

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Condemning the abduction of female students by armed militants from the Government Girls Secondary School in the northeastern province of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning the abduction of female students by armed militants from the Government Girls Secondary School in the northeastern province of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Whereas, on the night of April 14, 2014, as many as 234 female students, most of them between 16 and 18 years old, were abducted by armed militants from the Government Girls Secondary School, a boarding school located in the northeastern province of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

Whereas the militants burned down several buildings before opening fire on soldiers and police who were guarding the school and forcing the students into trucks;

Whereas, according to local officials in Borno state, about 43 students were able to flee their captors, and the rest remain missing;

Whereas all public secondary schools in Borno state were closed in March 2014 because of increasing attacks in the past year that have killed hundreds of students, but the young women at the Government Girls Secondary School were recalled to take their final exams;

Whereas the group popularly known as “Boko Haram”, which loosely translates from the Hausa language to “Western education is sin”, is known to oppose the education of girls, has kidnapped girls in the past to use as cooks and sex slaves, and is thought to be responsible for the April 14th kidnapping in Borno state;

Whereas there are reports that the abducted girls have been sold as brides to Islamist militants for the equivalent of \$12 each;

Whereas Boko Haram has targeted schools, mosques, churches, villages, and agricultural centers, as well as government facilities, in an armed campaign to create an Islamic state in northern Nigeria, prompting the president of Nigeria to declare a state of emergency in three of the country’s northeastern states in May 2013;

Whereas, according to the Brookings Institution, Boko Haram burned down or destroyed 50 schools and killed approximately 30 teachers in Nigeria in 2013, leaving tens of thousands of children unable to attend school;

Whereas, on April 14, 2014, hours before the kidnapping in Borno state, Boko Haram bombed a bus station in Abuja, Nigeria, killing at least 75 people and wounding

over 100, making it the deadliest attack ever in Nigeria's capital;

Whereas Amnesty International estimates that more than 1,500 people have been killed in attacks by Boko Haram or reprisals by Nigerian security forces this year alone, and the Council on Foreign Relations estimates that almost 4,000 people have been killed in Boko Haram attacks since 2011;

Whereas the Department of State designated Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in November 2013, recognizing the threat posed by the group's large-scale and indiscriminate attacks against women and children;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, girls' education is a major challenge in Nigeria;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), some 4,700,000 children of primary school age are still not in school in Nigeria, with attendance rates lowest in the north;

Whereas a study conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that school children in Nigeria, particularly those in the northern provinces, are at a disadvantage in their education, with 37 percent of primary-age girls in the rural northeast not attending school, and 30 percent of boys not attending school;

Whereas, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, Nigeria is ranked 106 out of 136 countries based on women's economic participation, educational attainment, and political empowerment;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, women held only 6.7 percent of the seats in Nigeria's parliament in 2013;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas, according to the United States Agency for International Development, “Broader, more equitable access to education encourages political participation, enhances governance, strengthens civil society, and promotes transparency and accountability.”;

Whereas a 100-country study by the World Bank shows that increasing the share of women with a secondary education by 1 percent boosts annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percentage points;

Whereas, according to UNICEF, adolescent girls that attend school are less likely to be married as children, “are less vulnerable to disease including HIV and AIDS, and acquire information and skills that lead to increased earning power. Evidence shows that the return to a year of secondary education for girls correlates to a 25 percent increase in wages later in life.”;

Whereas, according to the World Bank, “The benefits of women’s education go beyond higher productivity for 50 percent of the population. More educated women also tend to be healthier, participate more in the formal labor market, earn more income,. . . and provide better health care and education to their children, all of which eventually improve the well-being of all individuals and lift households out of poverty. These benefits also transmit across generations, as well as to their communities at large.”; and

Whereas women and girls must be allowed to go to school without fear of violence and unjust treatment so that

they can take their rightful place as equal citizens of and contributors to the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses its strong support for the people
3 of Nigeria, especially the parents and families of the
4 girls abducted by Boko Haram in Borno state, and
5 calls for the immediate, safe return of the girls;

6 (2) condemns Boko Haram for its violent at-
7 tacks on civilian targets, including schools, mosques,
8 churches, villages, and agricultural centers in Nige-
9 ria;

10 (3) encourages the Government of Nigeria to
11 strengthen efforts to protect the ability of children
12 to obtain an education and to hold those who con-
13 duct such violent attacks accountable;

14 (4) encourages efforts by the United States
15 Government to support the capacity of the Govern-
16 ment of Nigeria to provide security for schools and
17 to hold terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram,
18 accountable;

19 (5) urges timely civilian assistance from the
20 United States and allied African nations in rescuing
21 and reintegrating the abducted girls;

22 (6) recognizes that every individual, regardless
23 of gender, should have the opportunity to pursue an
24 education without fear of discrimination;

1 (7) reaffirms its commitment to ending dis-
2 crimination and violence against women and girls, to
3 ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls,
4 and to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic
5 human rights of women and girls worldwide;

6 (8) recognizes that the empowerment of women
7 is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to
8 generate economic growth, sustainable democracy,
9 and inclusive security; and

10 (9) encourages the Department of State, the
11 United States Agency for International Develop-
12 ment, and the Department of Defense to continue
13 their support for initiatives that positively impact
14 the ability of women and girls to fully access their
15 human rights.