

‘Western Education Is a Sin,’ Claims Terrorist Group That Kidnapped 163 Christian Girls

Islamic insurgency and foreign terrorist organization **Boko Haram** has overwhelmingly abducted self-proclaimed Christians in its raid on a government-sponsored secondary school in Chibok, northern Nigeria.

Boko Haram leaders have formally claimed responsibility for the mass kidnapping of 243 schoolgirls and, as reported by the parents of the abducted, Boko Haram is suspected to still be in possession of more than 230 schoolgirls who are being sold into domestic and sexual servitude for as little as \$12 each.

On the night of April 14, more than 100 armed Boko Haram insurgents abducted a reported 243 students from an all-girls government-sponsored secondary school after shooting their way past the compound's security staff.

The mass kidnapping lasted approximately six hours as the kidnapers hand-selected their victims from the more than 250 students attending the secondary school. The overwhelmingly Christian crop of abductees was then loaded onto the backs of military-grade trucks and driven deep into the Sambisa Forest, located on the Nigerian-Cameroonian border.

Though an estimated one to two dozen of those abducted have reportedly escaped, search parties comprised of Civilian Joint Task Force vigilantes and parents continue to search alongside the Nigerian army for the remaining missing girls.

Evangelist Matthew Owojaiye of the Old Time Revival Hour Church in Kaduna compiled a list of 180 kidnapped girls who have been identified. The list, which includes the girls' names, religious affiliations and photographs, has yet to be

verified by Nigerian authorities. The Northern States Christian Elders Forum, an affiliate of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), first released the list late on May 4.

Identifying 163 Christian girls and 15 Muslim girls suspected to still be in captivity, CAN claims the disproportionately Christian inclination of the abduction points to targeting by Boko Haram in the selection of their victims.

“Chibok local government is 90 percent Christian,” laments Owojaiye. “Majority of the girls abducted are Christian! Why did Boko Haram visit Chibok local government? Why didn’t they visit so many other local government girls secondary schools in Borno state?”

Boko Haram, whose name means “Western education is a sin,” continues to pursue its goal of carving out a separate Islamic state from Nigeria’s northern regions, where it can establish its ultraconservative interpretation of Shariah law.

The insurgency often targets schools, government institutions and religious minorities—mostly Christians—as part of a broader strategy to create a purely Islamic society in northern Nigeria.

In 2014 alone, it’s estimated more than 2,500 innocents have been murdered by Boko Haram, many of whom are known Christians whose communities have been pillaged and churches set ablaze.

“Boko Haram’s deliberate targeting of Christian students for sale into domestic slavery and forced marriage once again illustrates the group’s limitless repertoire of evil and its willingness to unleash that evil in pursuit of a separate Islamic state ruled by Shariah law,” says William Stark, International Christian Concern’s (ICC) regional manager.

“While ICC continues to join the international community in calling for a return to a peace in northern Nigeria, we cannot refuse to recognize the Nigerian state’s inability to provide

the security necessary to ensure prosperous living for the nation's Christians and other minority religions, especially in the increasingly lawless northern region," he adds.

"If the Nigerian state and international community continue to fail to respond to Boko Haram effectively, 230 innocent school girls could be lost to a lifetime of suffering and oppression at the hands of these Islamic militants," Stark concludes.

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