

PRESS RELEASE

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF ABDUCTION FROM GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL, CHIBOK, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

Saturday April 14th, 2018 will mark the 4th anniversary of the abduction of 296 schoolgirls from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok by Boko Haram.

- 57 girls escaped in the first 24 hours.
- In the course of the intervening 4 years, another 107 of the 219 girls held captive either escaped, were released after negotiations, or were found after the army liberated the areas where they were being held.
- To date, 112 Chibok Girls remain captives of the terrorists.

On Monday February 19th, 2018, 111 secondary schoolgirls, one primary school girl, and one primary school boy, 113 children in total, were abducted from Government Girls Science & Technical College, Dapchi by Islamic State West Africa, a splinter group of Boko Haram.

- After government negotiations 106 of the girls, and one boy were released after 31 days in captivity.
- To date, 6 Dapchi girls have not returned, with reports that five died during the abduction and were buried, while Leah Sharibu was reported to have been denied release because she refused to renounce her faith.

While we are aware of the efforts made so far, and commend the government for the recovery of 107 Chibok girls, and 106 Dapchi girls, we will not relent in our advocacy and strident demands for the rescue of our school children and fellow citizens from captivity.

As concerned citizens of this country, the #BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) advocacy group has highlighted the plight of these innocent girls, and other victims of insurgency, even at a global level and engaged the government and other agencies in a constructive manner to secure the rescue of the girls. Our advocacy includes nearly 4 years of a daily sit-out in Abuja; weekly sit-outs in Lagos, Oshogbo, and Ibadan; visits to key local and international stakeholders; development of strategies and tools such as 'Citizens Solutions to End Terrorism' and the 'Verification, Authentication and Reunification System (VARs)'.

While we remain hopeful and expectant of the imminent news of the rescue of ALL the girls, if this hope does not materialize before April 14, 2018, we will mark the 4th year of captivity for 112 Chibok Girls by gathering with members of the Chibok community and members of BBOG from all over Lagos as follows:

BBOG 4TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME in LAGOS

Friday April 13, 2018

4:00pm **March from Falomo Roundabout to the United Nations office in Lagos to advocate for renewed global pressure on our government**

6.00pm **Interfaith Vigil at Falomo Roundabout**

Address by **Professor Maurice Magnor**, Centre for Defence of Human Rights & Democracy in Africa

Address by **citizen representatives in government**

Christian prayers by **Pastor Ituah Ighodalo** of Trinity House Ministries

Muslim prayers by **Imam Nojeem Jimoh** of Lighthouse Estate Mosque

Poetry Recitations by Performance Artists

Reading of 'An Interfaith Prayer for Chibok – Four Years in Captivity' from BBOG members in New York

Saturday April 14, 2018

11:00am **Screening of 2nd Annual Chibok Girls Lecture in Abuja by Pastor Tunde Bakare followed by Town Hall Question & Answer Session at Falomo Roundabout**

We empathise with the traumatized families of all the victims of insurgency, those missing, deceased, and forcibly removed from government schools where their parents thought they would be safe. We pray that many more families will be able to share in the joy of their children coming back home.

We call on national, regional and global influencers and authorities to support and pressure the Nigerian government to bring the nightmare to school abductions, violent extremism and insecurity to an end.

Signed:

For and on behalf of **#BringBackOurGirls Lagos & Ejigbo Families**

Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi

Habiba Balogun

Adwoa Edun

Jonathan Okanlawon

Aisha Oyebode

Mondon Ojon

Ayo Obe

Ngozi Iwere

Babasola Olalere

Yahi Bwata

Deji Kolawole

Yemi Adamolekun

F.T. Adebayo

Yemisi Ransome-Kuti

An Interfaith Prayer for Chibok – Four Years in Captivity

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, God of every human soul, hasten to our prayers; We rejoice in those returned. And we beseech you now for the return of the 6 Dapchi girls and the rescue of the 112 Chibok girls in Nigeria, 4 long years **still** in captivity, **still** enduring horrific cruelty and **still** enslaved by inhumane tormentors.

Four years and we are still grieving...

Merciful God, we beg you to listen to our plea; Hear the cries of weeping mothers, hear our hearts that mourn for our stolen daughters, our sisters who are still left in agony as they await their return.

Four years and we are still lamenting...

God who redeems and restores, the One who returns the lost and brings chained captives out of confinement. Make your presence known. Stay the hand of death that lingers over them daily by their militant enslavers.

Four years and we are waiting...

God of expectation and healing, send them courage... bring healing to the soul, mind and body. We pray their swift and safe return to the families and communities who love and long for them.

Four years and we are still hoping...

God who lifts and restores, we beg of you to keep watch over the girls who have been rescued and/or have escaped the hands of the enemy. Continue to send resources, medical, physical, psychological, financial and humanitarian aid. Send your loving care in abundance as they heal from the deep-rooted trauma they have survived.

Four years and we are still hurting...

God of justice, we pray and cry aloud because of these vicious attacks that claim lives and human dignity. Ignite the will and the work of the righteous, that we may demand justice for those who kidnapped and harmed the bodies and spirits of these girls. Move us to pray with our feet and demand of governments to bring back our girls now!

Written by Rev. Dionne P. Boissiere, MDiv. with adapted excerpts from Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Litany for the Enslaved and Stolen Nigerian Girls and Rabbi Hillel Hayyim Lavery-Yisrael of www.opensiddur.org