



Abduction of Nigerian School Girls: WANEP calls for urgent action

PRESS RELEASE

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP, on behalf of its 500 member organisations spread across the 15 ECOWAS member states joins the global community to express deepest concern and apprehension on the April 14 abduction of over 200 schoolgirls from Chibok Community in Borno State. The spate of terrorist attacks so far carried out by the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria has claimed the lives of an estimated 1,500 people this year alone in addition to the 3,600 lives lost between 2010 and 2013.

WANEP expresses deep concern over the fate of the abducted girls even as the sect leader expressly stated that he was “mandated by Allah to sell the girls because they should have been married instead of attending school.” WANEP notes that attacks against the liberty of children and the targeting of schools are prohibited under international law and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

With the gravity of the situation at hand, we are however, worried over the contradictory reports from government quarters trailing the circumstances leading to the kidnap and the location of the girls. More worrisome is the seeming ease with which the girls were kidnapped in a very orderly manner and the boldness with which the kidnapers repeated their atrocious action by abducting additional eight girls still without any resistance.

WANEP appreciates the efforts of security agents in the war against the insurgents and calls on the Nigerian government to intensify efforts in this regard by taking immediate concrete action to locate and safely return the girls to their distraught parents and well-meaning sympathizers who are daily thronging the streets demanding for their release.

In the light of the unfolding tragedy, WANEP urgently calls for the following:

- That a critical analysis of the situation be done to obtain credible and useful information, which will enable a more accurate response. In this regard, the capacity of community women in providing accurate information should be explored and collective efforts utilized to provide options for response.
- The Nigerian Government must, within the context of the Responsibility to Protect, take necessary steps in the coordination of Security for the protection of other girls in Borno State and in a timely manner.
- That the present crisis must not be politicized as it is a collective tragedy which demands the participation of all and sundry in the efforts to ensure a safe release of the girls
- Urges the populace to support on-going efforts by providing relevant information that will lead to the release of the girls and the arrest of the culprits.
- Ask for the intervention of ECOWAS to prevail on neighbouring countries to Nigeria to form coalition against the insurgents in order to curtail spread in the region.

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