

PRESS RELEASE

Abducted Students: WACSOF-Nigeria Condemns Attempts to Promote Instability

Following the inconsistency, insincerity and lack of focus by the government on its position towards the recovery of abducted students of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok in Borno State by members of Boko Haram; and subsequent loss of public confidence in leadership, West African Civil Society Forum, Nigeria (WACSOF-Nigeria):

1. Wonders why Nigerian military has not showed appreciative effort to curb internal security challenges in spite of the international commendations it has received for its effective performance in peacekeeping operations across Africa countries such as Sudan, Guinea Bissau including Sierialone where it had helped to re-install democracy, peace and stability.
2. Expresses worry that while protests are being held across the world to condemn abduction of the students, some unpatriotic elites are busy politicizing and attaching religion sentiment to the abduction, primarily to divert the focus of the international rescue mission.
3. Reiterates that irrespective of their religion and ethnical backgrounds, the abducted students are Nigerians who must be accorded with respect and dignity.
4. Is surprised at the unguarded and deceitful statements by the Spoke person to State Security Service (SSS) that the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau has been killed without considering this could sabotage the ongoing international rescue mission in Nigeria.
5. Worries at the security personnel response to arrest and disperse peaceful protests and gathering demanding for the release of the girls.
6. Expresses concerns that since Monday 14th April 2014 when over 200 young female students from the Government Girls Secondary School Chibok, Borno State were abducted by heavily armed men, millions around the world have been unable to come to terms with the loss.
7. Finds it worrisome that weeks after the abduction, there is still no substantive newsfeed or public evidence on what is being done to rescue the girls.
8. Expresses surprise at lack of effort to effectively incorporate modern search and rescue equipment such as drones, Google Maps, and aerial surveillance to recover over 200 girls who vanished without a trace.
9. Queries lack of protection for the students in the North East in spite of the advance warning derived from the devastation and pain of the 59 innocent children murdered in Federal Government College, Buni Yadi on February 25th 2014.
10. Questions how under a state of emergency, 4 trucks and numerous motor bikes could be deployed, move in a convoy, unleash terror on the school at Chibok for four hours unchallenged and then flee with over 200 girls to a location yet to be determined by Nigeria's security institutions.

WACSOF-Nigeria therefore:

1. Urges proactive, transparency and accountability in the search and rescue missions of the government; and sincere effort to reinstall respect for human rights and dignity including peaceful protest.
2. Condemns all attempts to politicize the abduction and sabotage the attention of the international search and rescue efforts; and urges immediate appreciative effort to address inept performance by Nigerian military in the country.
3. Calls on all well-meaning Nigerians to unit and promote national integrity and disapprove dirty politics and all efforts to promote instability in the country.
4. Urges political and religion elites to be wary of implicative statements that could increase existing trauma on the victims' parents, jeopardize or threaten the peace and security of the citizens and country.
5. Demands detailed explanations to the alleged arrest and detention of some members of Boko Haram by the State Security Service (SSS) without trial in the last two years.
6. Reiterates the need for the SSS to carry out a transparent and unbiased trail on the arrested members of Boko Haram, primarily to gather useful information about them to assist Nigerians to know and identify who are supporting insurgents to carry this out crime against innocent citizens.
7. Urges effective liaise by all levels of government and well-meaning citizens with international search and rescue teams to ensure the girls are brought back safely.
8. Demands explanations to why, despite the massive increase in security spending (up to N1 trillion in 2013 and N845 Billion in 2014), Nigerians are faced with series security challenges; and the security and military personnel are reported to be under-equipped and ill-prepared to face the ever-growing security challenges confronting the country.
9. Urges Federal Government to make available to the public, a detailed briefing from the Armed Forces on the state of search and rescue efforts geared our demand to Bring Back Our Girls; and ensure safe rescue of the girls from their captives.
10. Demands immediate, investigative and workable effort to arrest and bring to justice the right perpetrators of heartless attacks on innocent citizens.

Signed:

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