

The ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
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Your Excellency,

I was appalled to learn of the abduction of 110 schoolgirls from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi, Yobe State on 19 February 2018. I understand that in March, 104 of the girls were released, following the conclusion of an agreement with the Nigerian government that saw armed forces withdraw from the town, temporarily allowing Boko Haram unhindered access.

I am aware that Leah Sharibu, the sole Christian in the group, is still being held prisoner by Boko Haram. Returnees confirmed that five of their fellow abductees were dead and had been buried in the bush. They also revealed that Leah Sharibu had been “held back on religious grounds” due to her refusal to convert to Islam in exchange for her freedom.

May I respectfully remind you of your government’s obligations to uphold the tenets and principles of the Nigerian constitution ensuring that every citizen has a right to “be protected irrespective of his/her gender, culture and religious belief.” I urge you to use your good offices to prioritise Leah’s safe return to her family. In addition, may I also urge you to put into place an effective strategy to protect educational establishments in vulnerable communities and to ensure that every child is free to pursue an education without fear, regardless of which faith they adhere to.

With thanks in anticipation of your support in this matter.

Sincerely,