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Outrage Over Kidnapping of Nigerian Girls Not Enough...The World Must Act!

“An injustice to anyone anywhere, is a threat to justice every.”

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

If ever the words concerning justice ring true, it is certainly at this current hour. The kidnapping of nearly 300 girls by the Nigerian terrorists known as the Boko Haram, is a stench in the nostril of all of God's people. Our hearts go out to the mothers, grandmothers, fathers, and friends of these young girls swept up while in school, guilty of nothing more than seeking to get an education. This gross injustice is a terror in the heart of all peace-loving people. There is no excuse, no justification, and no explanation for such behavior. The Boko Haram, whose name roughly translates into “western education is forbidden,” is giving the world a great education in an example of human terror, degradation, and humiliation. Our children should not be used as pawns, tools, or instruments in this manner to accomplish social and political change.

The nation of Nigeria and its political leaders along with those of the world, must live up to the moral imperative which should make children off limits when it comes to this kind of struggle. We are still not clear as to what this group wants, and what it seeks as a remedy for this act of open terror. Regardless of what they want, we must focus on what they have done. It is reported that this same group has been responsible for the deaths earlier this year of 50 teenage boys killed and burned at a government school in the northern part of Nigeria. This too is most unacceptable. It is unfortunate that many in the West have not been made aware of these treacherous activities until recently.

These young girls taken from the town of Chibok, located in the Northeastern part of Nigeria, must be returned to their families. Each day, each hour, each moment, each second is one of terror, fear, and hopelessness by young women who had their whole lives in front of them as they prepared for their future. We call upon our Government, President Barack Obama, as well as the Nigerian Government under President Goodluck Jonathan, to work together along with the international community to resolve this issue. Further, as we are concerned about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the reported injustice there, we must equally be concerned about a terrorist group invasion into Nigeria, snatching the lives of innocent girls and the injustice over there.

As a Pastor, I am aware of the requirement of God as we are called, "to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God." Micah 6:8 Justice calls for the world to act now. How do we act? Let me suggest the following:

- Working directly with the government of Nigeria to resolve these issues
- Putting pressure on the organization of African Unity to deal with this issues
- Demanding that the United Nations prioritize this issue as the terrorists appear to have violated international boundaries by the selling of young girls
- In addition all sororities, fraternities, businesses, corporations, religious institutions, should use every influence they have to weigh in on this tragedy

Mercy compels us to ask even though it may not be forthcoming, from the leader of the Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau, to show mercy to these girls. We would say to him to remember these words from the Qur'an, "you who believe! Show integrity for the sake of Allah, bearing witness with justice. Do not let hatred for a people insight you into not being just. Be just. That is closer to taqwa. Fear [and Respect] Allah. Allah is aware of what you do." (Surat L-Maida 8). You should immediately allow them to return home to their parents, safe, untouched, to continue on with their lives.

Humility demands that we act wisely even though America has a lot of fire power and the ability to destroy any town, any village, any city, anywhere in the world. We have established that reality time and time again. Let us use every diplomat at our disposal, the locals in the area of Nigeria, respected leaders of the Muslim and Christian communities, to engage in a meaningful dialogue to free these children. We must do this. We do it because we are compelled by our moral conviction. We are called upon by our human values and we are directed to do it by our God given mandate which says, "the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has

sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed.” Luke 4:18.

We cannot remain silent in a moment that demands we all speak out. For those who may be unclear about this issue, please remember the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “in the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

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For more information on the Detroit Branch NAACP please call (313) 871-2087 or visit www.detroitnaacp.org.