjust their dial to the extent that they are tuned into the frequency of suffering that is really happening around the world. We consider ourselves to be bidirectional in that sense: one direction towards the persecuted; the other direction trying to mobilize the church as caregivers for that issue.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes, if I may respond to that, last week I saw a very heartening thing in Nigeria, which was a bunch of churches and professionals coming together to try to care for the thousands of refugees who are now in Jos. We had Anglicans and others literally across the spectrum coming out to do that. These are people who need support to be able to respond. The reason this is important is that when you have a country that is fifty-fifty Christian-Muslim and when you see that Christians have not retaliated for these horrendous attacks against them, you realize it is key to keep the tempo down. If relief is going in, then people will not be as pained, will not be as angry, will not be as embittered to lash back, which is what could ultimately happen.

Let me add that the patience of the Nigerian Christians is not inexhaustible. We now face the situation where in February next year there are going to be presidential elections. If an infidel, in quotes, wins, there are groups that are already preparing to go out and kill Christians again. This happened in 2011, which is why we know it is likely to happen again. Already in the media we are hearing Muslim leaders warn that there are going to be killings if an infidel wins. So we need to walk with partners on the ground, the development agencies, CIDA, and everyone, to try to see how we can ensure there is no additional violence that could conflagrate further.

•(1000)

**Mr. David Anderson:** When you hear those voices and you're saying Muslim leaders are speaking that way, are there other voices of Muslim leaders who have the courage to speak out and say, "This is unacceptable in our country"? Do you hear that second voice? I think we all need to, but I'm just wondering, is it heard?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** I was actually excited to hear just yesterday that Nigeria's top Muslim leader has apparently come out strongly and condemned Boko Haram, which is an improvement because for a long time, Muslim leaders have said that it was Christians who were blowing up churches and killing themselves trying to give Islam a bad name. It looks like we're moving from that propaganda to a point where objective voices are now defining reality for what it is. We hope that there are more such voices.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Are there any other questions or comments for anybody? The next round is for the NDP. Are there any other questions?

Ms. Day, why don't you go ahead then.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to go back to the issue of education.

Could you give us a picture of primary education and higher education, such as how many boys and how many girls finish primary school and how many go on to higher education?

Saa's dream is to become a doctor, but, to do that, she has to go further in her studies. Could you paint me a picture of the situation there, Mr. Ogebe?

[English]

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes, we do have a high incidence of male enrolment versus female enrolment in many parts of northern Nigeria. We also have a crisis in northern Nigeria where there are

about 10 million children who are not in school. We have a government policy in which primary school is compulsory and it is free. But what we have in northern Nigeria is an Islamic system of apprenticeship where kids are put on the streets and they are allowed to learn at the feet of Islamic clerics and mullahs. Unfortunately, on the streets they're indoctrinated, neglected, and they become radicalized.

What is happening is that the Government of Nigeria and USAID are trying to build Islamic madaris for them where they can have both western education and Arabic education. The problem with this strategy is that it isolates them from the general population, so they see themselves as separate and superior to non-Muslim children. So when there's a conflict there is a propensity for them to be violent toward those people with whom they didn't grow up in the same schools and classes.

•(1005)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Does that mean that, in other regions, girls who go to primary school reach the end of that level? Do boys finish primary school, and what is the percentage of each?

Could you tell us if the north is the region at most risk or are other regions in the same situation?

[English]

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes. The north faces greater risk academically than the south. The south has always been more advanced, largely because we're on the coast and there was more access to the missionaries when they first came. It was more difficult for the missionaries to go up north, and even the colonial authorities wouldn't let them go far north. So yes, the north is more educationally disadvantaged historically than the south. These practices of not allowing boys to go to school is also a problem, and not allowing girls to go to school is a problem.

I don't have the specific statistics on this, but it's a well-known fact about the disadvantage of the north.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Could you tell us, without sticking your neck out too much, in which region Canada should focus its aid? Is it in the north of the country?

[English]

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Yes, clearly it would be the north of the country.

For example, I should let you know that right now there are thousands of Nigerian refugees in camps in Cameroon. When I visited the camps there, in one camp they had not been fed for 49 days. This is a UN camp. There are people outside the camp who are trying to get in, and if conditions in the camp are that bad, imagine what is happening to those who are outside the camp. There are people who are being killed by snake bites and a lot of avoidable things. If we could have humanitarian assistance in the UN camps, and also for the internally displaced persons in central Nigeria who are fleeing from the north, that would be helpful.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Goldring.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Thank you very much, Chair.

The Boko Haram are certainly engaged in this religious quest, but what is their endgame? What are they heading to? What are they really wanting to do? Is it strictly within the borders of the country, or are they looking to expand beyond the borders of the country? Are they under the same quest as the radical Muslim influences in Iraq? What is their endgame?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** That's a very good question. The endgame is total global domination. Ironically, we thought this was just the stuff of movies, but we are seeing in real life that this is their objective. That's why Boko Haram has evolved into a global terrorist group with transnational activity. Boko Haram is operating in Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria. It has also operated in northern Mali. We see links with other groups. There was a conference call of jihadi groups that was intercepted by the U.S., and Boko Haram was sitting in on the call with al-Qaeda. They are presenting themselves as a regional jihadi front line or vanguard.

Let me point out that Boko Haram has been there for about 10 years. In the early years, Boko Haram was satisfied with being a sect that had its own campus, its own identity, and was just killing Christians in the neighbourhood. Now, Boko Haram has evolved into a group that wants to overthrow the government and establish a caliphate. They declared their caliphate a few months ago in one of the cities that they captured. They have stated that their goal is they want jihad. They want to take over the country of Nigeria, and ultimately, they want to expand their map across the African continent.

•(1010)

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Expanding on my earlier question, would this not lead to a way to approach this difficulty and problem? We see this with ISIS too. International countries are determined to intervene on that issue on a direct basis. Your comments would lead me to assume that they would want to be involved in Nigeria too. Would this not lead to the overall need, if you like, for a world organization of Muslim moderates that could perhaps be engaged here to provide some moderation to Muslim communities?

Muslim communities are being tainted by these extremists too as we speak. I would think it would be time for them to establish something worldwide to be able to put forward their more moderate

opinions on what's happening, and possibly even to be engaged, along with the rest of the world, to help put down these extremists.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Absolutely, sir.

Let me point out that in our efforts to bring Saa and others here, we had Muslim girls, ladies from the south of Nigeria who contributed towards making their passports and so forth. We want to see a groundswell of Muslims. In the same way that we have foreign fighters going to join the terrorists, let's see foreign peacemakers coming together and going out to try, through moral suasion and ideological debates, or through theological debates, to persuade these people that this is not the right way. Unfortunately we don't see enough of that happening. Maybe we need to create a platform for those people who are moderates to engage with them.

This is why I call it an intra-faith dialogue, because you and I as westerners cannot engage with them on that platform. Under sharia law, in a law court, our evidence is worth less than half of that of a Muslim. They wouldn't take us seriously, but as Muslim to Muslim they could engage. Then I think there would be some hope of dousing the ideological and theological extremism.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** You mentioned a couple of other countries that seem to be engaged in this type of philosophy, along with ISIS and Nigeria. In what other countries could we expect to see a surge of this type of radical Muslim philosophy coming up in the same way as it did in Nigeria and ISIS? Could you name a couple of them?

**Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe:** Right now, in East Africa, we have al-Shabaab which has already overrun the country and is expanding into Kenya, with the mall killings in Kenya last year that were so appalling. In northern Mali, we have MUJAO which successfully captured the north for a long time before they were rolled back by French forces, supported by Nigerian forces, and so forth.

The sad thing is that, although the exact same thing is happening in Nigeria, I don't see the world coming together to help Nigeria roll back Boko Haram the way Nigeria helped the French roll back MUJAO.

In that region of the African continent, those are a few countries that are clearly under threat.

**The Chair:** I want to say to our witnesses for being here today, thank you very much.

Saa, did you have any final comments for us before we finish the meeting today? We're going to wrap up here and we just want to know if you had any final thoughts for us.

**Ms. Saa Chibok:** Yes. I want to thank you for this program that you have, all that happened to me and your trying to help. I want to thank you for all that you do. Thank you very much.

•(1015)

**The Chair:** Thank you once again for being here.

Emmanuel Ogebe, thank you very much for joining us via teleconference.

Our two witnesses here in Ottawa, Peter Jardine and Doug McKenzie, we want to thank you.

Our witnesses are free to go.

Marc, you had a quick comment before we dismiss the committee.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

This came up at the last minute, but there is a person called Vian Dakhil, who is a Yazidi member of Parliament in Iraq. She is appearing next week in Congress. She has been asked to appear there. She would be interested, if there's an interest, in coming up to Canada and speaking about her experience and about ISIL.

I know it's a last minute thing, but if the committee was willing, either next Tuesday or next Thursday, if it worked with her agenda, to have a chance to meet her.... I put that before the committee.

**The Chair:** Are there any comments?

Paul.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I would support that. I had heard of her visit before. The Iraqi ambassador mentioned it.

**The Chair:** David.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I would think we would support that whether she's here by video conference or whatever. I think she would be an important source of information for us.

**The Chair:** We could add her to one of the panels.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** I will check to see if that works for her schedule and I'll get back to you immediately.

**The Chair:** Absolutely do that and maybe she could be added on.

Since we have a little extra time, we have a couple of budgets. I was going to leave these for another day, but we have a half an hour.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**The Chair:** Okay, not for half an hour....

Very quickly, these are just two budgets on what we're working on right now. One is for the study we've undertaken and the other is for today. There's a budget for \$22,500 and one for \$2,650. I just want to see if the committee would be okay with that.

It's standard, what we look at doing. We need to have a vote on it to pass it. If you would just have a quick look at that....

As we're finishing handing them out, are there any questions? As I said, this is standard operating procedure. One is for what we're doing with regard to a response to ISIS. It's an ongoing study we just started. One is of course for today, for video conferencing. Are there any questions?

If there are no questions, then I'll pose the question.

(Motions agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** So carried.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** There's one other item, if I may, just to follow up on whether we've heard from ministers for estimates.

**The Chair:** No, we haven't.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** So they've been asked but we just haven't heard back.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Is there anything else, ladies and gentlemen?

**Mr. David Anderson:** Could I just say something? We'll work harder to let you know if the schedule's changing than we did on this occasion. This was something that was fairly fluid right from beginning to end.

We will try to let the opposition have a little more information if things are changing regarding the committee's schedule or opportunity to bring witnesses in that might be doing something unusual.

**The Chair:** Sure. I think that would be helpful. Even if we got it on the agenda not knowing when it may actually happen, that would be good.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** If I may indulge for a second, one of the things we had run into before is having appropriate planning meetings, which is often a way to avoid this. I might suggest that.

I don't know how this happened. I wasn't pleased because not just for us as the opposition—we didn't have any time to prepare; we got notice of this yesterday—it didn't allow all the people who work at the front here, save the chair, and the chair didn't know either, for them to do the work.

I don't know how this happened, but I know how we could avoid it. One way is to have planning meetings or steering meetings as we used to have. That's an option. Clearly we can't have last minute.... It's not fair to the people who work here to prepare. It's not fair to anyone and we certainly wouldn't do the same. There are times when things do happen; I understand.

**An hon. member:** This is one.

• (1020)

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Well, I'm saying that, David. You gave me one of those looks.

There was no communication at all until we found out 24 hours before. I don't know if it was 24 hours before that you were considering this, it could have been brought up in committee before, saying that we have this opportunity to talk to someone about it. That would have been helpful for everyone.

**Mr. David Anderson:** That's what I said.

**An hon. member:** Not really.

**The Chair:** Perfect. Thank you very much.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.









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