

## THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE RETURN OF NIGERIAN SCHOOLGIRLS TO THEIR HOMES

Geneva, Switzerland, May 7, 2014—The International Federation of University Women (IFUW) calls for the immediate release and safe return of the over 200 school girls between 12 and 17 years old abducted from their school hostel in Chibok Borno State in Nigeria and threatened by their captors with being sold into slavery as punishment for seeking an education. IFUW demands that the Nigerian government urgently take steps to ensure that the girls are returned to their families unharmed and can continue their education in a safe environment.

Safe access to secondary education is indispensable to the development of communities and countries. Girls should not be faced with such brutal acts of violence and under no circumstances treated as objects for political or sectarian purposes. Abduction of children is a crime and illegal under international law.

Nigeria ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) without reservations in 1985 and is bound to incorporate its provisions in domestic legislation. It is therefore incumbent on the Nigerian government to fulfil all obligations under international and national law and, by exercising oversight and enforcement, to ensure that such acts of violence may not be repeated.

“It is a real tragedy that these girls are being subjected to such violence. We fully support the families involved,” says Catherine A. Bell, President of IFUW. “Girls must be assured of a safe haven in education, as educating girls beyond primary school is the best way to lead a family, community and society into further development.”

The International Federation of University Women (IFUW) is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and has an international membership. Founded in 1919, IFUW is the leading girls’ and women’s global organisation run by and for women, advocating for women’s rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels.

IFUW is in special consultative status with ECOSOC and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO. Follow IFUW on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter (@IFUWomen)

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