



Legislation Text

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

This resolution condemns the abduction of female students by armed militants from the Government Girls Secondary School in the northeastern state of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and calls upon the Federal Government of Nigeria to do everything within its power to locate the abducted students and return them to safety. In addition, the resolution calls upon the U.S. Government and allied international forces to assist the Government of Nigeria to rescue and reintegrate the abducted students.

Whereas, On the night of April 14, 2014, more than 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 state of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and

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

Whereas, While all public secondary schools in Borno state were closed in March, 2014, because of an increasing number of attacks in the past year, the young women at the Government Girls Secondary School were recalled to take their final exams in April; and

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 14 kidnapping in Borno state; and

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; and

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; and

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; and

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; and

Whereas, The U.S. 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; and

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

Whereas, According to the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), some 4.7 million children of primary school age are still not in school in Nigeria, with attendance rates lowest in the north; and

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 states, 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; and

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; and

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

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

Whereas, According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, "Broader, more equitable access to education encourages political participation, enhances governance, strengthens civil society, and promotes transparency and accountability"; and

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

Whereas, According to UNICEF, adolescent girls that attend school are less likely to be married as children, are less vulnerable to disease and acquire information and skills that lead to increased earning power later in life; and

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

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council:

1. Expresses its strong support for the people of Nigeria, especially the parents and families of the girls abducted by Boko Haram in Borno state.
2. Condemns Boko Haram for its violent attacks on civilian targets, including schools, mosques, churches, villages, and agricultural centers in Nigeria.
3. Calls upon the Government of Nigeria to do everything within its power to locate the abducted students and return them to safety and hold those who conducted such violent attacks accountable.
4. Encourages the Government of Nigeria to strengthen efforts to protect the ability of children to obtain education.
5. Encourages efforts by the U.S. Government to support the capacity of the Government of Nigeria to provide security for schools and to hold terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram, accountable.
6. Urges timely civilian assistance from the United States and allied African nations in rescuing and reintegrating the abducted girls.
7. Recognizes that every individual, regardless of gender, should have the opportunity to pursue an education without fear of discrimination.
8. Reaffirms its commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, and to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide.
9. Recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to achieve economic growth, sustainable democracy and security.
10. Encourages the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Department of Defense to continue their support for initiatives that positively impact the ability of women and girls to fully achieve their basic human rights.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City Clerk shall send a copy of this resolution to President Barack Obama and to each member of Wisconsin’s Congressional delegation.

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5/9/2014