

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 6, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the women of the United States Senate, we are writing to you today deeply disturbed by the abduction and mistreatment of more than 200 girls by the terrorist group Boko Haram from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria. Boko Haram has threatened to sell the girls as slaves, and some may have already been sold into child marriages. We condemn these appalling actions in the strongest possible terms, and we agree with you that the abduction of these girls is an outrage. The girls were targeted by Boko Haram simply because they wanted to go to school and pursue knowledge, and we believe the United States must respond quickly and definitively.

In the face of the brazen nature of this horrific attack, the international community must impose further sanctions on this terrorist organization. Boko Haram is a threat to innocent civilians in Nigeria, to regional security, and to U.S. national interests. The National Counterterrorism Center has found that Boko Haram has engaged in multiple attacks on Westerners and repeatedly targeted students at schools and universities, threatening the ability of young Nigerians, particularly women, to attend school.

While we applaud the initial U.S. condemnation of the kidnapping, we believe there is much more that the United States government should do to make clear that such an attack will not be tolerated. We urge you to press for the addition of Boko Haram and Ansaru to the United Nations Security Council's al-Qa'ida Sanctions List, the mechanism by which international sanctions are imposed on al-Qa'ida and al-Qa'ida-linked organizations. Their addition to the List would compel a greater number of countries to sanction Boko Haram, joining several countries, including the United States, which have already done so. The Department of State reported that Boko Haram has links to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb when it designated the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, and General David Rodriguez, Commander of U.S. Africa Command, has described these links before Congress.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working together until girls and women worldwide can pursue an education without fear of violence or intimidation.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Velvie Schubert

Mary Ann

Kay E. Hagan

Jeanne Shaker

Barbara Baker

Elizabeth Warren

Margi Ching

Lou Burkholder

Maria Campbell

Patty Mann

Kelly Angotte

Heidi Kait

James Hunter

Lee Tucker

Ann Klobner

Carol Cadell

Kurt E. Hill

Jany Boddie