



“I Will Never Go Back to School”

**The Impact of Attacks on Education
for Nigerian Women and Girls**



Global Coalition to **Protect**
Education from Attack

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October, 2018



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This report is published by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), which was formed in 2010 by organizations working in the fields of education in emergencies and conflict affected contexts, higher education, protection, and international human rights and humanitarian law that were concerned about ongoing attacks on educational institutions, their students, and staff in countries affected by conflict and insecurity. GCPEA is a coalition that includes United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. GCPEA is a project of the Tides Center, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

This report is the result of independent research conducted by GCPEA. It is independent of the individual members of the Coalition and does not necessarily reflect the views of the member organizations.

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Students who were abducted in February 2018 from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria, and spent a month in captivity.

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Hauwa M., a 16-year-old student in 2014 when Boko Haram attacked the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, reported:

“ [After the attack], I went home. I was too afraid and decided not to go back. I told my parents I would never go back to school. They were also too afraid.... Before [the attack], I was so passionate to study and achieve my dream [of being a lawyer]. But now, this experience completely demoralized me.... I told my father that I will never go back because of Boko Haram threats and what I saw that night. I cannot go back to face the same thing again. ”

Summary

The Government of Nigeria has been embroiled since 2009 in an armed conflict with the Islamist insurgency group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram. Boko Haram has committed serious acts of violence. It has killed an estimated 20,000 and displaced over 2.2 million in the wider Lake Chad region.²

Thousands of girls and young women have been abducted, including from their schools. Boko Haram has also abducted boys and men and forced many to become fighters. Many have never returned from captivity. Those who have returned report suffering abuse. Although the security situation has gradually improved since the peak of the conflict in 2013-15, Boko Haram continues to carry out attacks causing serious loss of life, including increasingly by using child and female suicide bombers. The group reportedly caused 967 fatalities in 2017, a six percent increase over the previous year.³

A key component of Boko Haram's ideology is hostility toward secular education, and it has gained notoriety for its repeated attacks on schools and universities, as well as teachers, administrators, and students, wreaking havoc on an already fragile education system. Boko Haram has killed an estimated 2,295 teachers, and over 19,000 teachers have been displaced by the conflict. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that more than 1,400 schools have been destroyed, damaged, or looted primarily in the northeast, and more than 600,000 children have lost access to education.⁴

In addition to attacking education generally, Boko Haram has targeted female students. What is more, the impact of attacks on education on women and girls is often different from that on boys and men. For these reasons, this paper is examining the specific impact on females. Boko Haram gained international notoriety in 2014, when it abducted 276 girls from their school in the town of Chibok. Four years later, more than 100 of the "Chibok girls" remain in captivity. Chibok is, unfortunately, only one such case. GCPEA estimates that approximately 600 women and girls have been abducted from their schools. Some of these women and girls reported that Boko Haram had forced them to convert to Islam and subjected them to forced "marriage,"⁵ and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Others reported being held in prison-like conditions, where they were repeatedly raped. Some ultimately became pregnant as a result of rape. Some victims, especially those who refused to convert to Islam or "marry" a fighter, also reported being forced to work long hours for the wives and families of insurgents and being threatened and beaten when they were too exhausted to continue. Some girls and women were forced to participate in or aid Boko Haram attacks.



It also appears that Boko Haram has used abducted girls as suicide bombers. The United Nations (UN) reported that during 2017, “115 children – 38 boys and 77 girls – had been used as human bombs. That number was six times higher than in 2016.”⁶ Although difficult to verify, those knowledgeable about the Boko Haram insurgency and Nigeria’s counterterrorism efforts believe that many of its child suicide bombers were abducted.⁷

Although the security situation has improved significantly since the peak of the conflict, and the government has repeatedly claimed that it has defeated Boko Haram, the group continues to carry out attacks, including attacks on schools and abductions. As this report was being drafted, Boko Haram abducted 111 girls from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi (Yobe state) on February 19, 2018, an attack reminiscent of the 2014 Chibok abductions. According to eyewitnesses interviewed by GCPEA, five girls were crushed to death during the abduction and transport to Boko Haram’s camp and were buried in a shallow grave along the way. Boko Haram returned all but one of the remaining Dapchi girls about a month later, on March 21, 2018, reportedly after negotiations with the Nigerian government. Girls who survived the abduction reported that one girl – Leah Sharibu – was not returned because she had refused to convert to Islam and Boko Haram was targeting non-Muslim girls.

In addition to the abuses committed against female students and teachers as an immediate result of an attack on schools and/or while held in captivity, the suffering and impact does not end once they are rescued or escape. Instead, girls and young women continue to experience a wide range of harmful repercussions long after the immediate attack. Attacks on education create a ripple effect, setting in motion a range of negative impacts such as loss of education, early marriage, early pregnancy, and stigma associated with sexual violence and children born from rape, all of which can dramatically affect female students’ futures. These harms often exacerbate and are exacerbated by pre-existing forms of gender discrimination and harmful practices that negatively affect girls and women.

Boko Haram’s targeted attacks on schools and the abduction of school girls, has been harmful for female students’ access to education. Many of the female students interviewed by GCPEA reported that they had been forced to suspend their education after their school was attacked or permanently dropped out of school because of the attacks. Poverty has been the single greatest obstacle to education in northeastern Nigeria, and parents’ ability to pay for school expenses has been further impeded by the conflict. In addition to economic factors, many female students interviewed by GCPEA reported that they and/or their parents had been too afraid for them to return to school. Many schools were also closed for significant periods due to insecurity, or because the school had been destroyed or seriously damaged during the attacks.

At the peak of the conflict, Boko Haram also used schools for various military purposes, including to hold and execute captives, and as barracks for insurgents. This further contributed to parents’ and students’ fears about the safety of sending their children, and especially their daughters, back to school after the insurgents had departed.



Nigerian government forces and pro-government militia have also used schools for military purposes. As of May 2017, a UN agency reported that Nigerian government forces were using 17 schools for military purposes.⁸ While the government stated that the presence of security forces near schools was for the protection of the schools and students, the presence of armed forces in or near a school can make it a target of retaliatory attacks, increasing the risks to children and teachers, as well as the likelihood that education will be disrupted. The presence of such forces also increases the risk of sexual violence against female students and teachers.

While this report documents numerous abuses that female students and teachers have suffered during an attack on their schools and/or as a direct consequence of such an attack, there are also numerous risks for teenage girls who are not in school, including early marriage, early pregnancy, and lost opportunities for personal autonomy, employment, and economic independence. While these risks are not limited to girls who have survived attacks on education, girls who attended school prior to an attack are more vulnerable to such risks than they were before the attack.

Many survivors also report suffering mental and physical health problems because of the abuses they have suffered. Some described continuing to endure bleeding and other serious gynecological problems as a result of rape. Many of the students, as well as some of the teachers, described recurring nightmares, anxiety, being easily frightened, an inability to focus, and other signs commonly associated with trauma. Their traumatic experiences often have an impact on their ability to pursue their education and may also impede their ability to move on with their lives in other important ways.

Already before the conflict began, Nigeria had one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world with an estimated 62 percent of girls in northeastern Nigeria being married before their 18th birthday and 23.5 percent before their 15th birthday.⁹ Although there is little concrete data on changes in the prevalence of early marriage due to the conflict, representatives of both national and international NGOs, as well as academics, interviewed by GCPEA believe that there is a clear trend of increased early marriage. As noted above, the tendency to marry girls at an early age is further exacerbated by attacks on schools that may result in parents taking their daughters out of school or girls themselves refusing to continue with their education due to safety concerns. GCPEA's interviews with young women and teachers underscored that being out of school, even for relatively short periods, increases the risk of early marriage for girls. Once married, girls often find it difficult to continue with their education, including due to household responsibilities or opposition from their husbands. Early pregnancy is a further impediment to continuing to attend school, as well as increasing the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), exposure to HIV, and a host of pregnancy-related complications.

As noted above, while attacks on education and military use of education institutions have had a devastating effect on all students and teachers in northeastern Nigeria, girls and women have often experienced different kinds of abuse, and the abuses committed against them may have different long-term consequences. This case study focuses on abuses most typically committed against female students in the context of attacks on education in Nigeria. This research is part



of a multi-country study on the impact of attacks on education on women and girls¹⁰ The focus is not intended to suggest that girls and women suffer more than boys and men when schools are attacked. This research is intended to contribute to a better understanding of the long-term implications for girls and women and ultimately to inform better strategies for protecting girls and women, preventing abuse, and mitigating harm.

In a context such as Nigeria, in which a significant focus of the conflict is targeted at schools and the formal (government) education system, there is often little difference in Boko Haram's apparent motivation for abducting girls from a school campus and the abduction of school-age girls from their village. Regardless of where the abduction takes place, girls and young women are often asked whether they go to school, are identified or singled out because of their school uniform and/or school age and are lectured on the evils of western education. What is more, the impact on girls and young women of such abductions is often similar, because as one girl stated, "They made it clear to all us girls that we should stay at home and get married or face the wrath of Boko Haram."¹¹

This report prioritizes cases of female students who experienced violations in the context of an attack on a school structure, or on the way to or from school. However, some interviews are included with victims of attacks that took place outside the context of a school campus if there appeared to be a link to the victim's status as a student.

The Nigerian government endorsed the Safe School Declaration in May 2015. The Nigerian government with the support of international donors and humanitarian organizations, as well as national and international NGOs, has also developed a number of initiatives and measures to rebuild schools and provide improved security for schools. It is unclear, however, how many schools have benefited from these measures to date. The Dapchi abduction is a grave reminder that girls and women remain vulnerable to attack in Nigerian schools. It also underscores that Nigerian security forces continue to struggle to provide adequate protection for schools in the northeast and to prevent the abduction of female students.

Legal Obligations

The abuses by Boko Haram documented in this report violate a number of rights enshrined in international law. (See also Nigeria's Obligations Under International Law, Annex, which includes citations.) The rights to life, security of person and bodily integrity, and the prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment are guaranteed by numerous international human rights treaties. Sexual violence, which may include rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage and pregnancy, is recognized as a violation of these fundamental rights.

Nigeria is a state party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, which set out the main obligations of international humanitarian law. International humanitarian law prohibits intentionally attacking or harming civilians or others who are not taking part in hostilities. It applies to non-state armed groups such as Boko Haram, as well as to Nigerian security forces, and is applicable during internal armed conflicts, such as the conflict in northeast Nigeria. Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 requires that all civilians



and persons *hors de combat* be protected from torture and cruel, inhuman, humiliating or degrading treatment¹². It also specifically requires that all civilians and persons *hors de combat* be protected from rape or other forms of sexual violence.

Pursuant to international humanitarian law, individuals who commit, order or are otherwise implicated in rape and other forms of sexual violence may be responsible for war crimes. Such crimes carried out as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population are responsible for crimes against humanity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (the Rome Statute), to which Nigeria is a party¹³, includes rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and other forms of sexual violence within its mandate. War crimes and crimes against humanity can be prosecuted in domestic courts or by the ICC.

Nigeria has ratified the core international human rights treaties that set out relevant standards for the protection of persons on its territory, including specific provisions related to the rights of women and girls. Pursuant to these instruments, the Nigerian government has an obligation to adopt effective measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish serious human rights abuses. This obligation extends to protecting women and girls from abduction, sexual and gender-based violence, torture and other ill-treatment. The Nigerian government has a duty to investigate and prosecute serious human rights abuses, whether committed by an agent of the state or a non-state armed group, such as Boko Haram.

International law defines a child as anyone under 18 years of age. Early or child marriage violates a number of human rights principles, and numerous international human rights bodies have recommended that states raise the minimum age for marriage to 18 years for both men and women. They have also made clear that child marriage is a form of gender-based violence; because child marriage disproportionately affects girls, it also violates human rights instruments that guarantee non-discrimination. Nigeria's Child Rights Act of 2003 sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years. However, the law must be adopted by each state's parliament to have legal effect. Currently, the law has not been adopted by any of the three states most affected by the conflict. The Nigerian government launched The National Strategic Plan to End Child Marriage in Nigeria 2016-2021 in November 2016, which seeks to end child marriage in Nigeria by 2030.

The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is enshrined in various international treaties. Violence against women, including sexual violence, has been recognized as violating the right to health. Numerous international bodies have noted that early marriage can have serious negative consequences for girls' health, including early and frequent pregnancies, high maternal mortality rates, a heightened risk of sexually transmitted infections, and a higher rate of pregnancy-related complications, including obstetric fistula. The Nigerian government has an obligation to ensure that those who have ongoing health problems because of such violence have access to care and support necessary for them to fully enjoy this right.

Education is a basic right enshrined in numerous international treaties ratified by Nigeria. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, for example, has called on State Parties to the Charter to take the measures necessary to ensure the achievement of the right to education, including by providing special measures to ensure equal access to education for girls. Attacks on



education, as well as the use of schools for military purposes, can violate the right to an education. The Government of Nigeria has a responsibility to protect schools and ensure that they are safe for students and teachers. It must also take all possible measures to mitigate the harm caused by attacks on schools, including the harm caused by abductions of female students and teachers, forced marriage, rape, and other sexual violence committed by Boko Haram insurgents.

Priority Recommendations

To the Nigerian Authorities

The Government of Nigeria has a responsibility to protect schools and ensure that they are safe for students and teachers. The following recommendations draw on GCPEA's previous recommendations regarding the protection of education, while adding recommendations specific to the current context in Nigeria.¹⁴ (See also Expanded Recommendations section below) GCPEA calls on the government of Nigeria and other stakeholders to take the following steps as a matter of urgency:

- **Policy development and dissemination.** GCPEA calls on the government, as well as military and police forces, to develop targeted and sustained measures to prevent abductions and sexual violence against female students and teachers, including by giving a standing order to security forces to respond immediately to calls for help and protection when an attack is imminent or underway at a school;
- **Risk analysis for each school in sensitive areas.** GCPEA calls on the government to conduct a thorough risk analysis for each school that is currently open to students, prioritizing schools located in remote areas with female students. It should develop clear and transparent criteria for determining when schools should be closed due to insecurity and when it is appropriate to reopen. It should consult students, teachers, school administrators, and local communities in the risk assessment as well as in developing protection measures;
- **Minimizing disruption of education.** GCPEA calls on the government to take all appropriate measures to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible to students' education, including by considering whether students can be safely relocated to schools in more secure areas when their schools must be closed due to insecurity and/or by ensuring that they have alternative means of accessing education; and
- **Independent review of security gaps.** GCPEA also calls on the government, with the support of international donors, to review the security gaps that led to past attacks on schools, including by conducting transparent and independent investigations into large-scale abductions such as in Damasak and Dapchi. The government should publicize the findings of these investigations, as well as those of the investigative committee on the 2014 Chibok abductions, and make public the steps it is taking to address any security gaps identified in the investigations and its strategies to improve protection measures and prevent such abductions.

To Boko Haram

GCPEA also makes recommendations to Boko Haram leaders regarding the gross and serious violations perpetrated by its combatants:

- **Cease attacks.** As a matter of utmost urgency, GCPEA calls on the leadership of Boko Haram to cease all attacks on education, including attacks on schools, students, and teachers;
- **Halt abductions and release those in captivity.** The leadership of Boko Haram should immediately halt the abduction of female students and teachers and release all who are still in captivity;
- **Prevent sexual and gender-based violence.** Boko Haram commanders should take all steps necessary to prevent SGBV by its combatants, including by halting all forced marriages and forced conversions of women and girls, in accordance with international standards; and
- **Comply with international law.** The Boko Haram leadership should take all measures necessary to ensure that its combatants strictly comply with international humanitarian law and the principles of international human rights law.

To the International Community

The United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union, and a number of governments, as well as numerous international humanitarian actors, are already actively engaged in providing support and programming to respond to many of the issues raised in this report. However, the needs of victims of the conflict in northeastern Nigeria, and especially the multiple needs of women and girl survivors of attacks on education, far exceed current resources. GCPEA therefore calls on the international community to privately and publicly urge the Government of Nigeria and its relevant ministries to adopt the recommendations included in this report and to take the following priority steps:

- **Advocate for comprehensive and sustained measures to protect education from attack.** International actors should intensify advocacy with the Nigerian government to prioritize security of schools, including the urgent assessment of security risks for each school that is currently open to students, prioritizing schools located in remote areas with female students, and other measures recommended in this report;
- **Provide financial support for enhanced protection measures.** International donors should expand funding for enhanced security measures for at-risk schools, including physical barriers, emergency communications systems, systematic early warning systems, the development of comprehensive school-based safety and security plans, and programs to provide security training for educators, among other measures recommended in this report;



- **Advocate for independent investigation of past attacks.** The international community should strongly urge the government to conduct transparent and independent investigations into large-scale abductions such as in Damasak and Dapchi in order to identify security gaps that may have contributed to the attacks, to publicize the findings of these investigations, as well as those of the investigative committee on the 2014 Chibok abductions, and to incorporate lessons learned into future protection measures and strategies to prevent such abductions; and
- **Support efforts to minimize disruption of learning.** International donors should expand their support for efforts to minimize conflict-related disruptions to education by targeting additional funding for the development and provision of alternative means of accessing education, including non-formal and accelerated learning opportunities and alternative delivery of education, in the absence of formal ones, as well as the establishment of more safe spaces for girls that provide such non-formal and accelerated learning. International actors should continue to encourage and support efforts to mainstream students from these non-formal programs into formal schools as soon as possible.



A teacher stands in a classroom at Yaskule girls primary school in Michika village, northeast Nigeria June 12, 2017.

© REUTERS/Akintunde Akinleye

Methodology

This case study is based on over 175 interviews, including with 119 victims and/or eyewitnesses of attacks on schools. The female students who were interviewed for this report ranged in age from 12 to 31, with the majority between the ages of 15 and 24.



The victims and witnesses were identified with the assistance of Nigerian civil society workers, who were asked to facilitate contact with any female student or teacher they knew of who had been affected by an attack on a school. GCPEA conducted 30 interviews with parents of female students, Nigerian human rights defenders, women's rights activists, and representatives of other nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions. GCPEA also spoke with representatives of international humanitarian organizations based in Nigeria, international donor organizations, federal and state government officials, and other experts. GCPEA prioritized cases of female students and teachers who experienced violations in the context of an attack on a school structure, or on the way to or from school. However, some interviews were also conducted with victims of attacks that took place outside the context of a school campus if there appeared to be a link to the victim's status as a student. The types of impact discussed in this report are those specifically identified by the interviewees.

Interviews were carried out during three research missions in Nigeria—in October 2017, and in February and March 2018. Most interviews were conducted in person in Maiduguri (Borno state), Damaturu and Dapchi (Yobe state), and Mubi and Yola (Adamawa state), as well as in the capital, Abuja.¹⁵ A few interviews, as well as follow-up clarification, were conducted by phone, Skype, and email. The researchers selected research sites with a goal of getting a sample of experiences from a range of areas in the northeast and based on where it was possible to access the target population, taking into consideration that many of the interviewees are internally displaced and that security challenges prevented the researchers from traveling throughout the northeast. Interviewees came from the following Local Government Areas (LGAs)— Abadam, Askira, Bade, Baga, Bama, Biu, Buni-Yadi, Bursari, Chibok, Damasak, Damaturu, Damboa, Fune, Garin-Maje, Gombe, Gujba, Gulumba, Gwoza, Jere, Konduga, Kukawa, Maffa, Marte, Mobarr, Monguno, Mubi, MMC, Ngala, Potiskum, Tarmuwa, and Usara. Most interviews with victims and their families were conducted in Hausa or another local language, with the help of an interpreter.

In conducting this research, GCPEA followed relevant ethical principles, such as those set out in UNICEF's Ethical Guidelines for research involving children,¹⁶ and a number of guidelines for interviewing survivors of trauma and sexual violence. In all cases the research was guided by the principle of doing no harm, as well as principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy. The researchers informed each interviewee about the nature and purpose of the research and how the information would be used. The researchers explained the voluntary nature of the interview and told interviewees that they could refuse to be interviewed, refuse to answer any question, and terminate the interview at any point. GCPEA obtained explicit consent for each interview. When the interviewee was a minor, GCPEA obtained consent from a parent or guardian, as well as from the child. The names of all survivors and witnesses have been changed to pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The names of other interviewees have sometimes been withheld at their request. Interviewees did not receive any compensation. However, in an effort to ensure that interviews were conducted in a private, safe space, GCPEA paid to transport some interviewees to safe interview sites.

Map of Northeast Nigeria



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Sandals are strewn in the yard of the Government Girls Science and Technical College staff quarters in Dapchi, Nigeria, on February 22, 2018, after Boko Haram abducted 111 schoolgirls.

© AFP PHOTO / AMINU ABUBAKAR



Background and Context of the Conflict in the Northeast

Overview of the conflict

Since 2009, Nigeria has been embroiled in an internal armed conflict with the Islamist insurgency group formally known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS).¹⁷ Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic cleric based in Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria, founded JAS in 2002. JAS is popularly referred to as Boko Haram, a Hausa phrase that has been loosely interpreted as "Western education is forbidden."¹⁸ Yusuf called for a purer form of Islam and sought to establish an Islamic state in northern Nigeria based on his interpretations of Islam. After Yusuf died in police custody in July 2009, Abubakar Shekau, who had been Yusuf's deputy, took over the leadership of Boko Haram. Historians and political scientists view the murder of Yusuf and



Shekau's assumption of authority as the beginning of the conflict.¹⁹ Since that time, Boko Haram has repeatedly carried out serious acts of violence against civilians.²⁰ Approximately 20,000 have been killed, and an estimated 2.2 million displaced.²¹ The scale of the group's violence against civilians is believed to be "among the highest of any armed group in Africa."²²

Boko Haram targets those who are unbelievers, which it interprets as anyone who does not agree with its religious views and ideology. Amnesty International described the targets of Boko Haram attacks:

Some specific individuals or categories of civilians were deliberately targeted. Boko Haram fighters killed politicians, civil servants, teachers, health workers and traditional leaders because of their relationship with secular authority. Boko Haram called them "unbelievers." Christians living in the north-east were included in this category, but so were Islamic religious figures, from the leaders of sects to local Imams, if they publicly opposed Boko Haram or failed to follow the group's teachings. At times, Boko Haram gave such individuals the option of converting, whether Christian or Muslim, instead of being killed.²³

The violence against civilians escalated in 2011 and 2012, leading the federal government to declare a state of emergency in the three most affected states of the northeast²⁴ – Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states – in May 2013. However, the state of emergency did little to curb Boko Haram's attacks against civilians and may have actually contributed to an escalation in violence.

At the peak of the conflict, in 2013 to early 2015, Boko Haram controlled territory across most of Borno, northern Adamawa and into eastern Yobe states estimated to be "equivalent to the size of Belgium."²⁵ The UN Secretary General reported that:

In late 2014 and early 2015, Boko Haram controlled large swathes of territory, including 12 of 27 local government areas in Borno, 5 of 21 in Adamawa and 2 of 17 in Yobe. By February 2015, an estimated 800,000 children were internally displaced and at least 192,000 persons (52 per cent of whom were children) had sought refuge in neighboring countries.²⁶

Since its founding, Boko Haram has opposed secular, or government, education, which it considers to be inconsistent with the values and beliefs of Islam. Over time, and especially after Yusuf's death, the group became increasingly violent in pursuing its goal to bring an end to secular education in northern Nigeria, and to punish anyone associated with such education. The group gained notoriety for its repeated attacks on teachers, school administrators, school structures, and ultimately students, as well as the abduction of female students. The most notorious of these attacks was the abduction of 276 secondary school girls from their dormitories in Chibok (Borno state) on April 14, 2014. That attack and the ensuing national and international outcry, including the establishment of the Bring Back Our Girls campaign (BBOG),²⁷ heightened awareness about Boko Haram's targeting of schools and abduction of female students and underscored the Nigerian government's failure to protect the civilian population from the group's atrocities. The outrage that ensued is believed by some to have contributed to the electoral defeat of incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015.²⁸



Nigeria elected President Muhammadu Buhari, a retired major general in the Nigerian Army, in May 2015. Buhari announced that the defeat of Boko Haram and the return of all the Chibok girls would be a priority for his administration. Under Buhari's government, and with the support of regional security forces from neighboring Chad, Niger, and Cameroon – the Multinational Joint Task Force – the Nigerian military gradually reclaimed territory that had been controlled by Boko Haram. By late 2015, the Nigerian security forces reported that only two local government areas (LGAs) – Abadam and Mobar in Borno state – remained under Boko Haram's control and these were reportedly "liberated" during 2016.²⁹

Nigerian government and security forces have repeatedly claimed that Boko Haram has been defeated. In December 2015, the federal government announced that it had "technically defeated" Boko Haram.³⁰ Then again in February 2018, Major General Roger Nicholas, theater commander for the northeast, declared that Boko Haram was "completely" defeated.³¹

Despite these reported military successes, the security situation in the northeast remains volatile. While Boko Haram has been pushed out of most towns that were previously under its control, the surrounding areas often remain too insecure to allow movement outside the town centers or to justify return of the civilian population.

The Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria (EIEWGN)³² conducted a Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA) in the fall of 2017, which stated that:

Security remains a challenge, with the increasing number of suicide bombings, attacks on villages, IDP settlements and soft targets and other asymmetric attacks. This prevents returns and access to livelihood opportunities thus increasing dependency on humanitarian aid. In October 2017 alone, more than 50 people were killed, dozens more injured and properties destroyed in ambushes, suicide attacks or raids on villages. At least two local government areas (LGAs) remain inaccessible and several roads closed or requiring military escort, making humanitarian intervention more difficult.³³

As of early 2018, many roads were still not passable without military escort. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated in February 2018 that "some 926,000 persons remain in areas that are hard to reach for international humanitarian organizations."³⁴

As this report was being written, Boko Haram abducted 111 girls (and two additional children who were visiting in the staff quarters) from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi, Yobe state, on the evening of February 19, 2018. Five of the girls were reportedly crushed to death during the abduction and transport. One girl remains in captivity for reportedly refusing to convert to Islam. The other 107 children were returned on March 21. This most recent abduction, the third largest since the conflict began, underscores the ongoing insecurity and risks to students and teachers, and raises questions once again about the role and reliability of the Nigerian government and security forces when it comes to the protection of civilians.

Impact of the conflict on education

The education system in northeastern Nigeria was already fragile before the conflict with Boko Haram began, with significant numbers of children never attending school and large numbers dropping out without completion of secondary school.³⁵ Given the high rates of poverty, many parents could not afford to send their children to school because of the costs of education, including school fees, uniforms, and textbooks. Some parents were resistant to sending their children to formal schools long before the emergence of Boko Haram. (See discussion below).

Prior to the conflict, there were significant regional disparities in educational attainment, with children from the north much less likely to attend school. There were also significant gender disparities in educational attainment, and disparities between urban and rural areas. Data from 2011 indicates that “about 34 percent of primary-age rural girls did not attend school in the rural North, compared with 25 percent of boys.”³⁶ Girls were less likely to attend school at all, and more likely to drop out before completion of secondary school.³⁷ Even those who did attend school in the northeast often had very poor outcomes, and many teachers were woefully unqualified.³⁸

Given this background, it comes as no surprise that nine years of conflict have had dire consequences for education in northeastern Nigeria, especially because Boko Haram has specifically targeted formal education, destroying schools, killing students and teachers, and abducting female students. The Buhari Plan for Rebuilding the North East 2016³⁹ reported that:

The Boko Haram crisis has extensively expanded the severity of all challenges against formal education in the region. Schools have been the primary, constant targets of the Boko Haram violence, resulting in the complete destruction and abandonment of many formal education facilities and systems, the mass out-migration of qualified teachers... increased population density in many urban areas due to displacement and the consequent decrease in access to education.”⁴⁰

Due to the deteriorating security situation, all schools in Borno state (considered the epicenter of the conflict) were closed from December 2013 to June 2015, and some schools in the state were also closed for shorter periods after specific attacks. Schools in Yobe and Adamawa states have also been closed for shorter periods on an ad hoc basis. However, even after the schools were officially allowed to reopen, most were not able to do so primarily because of ongoing insecurity, and in some cases due to damage or destruction of school infrastructure, and/or use of school buildings as shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs) or, in some circumstances, for military purposes. As of September 2017, UNICEF reported that the conflict had destroyed or damaged an estimated 1,400 schools, and that 57 percent of all schools in the northeast remained closed due to insecurity, damage or both.⁴¹ Similarly, according to the Joint Educational Needs Assessment, as of November 2017, “[l]arge areas of Borno state as well as Northern parts of Adamawa and Southern parts of Yobe state remain inaccessible to humanitarian organisations. Local education authorities report no schools are functional in these areas.”⁴² As a result of these closures, many students could not attend school for significant amounts of time; a small percentage were able to attend private schools that remained open in Maiduguri during the peak of the conflict, a few were able to attend classes in IDP camps, and some children continued to



attend Islamic schools. More recently, as the security situation has improved, and government and international actors have expanded education opportunities, including in IDP camps, some students have been able to return to school and others have had the opportunity to access education for the first time. However, over 600,000 children have lost access to education in Borno state alone as a result of the conflict and post-conflict impact,⁴³ and “[a]n estimated 3 million children are in need of emergency education support.”⁴⁴

The conflict has had grave consequences for teachers in the region. According to UNICEF, 2,295 teachers were killed by Boko Haram between 2009 and 2017.⁴⁵ Furthermore, over 19,000 teachers are estimated to have fled the region due to security concerns.⁴⁶ As a result, many children have no access to education whatsoever, or can only be accommodated in classes with an overwhelming number of children per teacher. According to the Joint Education Needs Assessment, “17 percent of primary schools in Borno state and 20 percent of primary schools in Yobe state have a student teacher ratio of over 1:80, with ratios of over 1:160” more common in high risk areas.⁴⁷ The conflict has therefore exacerbated the already dismal situation for out-of-school children in the northeast.

The conflict has also had a negative impact on access to education, including for girls. High levels of poverty have long been an obstacle to education in northeastern Nigeria, and the conflict has further exacerbated economic obstacles to education in the northeast. Poverty continues to be the greatest obstacle to education in the region for both boys and girls. It also has specific gender dimensions. The Joint Education Needs Assessment reported that:

For girls, financial reasons are clearly the biggest barrier and especially significant for senior secondary schools. In addition, the higher the security level, the more finance is a barrier. The second and third reasons are also related to economic reasons with girls being required to earn money (work) and their labour required during planting or harvest season.⁴⁸

What is more, when parents are unable to afford the cost of education, families with few resources often prioritize education for sons over daughters.

While the impact of the conflict on school-aged children is overwhelmingly negative, observers have pointed to some positive effects, including both an increase in demand for and access to formal education. For example, most IDPs have fled from rural areas to more urban areas. In a country such as Nigeria, where a significant percentage of the rural population has had little or no access to education, one of the potential consequences of displacement to urban areas is exposure to formal education. UNICEF reported that “some children living in camps for the displaced in Borno State... are actually benefiting from education for the first time in their lives. In the Muna Garage camp on the outskirts of Maiduguri, for example, an estimated 90 percent of students were enrolled in school for the first time.”⁴⁹

Some education experts have pointed to an increase in enrollment rates for girls in urban and peri-urban areas, resulting in girl and boy students being more or less evenly enrolled in primary (grades 1-6) and junior secondary schools (grades 7-9).⁵⁰ This reflects clear progress over



pre-conflict levels and indicates shifting attitudes, especially among IDPs from rural areas, regarding the importance of education. This is especially true for school-age IDP children, who see children from the host community attending school and increasingly want to be allowed to join them. However, education personnel working in the northeast noted that even when enrollment rates for boys and girls are relatively equal, there are gender differences in attendance and retention, with girls apparently attending school less often and less consistently, and dropping out at higher rates, especially as they get older. The Joint Education Needs Assessment concluded that:

Enrolment by gender is roughly even across primary schools and [junior secondary schools] Basic Education. However, at [senior secondary school] level (grades 10-12) boys significantly outnumber girls....⁵¹



In addition to economic factors, the conflict has negatively affected girls' access to education in other important ways. Boko Haram's targeted attacks on schools and the abduction of school girls have been especially harmful for female students' access to education. Many of the female students interviewed by GCPEA reported that they had been forced to suspend their education after their school was attacked or permanently dropped out of school because of the attacks. Some reported that they and/or their parents had been too afraid for them to return to school. They also reported that many of their schools were closed for significant periods due to insecurity, or because the school had been destroyed or seriously damaged during the attacks. As will be discussed in more detail below, there are numerous risks for teenage girls who are not in school. Although concrete data is unavailable, representatives from national NGOs and INGOs reported a clear trend of early marriage linked to conflict-related insecurity.



Students who were abducted in February 2018 from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria, and spent a month in captivity.

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Boko Haram's Attacks on Education – Violations Committed Against Female Students and Teachers

One of Boko Haram's core tenets is hostility toward Western education,⁵² which it views as inconsistent with Islamic principles and a thinly veiled attempt by Nigeria's majority-Christian south to force the majority-Muslim North to abandon its religion and culture.⁵³

Many of the women and girls interviewed by GCPEA described how insurgents had lectured them on the evils of being in school, instead of getting married and remaining at home. It should be noted, however, that Boko Haram is motivated by a general hostility toward western education—for boys and girls—not just toward girls’ education.⁵⁴

GCPEA interviewed female students and teachers who described a wide range of abuses they experienced when their schools were attacked. Some described their growing fear and anxiety as their schools were increasingly the targets of Boko Haram violence. Many described the terror they experienced trying to flee the insurgents when the attack happened, and although not the focus of this report, many women and girls also described the execution of parents, siblings, friends and neighbors, which formed a significant part of their traumatic experiences. Some female students and teachers told GCPEA how they were abducted, forced to convert to Islam, and subjected to forced “marriage,” typically as a pretext for rape. Other victims reported being locked in large houses or in makeshift areas in the bush for long periods of time, where they were repeatedly raped and subjected to other violence and abuse. Some became pregnant as a result of rape. Some victims, especially those who refused to convert or resisted demands that they “marry,” reported being subjected to forced labor, as well as physical and psychological ill-treatment. Although not reported among those interviewed by GCPEA, other NGOs have also documented cases of girls and women being forced to participate in/or aid Boko Haram attacks, including by serving as a look-out, luring pro-government fighters into an ambush, and in some cases as suicide bombers.⁵⁵

Boko Haram Warnings About Education

In the first years of the insurgency, Boko Haram often gathered female students and lectured them that they should go home and get married but typically let them go with a stern warning not to continue with their schooling.⁵⁶ For example, Hauwa M., who was 16 years old when Boko Haram attacked the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi in February 2014, described:

The fighters gathered all the girls outside in front of the [girls’] dormitory. They asked us, “Are you together in the same class with men?” We told them that we are in the same classes but sit in different sections. And that there are different hostels (dormitories). But they called us harlots and said that the Amir (the local ruler) was asking why we go to school with men.⁵⁷

Rafiya I., a 17-year-old student at the Government Girls’ Senior Secondary School-Konduga in 2014, recounted:

They gathered us in a garbage disposal area and started preaching to us. One of them said, “Your parents sent you to this school. You see that what they ask you to do is wrong. You know that studying Biology, Physics, Geography is cursing God.” ... Another insurgent said, “We will rape you and then shoot you in the legs.” But another fighter, who was older, said “This is the first time we are coming, so let’s warn them. If we see that they go to a secular school again, then we will rape and shoot them.” There was a bit of an argument among the fighters, but ultimately, they asked if we promised to go home and get married. We all promised.⁵⁸



All of the school girls from Dapchi who were abducted by Boko Haram in February 2018 and returned a month later (see details below) reported that Boko Haram warned them never to go back to school. Kaltume M., a 15-year-old student, described the threat from her captors:

They wrote down all our names and took our pictures with a strict warning that if we even think about secular schools, they would harm us.... Boko Haram told us that if they come and see us in school, they will kidnap us again and keep us permanently in their custody.⁵⁹

Similarly, Fadimatu L., another 15-year-old student from Dapchi, reported that before she was released a Boko Haram fighter had warned her that:

"We will be returning you back to your homes, but if any of you decide to go back to school and get caught, you will be severely punished. We will make sure we monitor your movements since we have taken all of your names."⁶⁰

Threats or Warnings Regarding Clothing

Insurgents targeted both male and female students for wearing school uniforms, but female students were also targeted for wearing pants and/or for not wearing clothing that concealed their bodies in ways Boko Haram insurgents demand under their interpretation of Islam.

Labraba J., who was 22 years old at the time, described what happened when Boko Haram attacked the College of Business and Management Studies in Konduga on March 11, 2014:

Boko Haram was shooting... then they started using petrol to set the student dormitories on fire. There was a lot of crying and screaming.... I was wearing trousers and another girl was also wearing pants. One of the [insurgents] said, "Are you a man? You have to go." Two of the fighters started chasing me around with a gun like they were going to shoot. I ran into one of the buildings to hide. I went in before I realized that they had already set fire there, so I had to run back out. Suddenly, I felt terrible pain in my stomach and on my skin. I had serious burns all over my body from having run into the burning dormitory.⁶¹

Labraba J. had to spend over two months in the hospital and continued to need treatment long after she ran out of money to pay for hospitalization. She has visible scars from the burns she sustained. Many of Labraba's classmates were injured during the attack. According to those interviewed by GCPEA, three students died because of injuries sustained by fires set by Boko Haram during the attack.⁶²

Human Rights Watch also reported in mid-2016 that girls in northeastern Nigeria were "harassed to stop school and to wear long hijab veils."⁶³

Abductions of Female Students and Teachers from Schools

Boko Haram’s abductions of civilians have been a prominent feature of the conflict. The insurgent group has abducted and forcibly recruited men and boys to join the group as fighters or to provide needed skills and expertise. As noted above, in the earliest years of the insurgency, Boko Haram did not broadly target women and girls based on their gender. However, beginning in mid-2013, Boko Haram’s targeting of women and girls escalated with a growing number of women and girls abducted.⁶⁴

The exact number of women and girls abducted by the group is impossible to know; estimates range from 2,000 to well over 8,000. The government does not appear to be making concerted efforts to identify who has been abducted and is still missing. In April 2015, Amnesty International stated: “It is difficult to estimate how many people have been abducted by Boko Haram. The number of women and girls is likely to be higher than 2,000.”⁶⁵ In 2016 the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that as many as 7,000 women and girls had been abducted.⁶⁶ GCPEA estimates that approximately 600 of these girls and women were abducted during attacks on schools.⁶⁷ The most infamous of these was Boko Haram’s attack on the Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok, during which 276 girls were abducted from their school dormitories. Although the abductions in Chibok have garnered most of the media attention, both international and national, Chibok was not the first or last abduction of female students. There are also numerous smaller-scale abductions, and many may have gone unreported. GCPEA interviewed students who were abducted and/or eyewitnesses from three of the largest abductions of schoolgirls – Chibok, Damasak,⁶⁸ and Dapchi. The following section provides a brief account of those abductions from the perspective of the female students and/or eyewitnesses.

Government Secondary School – Chibok (April 14, 2014)

On the night of April 14, 2014, Boko Haram insurgents attacked the town of Chibok, Borno state around 11:30 p.m. Then, around midnight, insurgents stormed the Government Secondary School, which is approximately a 15-minute walk from the town. Boko Haram insurgents, dressed as police and soldiers, entered the school grounds. Amina F., one of the students at the school, described what happened that night:

Boko Haram fighters arrived on motorcycles around 11:30 or 12. They told us they were the police and had come to protect us from the fighting going on in town. At first, we believed them, but soon we realized they were not there to protect us. We started hearing them shouting “Allahu Akbar [God is Greatest]” and then we knew they were Boko Haram.

The insurgents rounded up all the girls in the school, looted the school’s food supplies, and burned classrooms and dormitories. Amina continued:

Then they told all of us to line up and start walking to the gate. They told us to pick a veil and cover our heads.... Some were forced to get in the truck, but the rest of us were told to start walking. We walked to a village called Ping. That is where there were bigger vehicles waiting for us. The fighters loaded all the food stuff on five vehicles and then the girls were loaded into the vehicles too....



I think we drove for about one-and-a-half hours, but at some point, girls started jumping out of the vehicle. I told my friend [name withheld] that we should jump too, but she said she was too afraid. Finally, I pushed her out and then jumped myself.⁶⁹



Similarly, Patience K. told GCPEA:

Two fighters came in and said “Don’t panic. We are police. We are going to take care of you.” Then they told us to go outside. But when we heard “Allahu Akbar,” we knew they were Boko Haram and were very afraid. Girls were crying and screaming. One of the insurgents (who had an amputated leg) said, “If you don’t keep quiet, I am going to shoot you.”...

They told us that if we want to die, we should stay, but if we want to live, we should get into the big truck.... We had been driving for about an hour. One of the girls had already jumped out. We started talking among ourselves about the fact that no one would know what happened to us. Then we started to jump. Unfortunately, when I jumped, I was knocked unconscious. Another friend who had also jumped dragged me into the bush to hide me from other trucks that were coming behind the one we were in.⁷⁰



The Government Senior Secondary School in Chibok had been closed since March 2014 due to insecurity in the region but had been reopened temporarily so that students could take their final examination - the West African Examination Council (WAEC) exam. As a result, students had returned to their dormitories to begin preparation for their exams shortly before the attack. It is not clear what factors the government considered in making the determination that it was appropriate to reopen the school at that time.⁷¹

On the night of the attack, students reported that there were no adults at the school, except for one elderly guard who was stationed at the gate. He fled as soon as he saw the Boko Haram fighters. Human Rights Watch reported that: “According to the teenage students, the lack of security made it easy for the fighters to overrun the compound, seize the young women and girls from their dormitory, and organize their transport.”⁷²

The insurgents abducted 276 girls ranging in age from 16-17 years old. The Chibok abductions drew international attention and outrage, resulting in the Bring Back Our Girls Campaign, and national and international condemnation of Boko Haram’s tactics. Fifty-seven girls escaped in the immediate aftermath of the attack, while others were rescued through military intervention or released following negotiations. As of January 2018, 112 of the Chibok schoolgirls were still missing.

Zanna Mobarti Primary School—Damasak (November 24, 2014)

In the single largest school abduction (including boys and girls, as well as some male and female teachers) in Nigeria, Boko Haram fighters attacked the town of Damasak (Borno state) on November 24, 2014. Victims of the attack and eye witnesses described how Boko Haram fighters entered the town and quickly occupied the Zanna Mobarti Primary School. Insurgents locked the gates of the school, trapping over 300 students inside, as well as teachers. Gradually, Boko Haram captured children from other schools and women and children from the town and brought many of them to the Mobarti school where they were held captive for over three months.

Sadiya S., a teacher who was held in the school for over three months and held in captivity for over three years, told GCPEA:

I was teaching in the school when Boko Haram came into town ... and started targeting all the primary school students with uniforms, as well as the teachers. My brother was at home the day that the attack started, but he tried to come to the school to check on me. They caught him very close to the school, tied him up, and shot him... On a typical day, there were over 500 children in the school. In my own section, which was 7-10-year-old students, there were three classes each with approximately 50 children, so about 150 in total. I don't know how many children were in the school the day of the attack. Some children fled, but many were captured....

They separated the teachers from the children and asked us what we had been teaching them. They said, "We told you not to teach in secular schools. They threatened to shoot us. It was terrible.... Those are days I will never forget. They were so terrible and traumatic.... At some point, they brought us food and told us to feed the children. When the food ran out, they brought beans. Many children died from eating those beans. I know of at least 10 who died from the beans."⁷³

The teachers and students were held in the school until mid-March 2015, when Boko Haram learned that a multinational force from Nigeria, Chad and Niger was advancing on Damasak. Boko Haram then fled the area, abducting as many as 500 women and children, who had been held in the school. Some men were also abducted. Most have never been heard from since.⁷⁴

Government Girls Science and Technical College – Dapchi (February 19, 2018)

On February 19, 2018, Boko Haram abducted 111 school girls (and two children who were visiting the staff quarters) from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in the town of (Yobe state), in an attack and government response that was similar to that in Chibok four years earlier.⁷⁵ An eyewitness interviewed by GCPEA reported hearing gun shots around 5 p.m. and then seeing 13 Boko Haram vehicles loaded with insurgents. Witnesses reported that the insurgents took a villager from the market square and told him to show them where the school was located.⁷⁶ The man reportedly took them to the primary school, but fighters insisted that they were looking for the girls' school. The villager told them he did not know where it was located. Finally, the insurgents found their way to the school around 7:15 p.m., where they loaded all the school's food supplies into their trucks.



Residents of Dapchi reported that the military had withdrawn its forces from the area less than a month before the attack. The Nigerian Army released a statement that its troops stationed around Dapchi had been redeployed to the Niger-Nigeria border because Dapchi had been “relatively calm and peaceful, and the security of Dapchi was formally handed over to the Nigeria Police Division located in the town.”⁷⁷ However, Sumonu Abdulmaliki, the Commissioner of Police for Yobe state, reported that no such hand-over had taken place.⁷⁸

In the hours immediately following the attack, local and regional government officials stated that no one had been abducted during the attack and that the military had chased the insurgents away around 8 p.m. Yobe Police Commissioner Abdulmaliki initially reported that no one had been abducted from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi and that “no life was lost in the attack.”⁷⁹ Two days later, on February 21, Yobe state government officials stated that “dozens of girls” had been rescued, but this also turned out to be false. Ultimately, Commissioner Abdulmaliki confirmed that Boko Haram had abducted 111 girls.⁸⁰

Several female students described hearing gun shots when Boko Haram insurgents stormed the school grounds and seeing men in military uniforms. The girls initially thought that they were being rescued after the attack on the town, but they discovered that the men were actually Boko Haram fighters when one spoke on the phone in Kanuri⁸¹ to request a vehicle to transport the girls.



Students who were abducted in February 2018 from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria, and spent a month in captivity.

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Kaltume M., a 15-year-old student, described her horror when she realized the uniformed men were Boko Haram:

I got confused and terrified when I heard [the call for a vehicle]. I started crying [when I] realized that I had fallen into the hands of the captors.... They started putting us into the truck, one after the other. We started jumping out, but they kept throwing us back into the truck. At some point, one of them cocked his gun and threatened to shoot us, if we continued to misbehave.⁸²

Similarly, Fadimatu L., also a 15-year-old student, recounted:

I saw my classmates running and saying Boko Haram had entered our school. Out of confusion, I started running toward the gate... when I saw some of the people dressed in military uniform. I hurriedly went to them. They told me not to panic because they were there to help us.... One of them called someone to come with a truck. Fear gripped me at that point, when I noticed that these were not real soldiers.⁸³

The girls were loaded into the truck and then driven for many hours, until they finally arrived at a Boko Haram camp, which appeared to be on an island. Kaltume M. described the terrifying drive into the bush:

They lined us up and ordered us into a big truck one by one until they filled it up without even an inch for breathing.... They started speeding terribly for almost 9 hours driving through the bush with very bad roads. We kept on hitting ourselves and falling on each other. Some who were weak fell in the truck and others stepped on them. When the truck turned, they hit their body again and other people fell on them. It continued until [several of the girls died]. I was very close to one of the corpses.⁸⁴

After several hours, the insurgents stopped for a break and to eat. At that time, they realized that five girls had been crushed to death and died during the journey. Amira M., a 17-year-old student, reported how the bodies of the five girls were buried:

We told them that some of us had died, and they brought out five corpses. Aisha Adamu Jumbam, Falmata Alhaji Inuwa, and Maiumuna A. Umar, and two others [who could not be identified because of their injuries]. You could see their bodies stained with blood from the injuries. [The insurgents] pushed them into the same hole and buried all of them together.⁸⁵



After 31 days in captivity, Boko Haram returned 106 girls and the one boy (for a total of 107 children returned) to Dapchi on March 21, reportedly after government negotiations. The girls were taken to Abuja for medical tests and meetings with government officials, including President Buhari. Some of the girls, as well as parents of abducted girls, reported that government officials and/or medical staff who treated the girls gave them gifts of money and textiles (wrapa). One girl – Leah Sharibu – was not returned, reportedly because she had refused to convert to Islam and Boko Haram was targeting non-Muslim girls. President Buhari stated that he would do everything within his power to bring Sharibu home. As of June 2018, Leah Sharibu remained in captivity.⁸⁶

The Government's Failure to Protect Schools

When speaking about attacks on schools that occurred during the peak of the conflict (2013-2015), most students described how worried they had been in the weeks and months prior to the attacks on their schools and described the growing anxiety they and their fellow classmates had felt as the number of attacks escalated and came ever closer. Yagana A., who was a student at the Government Secondary School in Chibok in 2014, expressed a view held by many students:

Before the attack, I had serious security concerns already. In the weeks before the attack, we kept hearing that fighters were going to come. During this time, some parents came and took their girls home. Others decided on their own to go home. But no one came for me.⁸⁷



Inadequate Security Measures

Virtually all students interviewed by GCPEA reported that their schools had no or wholly inadequate security measures in place, except for an elderly guard or two, and that no additional measures were introduced, or protocols established, to respond to the deteriorating security situation. Most students noted that their school administration and teachers rarely mentioned security, much less gave any advice on what to do if an attack were to happen. Instead, some school officials reportedly downplayed the risk, even as Boko Haram attacked nearby schools. Amira A., a student from the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, reported:

There was no fence, no security. Long before the attack, students were already afraid and did not feel secure. There were no discussions about security. No one gave us any suggestions about precautions or how to respond if there was an attack. We were left to fend for ourselves.⁸⁸



Maimuna I., a student at the College of Agriculture in Gujba when it was attacked, described how students tried to take protective measures:

Even after the attack in Buni Yadi, they didn't do anything to protect our school. No one ever said anything to us. Finally, the students (Students Union Government) took the initiative and requested a meeting to talk with the principal about security. Unfortunately, we were not able to arrange the meeting before the attack happened.⁸⁹





Similarly, Hamidah F., the principal of a girls' secondary school, recounted:

Immediately after [the abductions from] Chibok, we were set to start the [final] exams.... All around us people were being attacked. Boko Haram was targeting schools and especially girls.... Even so, we had no additional security, no support. The only protection was from vigilante groups patrolling around the school. We didn't even have a fence, so we were completely exposed.⁹⁰



Warnings Were Disregarded

Many of the schools received warning letters—sometimes multiple warnings—that an attack was imminent. Yet, even as school after school was attacked and the death toll escalated, school administrators appear to have ignored or downplayed the threats and even suggested on several occasions that students had themselves written the warning letters. Alhaji U. was a 15-year-old student when a suicide bomb attack killed 26 male students at the Government Science and Technical College in Potiskum (Yobe state) in November 2014. His comments were typical of many students interviewed by GCPEA:

There were serious security problems at the school in the period before the attack, but the government had a deaf ear. Boko Haram sent a letter threatening to attack, but the principal said it was not from Boko Haram but just a student who wrote it. There were no meetings, no advice from teachers... we were not told anything about security. After the attack, a fence was put around the school, but why then?⁹¹



Similarly, Nafisa H., a student at the Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, stated:

Even before the attack on the school, I did not think it was safe. About a week before, there was a letter warning of an attack. [We] took it to the principal, but he said it was a student who sent the letter.... One day before the attack, [a man] came to the school and told everyone that they should leave the school. But everyone just ignored him.⁹²



Absence of Education and Security Personnel When Some Schools Attacked

Many secondary schools in Nigeria are boarding schools. These schools are often located on the margins of towns or even in remote areas between towns so that several towns can share a single school. While some students live in the nearby towns, most students live in dormitories on campus. Typically, there are also staff and teachers' quarters on the school grounds. However, during the peak of the crisis, students reported that some of their teachers began to move themselves and their families off campus due to fear of an attack. As a result, in several of the boarding schools overrun by Boko Haram, virtually no adults were present at the time of the attack, and students were left to their own devices.



Hauwa M., a 16-year-old student at the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, observed:

Security was a big concern in the weeks and months before the attack. All the area and the surrounding villages were unsafe. And there had been rumors that Boko Haram would attack at any moment.... But when the attack actually happened, there were no adults around. No staff, no watchmen... The school had many guards, but I didn't see any of them that day.⁹³



Deborah Y., also a student at the College of Agriculture in Gujba, recalled:

The students saw that it wasn't safe, but why did the school administration not see? When the attacks started to take place in our area, the lecturers stopped sleeping in the lecturers' quarters. They all stayed in the town and would only go to the school for their classes. They knew that something would happen.⁹⁴



Similarly, Amina F., who was a student when the girls were abducted from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, stated:

There were no adults around to help us when Boko Haram came. The guard ran away as soon as he heard the fighters coming. Our teachers usually stay in the staff quarters, but all had gone to town and started sleeping in town after the school started receiving threats.⁹⁵



Location of Schools Sometimes Increased Students' Vulnerability

The location of some secondary schools on the margins of towns or even in remote areas between towns makes them particularly vulnerable to attack. Students, parents, and teachers expressed concern about how exposed many of the schools are. They stressed that schools should not be in the bush but located in towns where protection can be provided. Many shared the view that schools located in the bush are especially vulnerable to attack.⁹⁶

A representative of a UN agency agreed, observing that:

Primary schools are based in the local community and are closer to the community. I think there is much more ownership. By contrast, secondary schools are located outside the community, often quite far from the local towns.... When these schools were constructed, no one was thinking about the possibility of something like Boko Haram, but was instead trying to place them between various communities. So, you see that many of the secondary schools are even in the bush or on the outskirts of the bush. Now, I think there is a sense that we need to rethink that approach.⁹⁷



Security Forces Failed to Respond to Calls for Help

Students and teachers reported that security forces had not responded to calls for help, even when an attack was underway. In several of the attacks documented for this report, victims described calling security forces located in the vicinity or a relatively short distance from the school, only to be told that the units had not been ordered to respond or that units would be sent the next day. Fatsuma A. reported that when students called to alert security forces that Boko Haram was attacking the [College of Agriculture in Gujba], the soldier who answered “told me we would have to wait for an order from the commander. He said, “You will have to be patient until morning.”⁹⁸ Many students and teachers interviewed by GCPEA reported that security forces had repeatedly failed to show up at all or had arrived long after Boko Haram left the area, even when Boko Haram had slaughtered students and burned buildings for hours before leaving.

With regard to the March 2018 abductions in Dapchi, Amnesty International reported that Nigerian forces failed to respond to multiple warnings that Boko Haram fighters were moving toward Dapchi. “Amnesty International gathered testimonies from multiple credible sources showing that the Nigerian army and police received multiple calls up to four hours before the raid on Dapchi but did not take effective measures to stop the abduction or rescue the girls after they were taken by Boko Haram fighters.”⁹⁹ As noted above, the Nigerian security forces stated that they had withdrawn from Dapchi because the area was “relatively calm,” and that they had turned over responsibility for security to police in the region. However, the Yobe Commissioner of Police refuted this claim.¹⁰⁰ Attacks on several other schools have shown a similar pattern.

Lack of Urgency and Failure to Learn Lessons from Past Attacks

Even in 2017-2018, after so many schools had been attacked and many students killed or abducted, some students and teachers noted that government officials did not appear to have a sense of urgency about improving schools’ security. While there was relief that the Nigerian military had been able to reclaim territory from Boko Haram, many of those interviewed were skeptical of government claims that Boko Haram had been defeated and concerned about the government’s slow progress implementing much needed security systems.

Japari C. was a 19-year-old student at Adamawa State Polytechnic in the town of Mubi when Boko Haram attacked the school on October 29, 2014. Insurgents captured her and held her in front of the school gates during the attack, but she was able to escape when the fighters were temporarily distracted by a military plane flying overhead. She described how she continues to have security concerns that affect her ability to study:

It is hard to be here at the school. It has been three years [since the attack], but there is no real security. We don’t feel safe. How can we feel safe now, when we don’t understand what happened when Boko Haram attacked the school? The security guards seemed to appear and disappear out of nowhere.... Where were the soldiers when the attack happened? They also ran away. Some of us even ran together. So, I don’t feel confident in the security at the school now. That makes it hard to study sometimes, and it is hard to concentrate. The environment is not conducive to learning.¹⁰¹



Similarly, despite repeated attacks on the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), including at least eight suicide bombings or attempted bombings during a six-month period in 2017, there is still no fence surrounding the school.¹⁰² Mustapha T., a male student at UNIMAID, described his security concerns in the aftermath of a June 26, 2017 suicide bomb attack:

The school does not have enough security. They need to have an actual fence in the back! The school only has a fence around the front, not in the back where there is bush. The security guards believe the suicide bomber came from Mafa (through the back of campus) through the bush. The school also received two or three letters in 2017 from Boko Haram threatening to come and abduct girls. Yet, the back of the campus remains open and vulnerable.¹⁰³



The Borno state government paid to have a trench dug at the back of UNIMAID, which is intended to prevent insurgents from driving onto campus. The state government is also paying local militia members to work with police to guard the university's perimeter. However, as of February 2018, the Federal government had not agreed to pay for a permanent boundary wall as requested by the university and the Borno state government. (See also section on Nigerian Government's Response to Attacks on Education below)

GCPEA is unaware of any public investigation of the security forces' failure to protect Nigerian civilians or that any military or civilian leaders have been held accountable for a failure to respond to attacks on civilians. President Jonathan established a factfinding committee to investigate the Chibok abductions, but that report was never made public. In 2016, in response to a call from the Bring Back Our Girls campaign, President Buhari ordered another investigation into the Chibok abductions. A representative from BBOG told GCPEA that "both the former and the present government refused to release the report of the fact-finding committee [on Chibok]. And all our pleas fell on deaf ears. The promise by the Buhari government to initiate a fresh investigation also didn't translate into any action."¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Osai Ojigho, Amnesty International's Nigeria director, stated: "The authorities appear to have learned nothing from the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno state, in 2014 and failed to ensure protection for civilians in northeast Nigeria, specifically girls' schools."¹⁰⁵

It is therefore not surprising that many people question whether the Nigerian security forces are able or willing to protect them. While some students and parents welcomed the Nigerian military and felt its presence was critical to their protection, many of the students and teachers interviewed by GCPEA expressed skepticism that the military could be relied on to provide adequate protection. As one teacher observed:

The students, the parents, and the teachers have lost confidence in the military and the government. There have been too many times during this conflict when the military failed to show up until after the insurgents had finished their looting and killing. Too many times when the soldiers were slow to respond, or did not respond at all, until after Boko Haram had fled...It is hard to get that trust back.¹⁰⁶



Abductions of Female Students When Not in School

Most Boko Haram abductions of female students occurred as part of attacks on schools. However, there are some cases in which female students have been abducted in other contexts.¹⁰⁷ These abductions often occur because the girl's school uniform identifies her as a student, or because the insurgents are from the village and know which girls are in a government school.

Sarah Y. was a 19-year-old student at the Government Senior Science Secondary School in Konduga, in 2014, when she was abducted by Boko Haram. She and her classmates had finished their final exams and were anxious to go home. But the security forces in the area had closed the roads, so after waiting several days, Sarah and six of her classmates decided to hire a local driver to take them home. She described what happened:

[W]e had been driving for about three hours when we were stopped by three men who came up to us with guns. Then they were joined by another fighter who ... saw our school uniforms and said, "You are the students we have been looking for. We told you not to go to school, but you still go. We are fighting with the government, and by going to school you support the government." Then they told us to get out of the vehicle.... The following morning, we were taken to the boss, who saw our school uniforms and said "You are the children of the government. Why do you go to school? We caught you on your way from school.... We have caught others from Bama going to school, so we will put you together with them. You will stay with us forever."¹⁰⁸

Sarah described how she and her classmates were taken to an area where other girls were held:

The next morning the boss took us to where there were other women and girls who had been captured – about 60 women and girls – and told us that this is where we would stay.... Most of the ladies there were young. They were all students from Bama. Some of them were still wearing uniforms. They were just sitting there and were guarded.¹⁰⁹

While some suggested that they were targeted because they were wearing a school uniform, others reported that they were asked whether they were students. Some interviewees suspected that Boko Haram targeted those who appeared to be of school age. In other cases, the fighters knew their victims. Blessing E. recounted why she believes she was abducted from Lassa by Boko Haram fighters in December 2014:

We had just come home from school when they arrived. They burned down our house and abducted me and my 7-year-old brother. I was 17 at the time. They gathered about 30 women from all over. Those who were married (those who were carrying babies) were released. They picked out the young girls based on their physical appearance.... We were targeted because we were young and female, and because we were students. They knew we were all students, because some of the insurgents had gone to the same school and knew us. We recognized each other. They told us, "Western education is bad. You will not be going back to that school."¹¹⁰



Abuses Committed During Abductions and in Captivity

Women and girls who were abducted by Boko Haram reported suffering a wide range of abuses during their time in captivity. Of the 119 students and teachers interviewed by GCPEA, many reported that female students were forced to convert to Islam, often as a precursor to forced "marriage." The interviewees frequently reported rape and sexual slavery sometimes carried out under the pretext of "marriage," and sometimes without such a pretext. Some women and girls reported being given a choice of sorts to "marry" a fighter or serve as his slave. However, many reported that they were threatened with death if they refused conversion or "marriage." Some NGOs have also reported that women and girls were forced to assist with military campaigns, although those interviewed by GCPEA did not report participating in Boko Haram operations.

Forced Conversion

Many of the women and girls who were abducted, especially during the first years of the conflict, were Christian. Abductions often took place in areas such as southern Borno state that were known to be predominantly Christian areas.¹¹¹ There have also been credible reports of Boko Haram separating Christian and Muslim women within a group of abductees and treating Christians more harshly.¹¹² Many of the girls who were Christian were forced to convert to Islam, typically as a step before forced "marriage" to one of their captors.

Sadiya S. reported:

"If you were Christian, they would forcibly convert you, and then they would rape you."¹¹³



Grace P., who was abducted from her village – Askira-Uba – together with her 11-year-old sister in September 2014, recounted:

[Boko Haram fighters] captured us.... They told us that what we are practicing is not a religion, and they asked us if we were ready to convert [Wanka]. If not, they said they would kill us. They forced us to pray the Muslim way.¹¹⁴



Similarly, Hamsatu Y., a 55-year-old woman from Damasak, related what she saw while in captivity for over three years:

For the girls, they were forced to marry fighters.... Anyone who was a Christian was forced to convert or they would have been beheaded. But no one refused to convert, and no one refused to marry. They were not really given an option because they knew they would have been slaughtered.¹¹⁵



Most recently, all of the Dapchi girls who survived the abduction from their school in February 2018 were returned to their families, except for Leah Sharibu, who reportedly refused to convert to Islam. Fadimatu L. told GCPEA that when the girls were about to be released and taken back to Dapchi, a Boko Haram fighter said:

“[W]e are soon going to release you because we never knew that there were Muslims among you. We hate to see you in secular school, but our main target is the pagans.”¹¹⁶

Abuse in the Context of Forced “Marriage”

Many of the women and girls interviewed by GCPEA reported that they had been forced to “marry” a Boko Haram fighter. The circumstances surrounding these forced “marriages” varied significantly, presumably depending on which commander oversaw the fighters. As with cases of forced conversion, in most cases of forced “marriage,” the women and girls were threatened with rape or death if they refused. Sometimes insurgents threatened to kill a close relative. In some cases, Boko Haram fighters told the women that they would be forced to provide “slave labor” if they refused to get married. In some cases, the fighter already had other wives. One woman interviewed by GCPEA reported that she was forced to marry a fighter who already had four wives.¹¹⁷ Some women and girls reported a type of “marriage” ceremony – in some cases conducted as a group and in other cases a mere pronouncement that the woman was now “married.” Several interviewees reported being paid a dowry. In one case, a young woman described a marriage ritual whereby the women and girls were able to “choose” the Boko Haram fighter they would marry.

Falmata I., who was 14 years old at the time of her abduction, reported her experience and consequent pregnancy:

I was captured and taken to the forest. Boko Haram fighters told us that if we did not follow their beliefs, they would execute us. But if we believed in their ways and married them, we could live.... Ultimately, all of us (all six who were abducted together) “married” them. But it was torture living in the forest. They kept us locked up in huts or tents and we had little food.... I was there for two years when the military rescued us. At that time, I was pregnant....¹¹⁸

Hussaina B., a 27-year-old woman, described what she saw in captivity:

They didn’t care if you were already married. If you refused to “marry” them, they would slaughter you. There was nothing like good treatment.... Those who resisted marrying them would be beaten... others would be killed. They raped those who refused to marry. Sometimes they threatened to kill the parents or other family members.¹¹⁹



Maryam R., a 15-year-old student at the time of her abduction, described what happened to girls who refused to marry a Boko Haram fighter:

If you refused, they would threaten to kill you or to kill your mother or another older relative. Some did refuse, and they were punished severely and then forced to marry anyway. If you refused, they would tie your hands behind your back and flog you with a long cane until you gave in.¹²⁰



Amina T. was a 21-year-old student when she was abducted from the Government Secondary School in Chibok and held in captivity for almost 4 years. According to Amina, women in her area began to agree to marry insurgents as food became increasingly scarce in the Sambisa camp. She recounted:

We were chased out of Gwoza by the Nigerian military and had to go back to Sambisa [in 2016] and after that we had a terrible experience with hunger.... The ones among us who got married found it a little bit easier than some of us who refused. We were left on our own to search for food and take care of ourselves. Because of the suffering, many among us got married to gain access to the food supply.¹²¹



Aisha Y., who was 13 years old at the time she was abducted, described her forced "marriage":

When they took us to Sambisa, Boko Haram forced my elder sister to marry. My mother was very sad. Then they kept pressuring her to marry me too, and finally Boko Haram forced me to marry. I stayed for one week with my husband, and during that time he raped me. I cried and cried, and said I was too young to be able to handle this. Finally, a Boko Haram leader told the insurgents to send me back to my mother. But the husband continued to follow me around and rape me again and again. Boko Haram mistreated and raped many, many girls...¹²²



Rape and Sexual Slavery Outside the Context of Forced "Marriage"

While most women and girls were raped after being forced into "marriage" with an insurgent, some reported being raped without any pretense of marriage. Several women reported being held in locked rooms and being repeatedly raped by multiple perpetrators.

Halima U., a young woman held in captivity for three years, reported that she had been given the option of forced "marriage" or forced labor. At first, she opted to work, but later she agreed to a "marriage," even though she was already married because she believed it offered her some protection. She explained:

I was held for a long time [about two years] in Sambisa, and then forced to move closer to the Niger border. At that point, I got married.... I finally agreed to marry because I had lost all hope of ever escaping. While I was in Sambisa, two men had come repeatedly to rape me. But they never came to rape me until they were high on drugs. That is why I decided to get married to protect myself [from being raped by multiple insurgents]. I ended up staying [in captivity] for three years total.¹²³



Sadiya S., a young teacher from the town of Damasak told about her horrific experiences while held in captivity for over three years:

It was a horrible experience. They would just come and have sex with us. That is the most painful part for me. They did not care about anything else but the sex.... There was no actual moment when there was [even a pretend] marriage ceremony. There was just a person who claimed or marked a specific woman for himself. It is very painful to talk about. I had three different husbands.... Even now, I cannot forget the smell, the odor, the horror of them coming to rape me. If you tried to resist – to say no – they would just put a gun to your head and threaten to shoot you. And then they would rape you anyway. It was sexual slavery. It had nothing to do with marriage.¹²⁴

Sadiya continued:

For some time, I was locked in a room and the men kept the key. One of them would come and rape me. Then another would rape me and then leave. I don't even remember how many. I recall that there were three, at least. I gave birth to a son about a year ago. The worst part was that I did not even know I was pregnant, because I was so used to the pain.... I don't know who the father is.¹²⁵

Forced Labor

Although most girls and women reported being threatened with death or rape if they resisted “marriage” to a Boko Haram fighter, several of those who rejected the forced “marriage” even after such a threat reported that they were forced to perform domestic work, including cooking, washing clothes, and cleaning in the camp. Some were specifically assigned to be “slave labor” for insurgents’ wives and were often treated especially harshly.

Halima U., who was abducted from Gwoza LGA in 2014, stated:

I was taken to Sambisa.... The fighters wanted me to marry them, but I refused.... Those who refused to marry had to work. If you agreed to marry, you didn't have to work.... When Boko Haram fighters returned from fighting, they gave us their clothes with blood to wash. It was terrible. I worked all the time. I also had to do a lot of cooking for them.¹²⁶

Others reported being forced to work constantly, even after forced “marriage.” Hussaina B., who was also abducted from Gwoza LGA in 2014, described her experience:

It was a terrifying time.... I was abducted and even though I was already married, I was forced to “marry” the Boko Haram leader. He had four wives already, and I was his fifth. They forced me to cook for them and take care of the children. I was like their slave. And he raped me again and again.¹²⁷



Forced Recruitment for Military Operations

Forced Recruitment

Some girls and women reportedly participate in Boko Haram operations, and some women and girls who were previously abducted, including from schools, have assisted with Boko Haram attacks. However, it is not always clear the extent to which their participation is forced, the result of radicalization, and/or an expression of their pre-existing support for Boko Haram's ideology and aims. To the extent that those being recruited are under the age of 18, they are considered for purposes of this report to be forcibly recruited and are being used in violation of international law.¹²⁸ It is, however, more difficult to determine the nature of adult women's participation.

Although some women and girls have reported being forced to carry supplies or to lure soldiers or pro-government vigilantes into an ambush, the women and girls interviewed by GCPEA reported that Boko Haram did not typically force females to participate in military operations, and none of them reported that they had been forced to participate in Boko Haram operations. CIVIC summarized findings from its 2015 research that were consistent with GCPEA's own interviews:

Based on our interviews—and despite contrary information from the media—women's participation in Boko Haram attacks is minimal. One respondent presented a useful classification to better understand women's roles in Boko Haram. Some women serve as logisticians who courier money and weapons to various terrorist cells. Some act as recruiters, who seek out new members and filter through grassroots volunteers, typically by exploiting family ties or other personal relationships. Some women, as has been highlighted in recent media reports, become suicide bombers, fighters, and operational leaders who carry weapons during combat. But more often than not, women are victims of Boko Haram, and are forced to serve the traditional role of companion.¹²⁹

However, other research has suggested that, in some cases, Boko Haram does train women and girls, including some who have been abducted, as fighters. A young woman who had been abducted in September 2014 and held in a Boko Haram camp in Gullak told Amnesty International that:

They used to train girls how to shoot guns. I was among the girls trained to shoot. I was also trained how to use bombs and how to attack a village.... This training went on for three weeks after we arrived. Then they started sending some of us to operations. I went on one operation to my own village.... Other abducted women and girls were forced to participate in military operations to support the group.¹³⁰



Female Suicide Bombers

Boko Haram’s use of suicide bombers has received a great deal of media coverage. Although the group has used suicide bombers since early in the insurgency – the first reported use was on April 8, 2011– the prevalence of suicide bombings and their character has shifted over time.¹³¹ In particular, the first female suicide bomber was documented in 2014, and the number of bombers who are female and/or children has escalated since that time. The UN reported that during 2017, “115 children – 38 boys and 77 girls – had been used as human bombs. That number was six times higher than in 2016.”¹³² The use of female suicide bombers appears to be growing.

Experts on Boko Haram and Nigeria’s counterterrorism efforts believe that a significant number of suicide bombers are abducted. According to the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point:

Though full verification remains difficult, it appears to be the case that the majority of children that ultimately become child suicide bombers for Boko Haram are abducted; this is the case for both boys and girls.¹³³

The authors note that “suicide bombing has become a feature of Boko Haram’s tactical portfolio” especially since the Chibok abductions in April 2014,¹³⁴ and that there has been a “distinct rise in the use of women-linked suicide bombers, which began in July 2014 – just two months after the Chibok kidnappings—and rose precipitously thereafter.”¹³⁵ However, the authors do not attribute this escalation to increased availability due to abductions, but instead to a “strategic choice,” concluding that the timing of this increase is linked to the insurgents’ recognition that “women suicide bombers might offer distinct advantages over males” in terms of shock value.¹³⁶

For girls and women abducted in the context of attacks on schools, Boko Haram’s use of female suicide bombers is one more in a long line of abuses that may lead to their injury or death. What is more, the fact that a majority of suicide bombers are female, has contributed to increased suspicion, hostility, and stigma facing women and girls who return from captivity, and has made it much harder for them to have any hope of re-integrating in their communities. (See discussion on Stigma)



On April 8, 2015, a soldier walked through a destroyed classroom at the Universal Basic Education Junior Secondary School in Gwoza, Nigeria, the former base of Boko Haram, which had recently been retaken by the Nigerian military. According to the Washington Post, Boko Haram left schools in the city littered with abandoned explosives and weapons.

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Military Use of Schools and Universities

Boko Haram's Use of Schools for Military Purposes

At the height of the conflict, when Boko Haram controlled large areas of territory in the northeast, it also used schools for military purposes, including to hold and execute captives, as barracks for insurgents, to manufacture and store weapons, and to stockpile other supplies.

GCPEA interviewed several people who reported that Boko Haram had held them captive in a school. When Boko Haram attacked the town of Damasak on November 2014, it occupied the Zanna Mobarti Primary School, locking the gates and trapping students and teachers inside. (See discussion of Damasak abductions above) The insurgents then used the school as a military



base for more than three months. During that time, it also rounded up women and children from other parts of the town and held many of them at the school. Sadiya S., a teacher at the school, described her experience:

They used the school as a base. They brought students and teachers from around the town to be kept there with us.... They separated the teachers from the children and one of them said, “Teachers, you kept teaching when we told you not to. Now you will see what we will do to you.” They threatened to shoot us. We tried to obey whatever they told us to do, just to keep from being raped.... They treated us like prisoners. We were there for over three months. It was terrible. The place grew filthy. There were lice, and some came down with cholera. We were thinking about the best way to escape, but they threatened to kill us if we tried to flee....¹³⁷



Similarly, Human Rights Watch interviewed women and girls who reported that Boko Haram had detained them in schools around the town of Gwoza. For example, “a 15-year-old girl who had been abducted in December 2014 with her younger siblings from Baza in Michika, Adamawa state, described her ordeal: We were locked with up to 60 other women and children in the classroom of a school in Ville, just outside Gwoza. They never let us out of that room... But three weeks later, they hurriedly chased us out with canes as military jets flew overhead.”¹³⁸

Human Rights Watch also interviewed a woman from Gwoza who reported that she stopped sending her children to the Sabongari Primary School after Boko Haram occupied it in May 2014:

About one month before we fled, Boko Haram came at night in their hundreds, maybe thousands, with military armored personnel carriers. They attacked the government military base in Gwoza and brought all the guns and everything into the school. Once we realized they were camped in the school, no one dared go near it again. About three weeks later they burned down the whole school...¹³⁹

The UN reported in 2015 that Boko Haram had used five schools for military purposes in Bauchi state.¹⁴⁰ According to the UN, Boko Haram attacked the Euga Primary School (Bauchi state) and then used the school for military purposes in February 2015, disrupting “the education of approximately 800 children.”¹⁴¹

Military Use of Schools by Nigerian Government Forces

Nigerian government forces, the pro-government militia known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and other pro-government vigilante groups, have also used schools for military purposes during the conflict. The UN reported that between January 2013 and December 2016, it received reports of “12 cases of use of schools by the Nigerian security forces, comprising 10 schools in Borno State and two in Yobe State.”¹⁴² In one such case, for example, government forces used the Government Day Secondary School in Ngoshe (Borno state) as a barracks and detention center during the period April – June 2014.¹⁴³



The CJTF, as well as other pro-government militia groups, have reportedly recruited students from schools. According to the UN, it had documented “the use of children as young as 9 years” during the period January 2013 to December 2016, although the CTJF code of conduct sets 15 years of age as the minimum age of recruitment.¹⁴⁴ The CJTF used children “mainly for intelligence-related purposes, search operations, night patrols and crowd control and to man guard posts.”¹⁴⁵ In a positive development, in September 2017, the CJTF signed an Action Plan negotiated by the UN in Nigeria agreeing “to put in place a number of measures to end and prevent child recruitment and use. Identifying and releasing all children within the group’s ranks and instructing its members not to recruit or use children in the future are examples of such measures.”¹⁴⁶

As of 2017, Nigerian government and CJTF forces continued to be present in some schools in northeastern Nigeria. In May 2017, a UN agency reported that government forces were using 17 schools at the time for military purposes – 10 in Borno state and seven in Yobe state.¹⁴⁷ In November 2017, the Joint Education Needs Assessment reported that 20 schools out of the 332 schools that were surveyed in northeastern Nigeria had “military at or in the school.”¹⁴⁸ Similarly, a representative of an INGO working in the northeast told GCPEA in February 2018 that he had seen Nigerian security forces “occupying a school as a base in Gwoza about four months ago.”¹⁴⁹

GCPEA previously reported in *Education under Attack 2018* that the military use of schools by government security forces “occurred more frequently during the 2013-2017 reporting period than during the 2009-2013 period... possibly due to national armed forces’ increased efforts to drive out Boko Haram.”¹⁵⁰

Risks Associated with the Military Use of and Military Presence Near Schools and Universities

When schools and universities are used for military purposes, the civilian status of the school may be jeopardized, increasing the risk of retaliatory attacks on the school. Even when soldiers are present in or near a school to protect the students within them, the students become vulnerable to attacks by opposing forces. The UN reported, for example, that four schools in Gwoza that had been occupied by Nigerian Government forces were later burned and destroyed by Boko Haram. It stated, “The Government indicated that the military presence was to protect the schools; however, this action compromises their civilian status.”¹⁵¹ Human Rights Watch also reported that “Locals who had welcomed, and in one case invited, soldiers to lodge in their schools as a preventive measure against impending Boko Haram attacks, found the contrary to be the case—the schools were attacked specifically because of the presence of soldiers.”¹⁵²

The presence of armed forces in or near schools and the risk of retaliatory attacks by Boko Haram increases the likelihood that children’s education will be disrupted. There is a heightened risk that school buildings and infrastructure will be damaged or destroyed, that teaching and other supplies will be looted, and that both students and teaching staff will be too afraid to return to the school. The presence of armed forces in or near schools also increases the risk that students will be exposed to a range of abuse, and may disproportionately affect girls, who are at

heightened risk of sexual violence. As a result, parents may feel compelled to pull their children out of school and are particularly likely to pull their daughters out of school as a preventive measure when armed forces are in or near schools.

Because of Boko Haram's attacks on schools, some schools have stationed guards at campus entrances to perform security inspections of those who are entering. As of November 2017, the Joint Education Needs Assessment reported that 44 schools out of those surveyed had armed guards at the gate of the school for protection purposes.¹⁵³ In some cases, these guards are retired soldiers. In other cases, soldiers are responsible for providing security screenings. While the deployment of soldiers and CJTF members can provide much needed protection to schools at risk of a Boko Haram attack, the presence of such forces can also present a number of security concerns for students and education personnel, including a heightened risk of sexual violence against female students and teachers. While it was beyond the scope of this report to conduct a comprehensive review of the impact of security measures in place at schools, GCPEA did obtain some reports from female students of harassment by security personnel, especially during security screenings, for example at the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID).

Security protocols were enhanced and the presence of security guards at UNIMAID was increased, as a way of better protecting the university, which has been attacked repeatedly (See discussion above). However, female students interviewed by GCPEA reported that the presence of security personnel presented new opportunities for harassment. For example,

Maryam B., a 26-year-old student at UNIMAID reported:

A security guard came up and asked for my ID. I told him [I had forgotten it] in my room, but that I could go and get it to show him... He asked me for a date, but I said no. Then he said, if you don't agree, then you will have to sleep at our guard house. I told him that I would go and sleep in the mosque instead.... The female students here know that many women have been in a similar situation as me and have accepted their offer and were either raped or exploited. I am now especially careful about interacting with them, but sometimes you simply cannot avoid it.¹⁵⁴

Many of the students interviewed by GCPEA described the pressure on women students because of the security environment at the university. Hamidah H., a 21-year-old student recounted:

Some of the girls are also leaving school because they are too uncomfortable with the security screening. They have to lift or take off their hijab during the security check. There are female guards, but male guards are also standing there, and the men can see their bodies. So, some refuse to go to school anymore.¹⁵⁵



Halima I., 21-year-old UNIMAID student, described the pressure she feels:

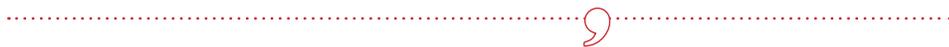
Women students are affected more by the insecurity than boys ... because the suicide bombers are often female, guards always suspect that you are trying to smuggle a bomb under your clothing or in your bag. We are more vulnerable to abusive checks. And if you get caught by Boko Haram, there is the big danger of abduction and forced marriage. There is a lot of pressure on us coming from both sides.

As a result of all these problems, a lot of my friends no longer want to study. Four of my friends have asked to leave school completely. Their parents asked them to go home, get married and abandon their education. Plenty of my friends got married instead. My parents want me to continue my education, but they have to force me to go to school. All I want to do is go home and stay.... I feel very sad and depressed.¹⁵⁶



Although GCPEA identified a number of women and girls who reported that they had been raped or sexually harassed by Nigerian government soldiers or members of the CJTF at or near their schools, these victims were ultimately too afraid to be interviewed. However, Anisah Ari-Amunega, Senior Programme Coordinator for WRAPA (the Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative) told GCPEA:

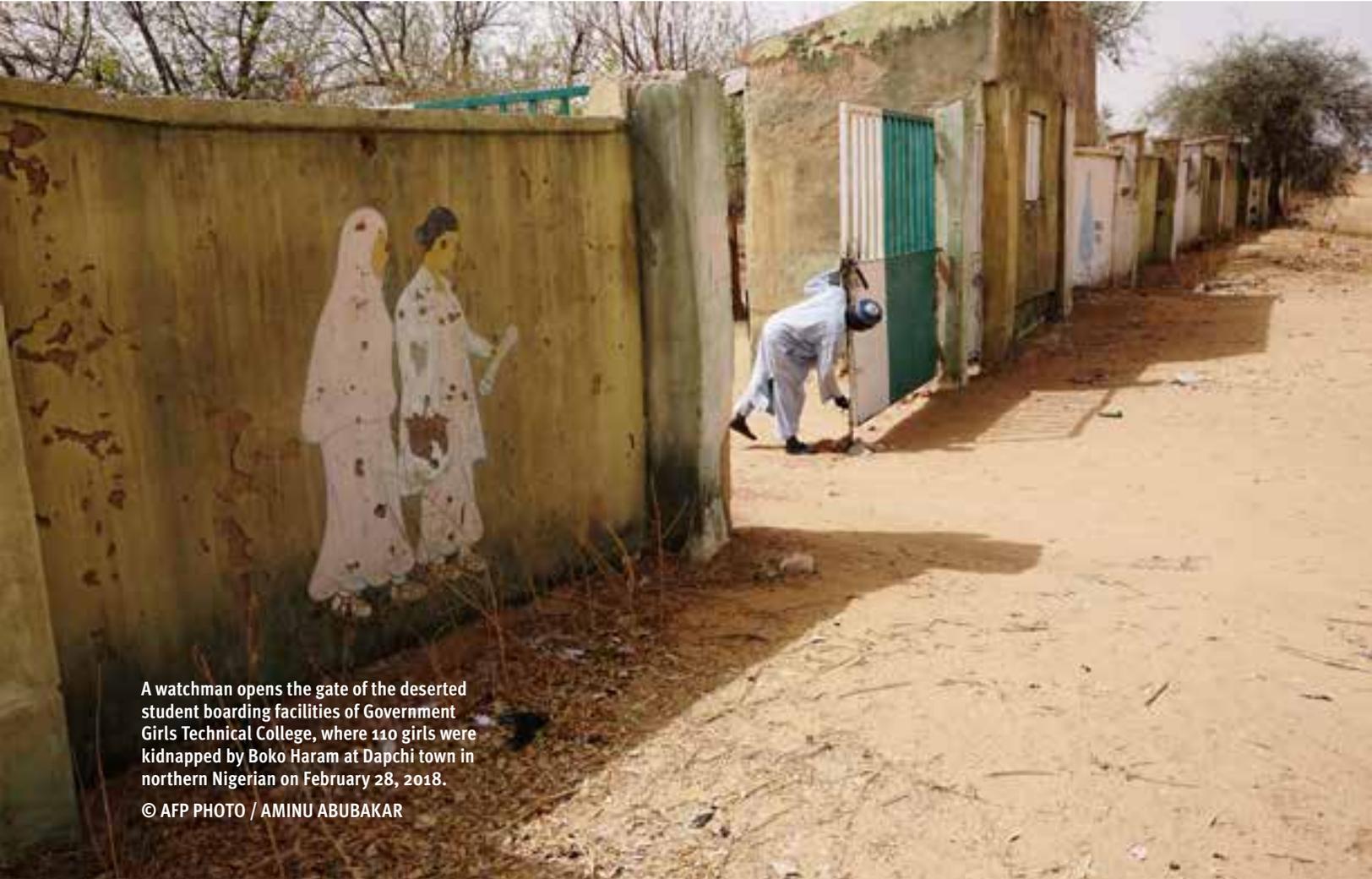
"Our work has shown that a significant majority of sexual violence cases at this point are being perpetrated by military and pro-government vigilante forces, not by Boko Haram.... So of course, parents are worried about their daughters being near such forces. The presence of security forces near a school is likely to affect girls' ability to continue with their education, and this in turn will increase the risk that they will be forced into early marriage."¹⁵⁷ Ms. Ari-Amunega noted, however, that "the girls are between the devil and the deep blue sea. If security forces are present, it makes them especially vulnerable to sexual violence. And the military are targets of Boko Haram as well, so it exposes the community to risk of attack. But at the same time, if the security forces are not present, the girls are at a great risk of Boko Haram violence, including rape and abduction. There are many layers of evil."¹⁵⁸



The Safe Schools Declaration and the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* (see Annex for more detail)

The Nigerian government endorsed the Safe School Declaration in May 2015. The Declaration includes a commitment to use the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.¹⁵⁹ *Guideline 1* states that: “Functioning schools and universities should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in any way in support of the military effort.” *Guideline 5* states that: “The fighting forces of parties to armed conflict should not be employed to provide security for schools and universities, except when alternative means of providing essential security are not available. If possible, appropriately trained civilian personnel should be used to provide security for schools and universities. ... (a) If fighting forces are engaged in security tasks related to schools and universities, their presence within the grounds or building should be avoided if at all possible in order to avoid compromising the establishment’s civilian status and disrupting the learning environment.”

The Education in Emergencies Working Group in Nigeria (EiEWGN), with leadership by the Federal Ministry of Education, has embarked on a process of mainstreaming the Safe Schools Declaration across federal and state ministries, with a view to achieving progress on implementation of the commitments. In May 2018, the EiEWGN hosted a workshop in Abuja, which brought together representatives of the Federal Ministries of Defense and Education, members of the armed forces, police, and civil defense, legal experts and academics, education providers, and non-governmental, civil society, and international organizations. Education Commissioners from the three most affected states also participated. Participants discussed the existing legal, policy, and operational frameworks concerning the protection of students, teachers, and schools from attack. They also discussed the risks associated with the practice of military use and explored ideas for next steps on implementation of the Declaration and *Guidelines*.



A watchman opens the gate of the deserted student boarding facilities of Government Girls Technical College, where 110 girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram at Dapchi town in northern Nigerian on February 28, 2018.

© AFP PHOTO / AMINU ABUBAKAR

Long-Term Consequences of Attacks on Education and Military Use of Schools on Female Students

Lost Education

As noted in the background section, the nine-year conflict in northeastern Nigeria has had a devastating impact on access to education for children living in the most affected states. As of writing, the Nigerian government estimated that 12.6 million children are out of school in the north and “the numbers of out-of-school children in the North East has significantly increased from 2010 to 2015,” presumably as a result of the conflict.¹⁶⁰ Although recent data on the percentage of out-of-school children who are girls was not available, as of 2015, “37 percent



of girls and 30 percent of boys of primary school age” were out of school.¹⁶¹ Not surprisingly, Boko Haram’s targeted attacks on schools and the abduction of many school children, has had a significant negative impact on an already fragile education system. It has also been particularly harmful for female students’ access to education and has undermined the slow progress in reducing the high rate of out-of-school children and, in particular, out of school girls. Boko Haram’s targeted attacks on education have interacted with pre-existing forms of gender discrimination in ways that further impede opportunities for girls.

Many of the female students interviewed by GCPEA reported that they had been forced to suspend or leave their education because of the attacks they had survived. In some cases, the girls’ parents decided that they should not continue their education, in other cases the girls themselves were too afraid to continue.

Hauwa M., a 16-year-old student in 2014 when Boko Haram attacked the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, reported:

[After the attack], I went home. I was too afraid and decided not to go back. I told my parents I would never go back to school. They were also too afraid.... Before [the attack], I was so passionate to study and achieve my dream [of being a lawyer]. But now, this experience completely demoralized me.... I told my father that I will never go back because of Boko Haram threats and what I saw that night. I cannot go back to face the same thing again.¹⁶²

Musa I., a male student formerly from the College of Education and Technology, Bama, and currently at the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), observed:

Many of my female colleagues did not return to school after the attack. Their parents were afraid for their security, especially because Boko Haram was abducting girls and forcing them to marry. They [the parents] encouraged their boys to continue with school, but many parents think “School is too dangerous for my daughter, and anyway she will just end up married. How long will she continue anyway, so she should just stop now and not risk it.¹⁶³

Many of the girls from Dapchi told GCPEA that they were too afraid to return to school. Habiba M., a 15-year-old student abducted from Dapchi, stressed

I will never go back to school because Boko Haram warned us that if we return to school and they catch us, we will never come out. I prefer to continue with my Islamic school at home where it is safe and close to my family. I don’t think Dapchi School is safe to go to again.¹⁶⁴



Teachers confirmed that many of their students had never returned to school after an attack. Mustapha A., a male teacher at the Government Girls Senior Science Secondary School-Konduga reported:

When the school [in Konduga] was closed, all the girls [over 2,000] went home. At that time, there were between 6—700 [who were] ready to write their final exam. Of that senior class, only about half of the girls took the exam. Many went home and got married, and to my knowledge the vast majority of those who married never returned to school.... The schools in Konduga have not reopened to this day.... But even if they would reopen the school, most parents would be reluctant to send their girls back to those schools.¹⁶⁵

A single attack on education can have consequences that go far beyond those directly affected by the attack; many girls and young women reported that they, or their parents, were too afraid to continue their studies after learning about the experiences of others, particularly the Chibok abductions.

Some girls were adamant that they would return to their studies regardless of the risks, and a few indicated that they were beginning to feel somewhat hopeful about the future due to the apparent successes of the Nigerian security forces in retaking territory from Boko Haram and, in a couple of cases, were reconsidering their initial decision never to return to school. Sarah Y., a student at the Government Girls Senior Secondary School– Konduga when it was attacked in 2014, recounted:

I did not go back to school after that experience. Of the five girls I kept in touch with, none of us went back to school. It was not safe.... This year [2018], I have started thinking about going back to school, but I am not sure with all the attacks that have happened. I was dreaming of becoming a nurse, but after that horrible experience, I just couldn't go back.¹⁶⁶

Hopes that insecurity is subsiding may, however, have been dampened by the subsequent abduction of 111 schoolgirls from Dapchi, which took place shortly after these interviews.

Early Marriage and Early Pregnancy

Scholars and activists have written extensively about the link between insecurity and early marriage, including how parents sometimes resort to early marriage in times of insecurity out of desperation or as a perceived form of protection.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, early marriage can also be a response to poverty.¹⁶⁸ An upcoming report from the Development Partners Resource Center of the development Research and Projects Center (dRPC) based in Kano, Nigeria, describes this link:

The culture of sexual violence against women and girls that pervades certain societies prompts parents to minimize the risk of sexual assault and protect their children by marrying them as early as possible, regardless of them having reached legal age.

Marriage is resorted to as a safeguard against disrepute and a path to giving the girl child a future, while averting actions that would bring shame to the family, such as a daughter ... becoming the target of sexual abuse.... An ancient custom adopted as an escape route from poverty and gender-based violence, child marriage is a harmful practice that perpetuates both, further impoverishing and victimizing women.¹⁶⁹

While there is little concrete data to confirm an increase in the prevalence of early marriage in Nigeria as a result of the conflict, INGO representatives and Nigerian women's rights activists expressed the view that early and child marriage have increased in the northeast as a result of insecurity.

Before the conflict began, Nigeria already had one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world with an estimated 43 percent of girls being married before their 18th birthday and 17 percent before their 15th birthday.¹⁷⁰ According to Girls Not Brides, an NGO working globally to end child marriage, Nigeria is ranked 11th in the world in terms of prevalence of child marriage.¹⁷¹ The prevalence of child marriage varies significantly by region: "In southern Nigeria only 10 percent of girls are married before 18, compared to 76 percent of girls in northern Nigeria."¹⁷²

Attacks on schools that, as discussed above, result in many girls leaving or being taken out of school further exacerbate the tendency to marry girls at an early age. Research consistently finds that being out of school, even for relatively short periods, greatly increases the risk of early marriage for girls.¹⁷³

GCPEA interviewed 15 teachers and principals from schools that were closed due to insecurity in Borno state and ultimately relocated to . These teachers and principals reported that many female students did not return to school after attacks, and many parents refused to send their daughters back to school because of fear of the security situation. They said that many of their former students had subsequently faced early and forced marriage. Fadimatu U., a principal of a senior secondary school, noted:

Some girls were forced to get married. Their parents were worried what might happen if their girls were not in school. Marriage is considered a form of protection.¹⁷⁴

Similarly, Hamidah M., principal of secondary school from Monguno, pointed out:

For girls who were left at home, many were forced by their parents to marry. If they were married, it was sometimes the only security they had.¹⁷⁵

Several teachers also noted that although the closure of schools due to insecurity was a necessary step, the fact that there was no school in some areas for two or more years increased the risk of forced marriage of girls, even if the family had relocated to a more secure environment. For example, Halima M., a teacher from Mafa, stated:



For 2015 and 2016, all of the schools [in Borno state] were closed. There were about 2,000 students in our school before. Now we have about 300-400. Many did not come back. For those girls who were no longer in school, many got married.... There is a big risk that the girls will be forced to get married if they are not in school. I would say that if the girl is out of school for even a week, the parents will think, "If she is going to sit around and not do anything, then she should go on and get married!"¹⁷⁶



Although parents may consider early marriage as a protection mechanism, especially during periods of insecurity, early marriage often exposes the girl to a number of increased risks. A girl who marries at an early age is often not mentally or emotionally prepared to negotiate for safer sex or withstand the pressures from her husband and other family members to become pregnant soon after the marriage. Early marriage frequently leads to early and unprotected sex, early pregnancy, and related reproductive health complications. UNFPA in Nigeria has stated that "the health consequences of early marriage among adolescents include, early child bearing; increased risk of STIs and HIV; high infant and maternal mortality and morbidity, prolonged and obstructed labor which may result in fistula and the corresponding consequences of social exclusion."¹⁷⁷

Similarly, Dr. Judith Ann Walker, director of the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) in Kano, Nigeria and an expert on child marriage, has observed that:

As 90% of pregnancies in the developing world happen within marriages, child marriage contributes to high rates of pregnancy and pregnancy-related risks in young girls. In situations of child marriage, girls tend to become pregnant very soon after marriage, often before they are physically or mentally ready, leading to earlier ages at first birth and higher total fertility rates. In northeastern and northwestern Nigeria, 39% and 45% of 15-19 [year old] girls have children, respectively. Young girls are more likely to experience difficult pregnancies and complications of deliveries. The risk of maternal mortality is doubled in cases where the mother is below 20 and increases 5-7 times when the mother is below 14. Studies have reported some of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world in northern Nigeria. [Footnotes omitted]¹⁷⁸

Suspicion, Stigma, and Social Exclusion

As the Nigerian security forces have recaptured areas previously under the control of Boko Haram, they have rescued many who had been abducted, as well as those who had been trapped in areas overrun by insurgents. Among these are many women and girls who were victims of sexual violence, sometimes following so-called "marriage" to Boko Haram fighters. Some of these women and girls are returning with babies whose fathers are Boko Haram insurgents.

These girls and women suffered highly traumatic experiences in captivity and have a desperate need for care and treatment. However, they all too frequently return to communities and even families who are hostile to them and suspicious of their allegiances. While all women and girls

who are survivors of sexual violence face the risk of stigma in northeastern Nigerian communities, the risk and severity of stigma and social rejection are often greater when the women have been held by Boko Haram, no matter how clear it was that they were taken involuntarily.

A 2016 study by UNICEF and International Alert found that: “Women and girls who spent time in captivity are often referred to by communities as ‘Boko Haram wives,’ and there appears to be little distinction made between those who were forcibly ‘married,’ even under threat of execution, and others.”¹⁷⁹ This research, examining the views of communities toward women and girls returning from captivity, noted that communities often fear that they “were radicalized while in captivity, and if allowed to reintegrate into their communities, they might recruit others.”¹⁸⁰ The report also found that “communities expressed the belief that over time relations could be rebuilt and that the women and girls could gradually be accepted and trusted by the displaced community.”¹⁸¹ Communities insisted, however, that these women and girls should go through a de-radicalization process as a precondition for being accepted back.

Even families who accept their daughters when they return from captivity often refuse to accept their daughters’ children fathered by Boko Haram fighters. The children are considered to have the “bad blood” of their fathers and are likely to be rejected by the community. According to International Alert, “some also believe that the children conceived as a result of sexual violence or sexual relations with JAS members will become the next generation of fighters, as they carry the violent characteristics of their biological fathers.... Mothers and newborns are being increasingly ostracized and are at risk of further violence.”¹⁸²

Boko Haram abducted and held Zainab K. for over two years, during which time she was forced to “marry” one of her abductors. She sobbed while describing the stigma she faces living in the Bekassi IDP camp in Maiduguri:

There is so much stigma. People laugh at me and make fun of us. Even people who are close to me say things like “I would never marry a Boko Haram man.” They insult me and make fun of me.... They don’t know how much it hurts me. And some have threatened to expose what happened to me, if I complain about them.¹⁸³

The insurgents abducted Nafisa M. from Gwoza LGA and held her in captivity for almost one-and-a-half years. During her time in Sambisa forest, she was forced to “marry” a Boko Haram fighter and became pregnant. She spoke about the stigma she faces now that she has escaped:

I feel a lot of stigma from what happened in Sambisa.... No one says anything in my presence, but I feel that they are saying mean things behind my back. I do not feel welcome among my own people now. I feel like I am all alone and sitting on the edge [margins] watching others live. Both of my parents are dead.... I am not sure I would feel safe to return to my village, given the hostility I feel from former neighbors. It is too painful.¹⁸⁴



Maryam R., who has an infant she conceived during her time in captivity, said:

My own parents have accepted me and accepted the child. But there is a lot of stigma from people in the community. We have heard every rumor possible. That we are cannibals and were forced to eat other people. They have told so many stories about us.¹⁸⁵



The escalation in suicide bombings that involve female bombers has further exacerbated the suspicion with which communities and even their own families sometimes view returning women and girls. Community members, themselves traumatized by the actions of Boko Haram, continue to live in an extremely insecure environment with the daily possibility of attack. They distrust returning girls and women and fear the possibility that they have been radicalized and are coming home to continue jihad on behalf of Boko Haram.

Continued Suffering Due to Trauma

Many of the students, as well as some of the teachers, interviewed by GCPEA described a range of symptoms, such as recurring nightmares, anxiety, being easily frightened, an inability to focus and other signs commonly associated with trauma. They reported that trauma impedes their ability to move on with their lives and has ongoing impact on their education. A significant number of students mentioned that they continue to be nervous and fearful, especially when at school. Several stressed that insecurity on school campuses and attacks on schools and students make it difficult for them to recover since they are denied the normalcy provided by attending school in a safe environment. As a result, some have decided not to return to school. Even those who returned to school at some point after the attack reported that it was difficult for them to concentrate on their school work. Many have recurring flashbacks; some frighten easily. Several cried during the interview.

Hamidah I. who is currently a student at UNIMAID stated:

The security situation has really had an effect on me. I cannot help but keep thinking about the people coming to kill me when I am writing my exams. It is really hard to concentrate.¹⁸⁶



Habiba Y., who was a 14-year-old student at the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi when Boko Haram attacked it in 2014, told GCPEA what she saw when she left her dormitory after the attack:

I saw corpses littered all around. I went home, and I never went back to school.... The thoughts and images come back to me over and over again. Many times, I feel depressed and sad. As we are sitting here talking, I am ok, but those images can come up at any time and then I remember again all I saw that night.¹⁸⁷





Manuela A., who is now in her final year at Adamawa State University, spoke about her fears:

[Boko Haram] caught a number of girls and victimized them. I know of four girls who were abducted and never came back to school. I still feel afraid to be at school. We are all traumatized from that experience.... There haven't been any security changes at the school. If there would be more security, I think it would be easier to concentrate on my work. There are no psychological services.... For me, the biggest impact from the attacks has been that I find it really hard to concentrate on my studies now. It is very hard to be here.¹⁸⁸



Some of the girls who were abducted from the Government School in Chibok but escaped capture by jumping from the moving vehicles, reported that their experiences were highly traumatic. For many of those who were fortunate enough to escape during those first hours and days after the abduction, thinking of their friends and classmates still in captivity has been especially painful.

Amina F. stated:

The experience [of being abducted] causes me to think repeatedly about those who have been in the bush for almost four years now. It makes it hard for me to study. I am lucky to be able to go on with my studies, but sometimes it seems like there is no point in going to school when so many others are still suffering.¹⁸⁹



Similarly, Tabitha L. recounted:

This experience has been very traumatic. It is traumatic even now because of the people who are still [in captivity]. I think of them often and it gets me down. It also affects my interest in studying. But when I see some of the parents of the other girls I feel hope that the girls will one day return home.¹⁹⁰



Nigerian education officials appear to be aware that trauma counseling and psychosocial support is needed. Government officials interviewed by GCPEA discussed the trauma experienced by both children and teachers and the need for mental health responses. The Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative (PCNI), for example, has been providing teachers with training to build their capacity to teach children in their classrooms who have been traumatized by the conflict.¹⁹¹ However, with the exception of the girls abducted from Chibok, none of the female students interviewed by GCPEA had received psychosocial support of any kind, and most had no idea where they might find such services. Some teachers had received trauma counseling to help them deal with their highly traumatized students and were most appreciative of the counseling they had received. In addition to government efforts, international and Nigerian NGOs have developed programs to respond to the enormous need for psychosocial services. (See discussion below) However, despite the best efforts of many organizations, there is an enormous gap between the available services and those needed.



Health Consequences of Rape

Some women and girls reported ongoing gynecological problems as a result of being raped. Aisha Y., who was 13 at the time she was abducted, reported having been raped repeatedly after being forcibly married to a Boko Haram fighter:

It was very bad. I was so young and innocent. I had such pain. I cried and cried, but he continued to rape me ... I continue to have pain to this day.¹⁹²

Sadiya S., who was held in captivity for over three years, described:

This is all too painful to talk about. My mother is separated from me... My brother was killed. And then, as a virgin -- I had never had anything to do with a man before -- these people took me and just used me.... I was raped over and over during that time... I had so much pain, that I did not know when I was pregnant. By then, I had gotten used to the pain.¹⁹³

A few of the women interviewed by GCPEA reported seeking medical treatment after their release or rescue. Zainab I., who was raped while she was fleeing from Gwoza toward Mubi, recalled:

When I got to Uba, I was approached by four Boko Haram fighters. They took me into a house, where all four raped me. Three would stand there with guns while the other one raped me.... I had internal injuries from the attack. Finally, it got so bad I went to the hospital. While I was there I was also tested for HIV. I am ok now, but I keep losing weight.¹⁹⁴

Girls from the Chibok and Dapchi abductions who have been rescued or escaped reported having been seen by doctors, who "carried out medical tests." However, the girls did not know what tests were conducted. Most of the women and girls, however, had never been treated by a doctor and did not have any information about how to access post-rape care, treatment for HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases, or reproductive services.

Halima U., a young woman who was raped repeatedly while in captivity for three years, reported having serious health problems as a result of the violence she had experienced:

I have been bleeding for so long. I have had gynecological problems since being raped and have been bleeding.... I have not seen any doctor. I wouldn't even know where to go, and I have no money.¹⁹⁵

A number of government and humanitarian organizations are providing health services, including for victims of SGBV. (See discussion below) These programs are critically important, but they do not begin to fill the need. What is more, the government needs to conduct greater outreach efforts to ensure that those in need know how to access services.



Two students who were relocated with some of their classmates and teachers to Maiduguri due to insecurity.

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The Nigerian Government's Response to Attacks on Education

Throughout the conflict, the Nigerian government and its relevant security agencies, as well as relevant state governments, have struggled to respond effectively to protect schools from attack and to prevent abductions, including of female students and teachers.



As noted above, most of those interviewed by GCPEA reported that their schools frequently had little or no security infrastructure or equipment, and that teachers and students were often left with no or wholly inadequate protection. Schools and education personnel frequently did not have accurate information on which to base security decisions. What is more, schools and education personnel could not rely on security agencies to provide them with protection, even when they requested protection from an imminent attack.

As a result of the conflict, many schools in the northeast had to be closed, sometimes for extended periods of time, in an acknowledgment that they were not sufficiently safe for students. In Borno state, for example, “schools at all levels were closed in 22 out of 27 local government areas for at least two years, and public secondary schools in the state capital, Maiduguri, only reopened in February 2016 after internally displaced people, who occupied most of the schools, were relocated elsewhere.... Authorities reopened public schools in the state in September 2016.”¹⁹⁶ While the decision to close schools was an important interim measure to protect students and education personnel, it ultimately resulted in hundreds of thousands of children being out of school for extended periods of time. In July 2015, members of the Nigerian House of Representatives expressed deep concern that schools in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, “especially the ones located in the hinterland, had been shut down for as long as three years, denying scores of young people access to education,” and issued a motion calling on the Federal Government to reopen schools. However, others opposed the motion, stating that the Federal Government should “only reopen schools when adequate arrangements are made for the security of the students.”¹⁹⁷

After his election in May 2015, President Mohammadu Buhari set about to restructure the military response to Boko Haram in an effort to retake areas captured by the group. Buhari relocated the military command headquarters from Abuja to the Borno state capital of Maiduguri and placed greater emphasis on cooperation with the Multi-National Joint Task Force comprised of Nigeria and its northern neighbors. Over time, the reinvigorated military response was able to push Boko Haram out of much of the territory it had controlled, resulting in a gradual improvement in the security situation in the region. However, although Boko Haram no longer controls the territory it once did, it remains able to carry out attacks that result in significant loss of life, and it continues to be able to attack schools and abduct students.

Protecting Schools and Improving School Security

The Nigerian government with the support of international donors and humanitarian organizations, as well as national and international NGOs, has developed a number of initiatives and measures to rebuild schools and provide improved security for schools. Some of these initiatives are implemented by the Federal government, but there are also numerous efforts undertaken by state and local authorities. It is, however, a challenge to obtain concrete information on the number of schools that have benefited from these measures to date. In its review of Nigeria in 2017, the CEDAW Committee acknowledged the Nigerian government efforts “to address the effect of the Boko Haram insurgency on access to education by women and girls.”¹⁹⁸

However, the committee noted with concern, among other things, “the lack of information on the progress made in securing schools to ensure that girls and teachers are protected from Boko Haram insurgents.”¹⁹⁹

The Safe School Initiative and the Presidential Committee for the Northeast Initiative

The Nigerian government launched the Safe School Initiative (SSI) on May 7, 2014, with the support of the UN Special Envoy for Education Gordon Brown, the African Development Bank, a coalition of Nigerian business leaders, and foreign governments, as a response to the growing number of attacks on schools in Nigeria at the time and, in particular, to the abduction of school girls in Chibok earlier that spring. The government established the SSI “to complement its military efforts to improve security in North-East Nigeria, with targeted packages of development interventions.”²⁰⁰ The government envisioned that the initiative would establish a \$100 million fund²⁰¹ ; as of 2018, it had reportedly raised approximately \$30 million (including funds from the Nigerian government, as well as national and international donors).²⁰²

In 2015, the Safe School Initiative was brought under the authority of the Presidential Committee for the Northeast Initiative (PCNI). The PCNI was set up by President Buhari “to serve as the primary national strategy, coordination and advisory body for all humanitarian interventions, transformational and developmental efforts in the North-East region of Nigeria.”²⁰³ According to the PCNI, the SSI has been subsumed under the PCNI, which ensures continuity of the existing SSI interventions. The PCNI oversees and coordinates a broader and more comprehensive program of rehabilitation and social stabilization.”²⁰⁴ Similarly, a representative of a UN agency pointed out that the SSI has been largely wound down and is now “only a collection of remaining activities. Most interventions in the northeast are now outside the SSI.”²⁰⁵

Although the SSI no longer exists as it was initially envisioned, a representative of the PCNI stressed that the SSI’s three focus areas continue to be implemented as part of PCNI’s broader programs. These areas include:

- 1. The provision of innovative education strategies for IDP children:** “This entails the provision of innovative teaching and learning materials in IDP camps and host communities” and “also involves the promotion of double shift schooling, mobilization of volunteer teachers, provision of temporary classrooms, school in a box, school on wheels, and other measures.”²⁰⁶
- 2. The transfer of children living in areas at high risk of insurgent activity to Federal Unity Colleges in safer regions of the country.** This component of the SSI is implemented by the SSI Secretariat working with State governments and the Federal Ministry of Education, which identified 2,400 students (800 per state) and funded full scholarships for the remainder of their secondary education. As of May 2018, there were still 1,446 students enrolled in the Student Transfer Program.²⁰⁷
- 3. The development of a Safe School Model, which will be piloted in select schools in the northeast and subsequently rolled out across the country.** “The Safe School Model will be the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, which is currently under construction. The school is being constructed in partnership with the Engineering Corps of the Nigerian Army.



This intervention includes the implementation of a school rehabilitation program that will contain the following:

- Upgrading schools' infrastructure (introduction of modern and environmentally sustainable systems like solar power to ensure that schools are well lit, provision of water and sanitation facilities)
- Physical protection (e.g. proper fencing, installation of alarm systems, school guards, community-based policing); and
- Developing school security plans and rapid response systems, and training staff as school safety officers. amongst other measures."²⁰⁸

The PCNI expects the construction and renovation of the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, school to be completed in 2018. No timeline has yet been established for rolling out the Safe School Model for other schools.

Victims' Support Fund

The Victims' Support Fund (VSF) was established to provide assistance to communities that had suffered from Boko Haram violence. The chairman of the Victims Support Fund is Theophilous Danjuma, a retired army general, who also heads the PCNI. Among other things, the VSF focuses on:

- "Economic empowerment for [women] victims of terrorism,"
- "Educational support for terror-affected and displaced children," and
- "Psychosocial support for people affected by terrorism."²⁰⁹

Although it is not clear how much money the Victims' Support Fund has raised to date for its priority areas, in its 2015 report to CEDAW, the government stated that it had been "able to raise N100 Billion (\$625m USD) in support of the care and rehabilitation for the victims of Boko Haram, who have been predominantly women and children."²¹⁰ The VSF programs have included reconstruction of school buildings,²¹¹ and training of teachers – so-called training the trainer programs – "to enable them to train other teachers to provide adequate support and impact to children in post-conflict situation. This will also equip them with relevant knowledge and skills to improve the outcomes of their teaching and daily interactions with pupils."²¹²

Following the Dapchi abductions in February 2018, some Nigerian activists and political leaders have expressed concern that the SSI does not appear to have improved security for schools in the northeast. State education officials have also raised questions about the government's failure to provide enhanced security measures for schools in the region. "It is unfortunate [that], up until now, they have not done anything for us in terms of providing some security measures to be taken in our schools," said Mohammed Lamin, commissioner for Yobe's Ministry of Education. "Maybe they may come in the near future to start fencing some of the schools or providing some security equipment to us, but up until this moment, nothing has been done. It is only the state government that has been providing all these things to our schools."²¹³



Some have also raised questions about the management of funds raised for SSI projects. On May 9, 2018, the Nigerian House of Representatives voted unanimously to investigate the management of the SSI funds. Representative Shuaibu Abdulrahman stated that “an undisclosed amount of money was collected to enhance physical security around vulnerable schools to check abduction of students in schools in the North-east” and claimed that “there was no evidence that schools in the area had now been secured or fortified with CCTV Cameras, high perimeter fence and generators as provided in the original concept of the initiative.”²¹⁴ According to Representative Abdulrahman, the absence of improved security measures contributed to the February Dapchi abductions. PCNI representatives, however, suggested that most of the SSI funds had been used to pay for education of the 2,400 who were transferred to safer areas. In addition, a representative of the PCNI stressed that the costs of repairing schools are higher than normal because contractors are reluctant to work in areas that are still insecure.²¹⁵

While not able to comment on questions of the government’s financial management of SSI funds, many of the education personnel interviewed by GCPEA are concerned that the government has not developed a comprehensive and coordinated security plan for schools. Education in emergencies specialists based in the northeast stressed that the government has failed to develop a set of guidelines on how best to protect schools from attack and pointed to the Dapchi abductions as evidence that the government’s efforts to prevent attacks on schools are inadequate. A representative of an international organization working in Maiduguri stated:

Although there is heightened awareness about protection concerns related to education, there is no deliberate and widescale agreement by the government on specific security measures that should be provided for schools in insecure areas in the northeast. I was shocked to find out in the media reports that there were no school guards or [militia] nearby protecting the school in Dapchi, especially given that it is a girls’ school in a remote area!”²¹⁶

Instead, the representative noted that “many of the government’s security responses after incidents such as the abduction of children from schools are reactionary but are not sustained over time.”²¹⁷

With regard to specific government measures to protect female students, the representative observed:

I am not aware of any pro-active government initiatives for the safety and security of children, and the [Borno] State Ministry of Education and SUBEB have not yet rolled out any specific set of actions to prevent especially girls from being abducted.²¹⁸

The current lack of a central and easily accessible data bank on school reconstruction and security initiatives and needs impedes government efforts to prioritize the provision of enhanced security measures for those schools most vulnerable to attack. Furthermore, without comprehensive data on school security, there is no reliable basis by which to assess the effectiveness of initiatives to improve school security and to inform future policies and practice. Parents,



students, and education personnel currently lack the information they need to feel confident in the measures being taken to make schools secure.

The structures that govern the provision of education in Nigeria, including the reconstruction and securing of schools, is particularly complex and appears to be an obstacle to transparency. Education is the joint responsibility of a multitude of actors within the three tiers of government – federal, state, and local area authorities. In 2013, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education stressed that “the extensive set of institutional and intergovernmental relations for the provision of basic education makes the provision of education in Nigeria particularly complex. Roles and responsibilities between the three tiers of government, and between government and para-statal, are largely undefined, leaving no government or agency clearly accountable for results. Moreover, these relations have become even more complicated in recent years ...”²¹⁹

This complex structure also makes it exceedingly difficult to find comprehensive data, as each ministry or agency has, at best, only a piece of the overall picture. A representative of the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MRRR), which was created in 2015 to oversee the rebuilding and resettling of Boko Haram victims in Borno state, observed that “the data [to assess the impact of security improvements in schools] are not easily accessible. They are scant and scattered among the various ministries and agencies.” The representative also pointed out that it is difficult to get a concrete overview of the expenditures made for school



Members of the #BringBackOurGirls campaign during a sit-out in Abuja, Nigeria, May 18, 2016, after receiving news that a teenager kidnapped by Boko Haram from her school in Chibok more than two years earlier had been rescued.

© REUTERS/Afolabi Sotunde

reconstruction and security because “donors often do not give money directly to the ministries but provide building materials or other in-kind donations to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.”²²⁰ It is critical that the government take steps to address this information/data gap.

Government Prosecutions of Crimes Against Civilians

The government has conducted investigations into Boko Haram’s attacks on civilians, but until recently most suspects being held in military custody had never been charged with a crime, much less been tried.²²¹ In September 2017, the Federal Ministry of Justice announced the start of trials of over 1,600 Boko Haram suspects being held in a military base in Kainji (Niger state).²²² Human rights groups expressed concern that many of the suspects have been held for long periods of time without charge, without the opportunity to appear before a judge, and without access to legal counsel. Groups also questioned the government’s decision to conduct closed trials in Kainji, without the presence of media or civil society monitors. With regard to the trials in Kainji, Human Rights Watch stated that “concerns about due process and fair hearing heightened when, within four days of trial, 45 of the first batch of 565 defendants were convicted and sentenced to between three to 31 jail terms for undisclosed charges. The court threw out charges against 34, discharged 468, and referred 25 defendants for trial in other courts.”²²³

In February 2018, in the second phase of the Kainji trials, 205 people were convicted for their involvement with Boko Haram. Among these, Haruna Yahaya, a 35-year-old former trader, reportedly confessed to playing a role in the Chibok abductions, and was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.²²⁴ Similarly, on July 13, 2018, the Kainji courts sentenced a second man, Banzana Yusuf, to 20 years imprisonment for his role in “planning and kidnapping” the Chibok schoolgirls.²²⁵ On July 19, 2018, Borno State Police Commissioner Damian Chukwu stated that security forces had captured 22 Boko Haram suspects, eight of which had confessed to participating in the abduction of Chibok schoolgirls in 2014, among other crimes.²²⁶ No other details were provided about the role these suspects may have played in the Chibok abductions.

The trial of another 651 suspects being held at Giwa barracks in Maiduguri (Borno state) is scheduled to start immediately after the completion of the trials in Kainji.²²⁷

Human rights groups have also called on the Nigerian government to investigate abuses allegedly committed by Nigerian security forces during the conflict in the northeast and to hold perpetrators accountable. In March 2017, the Nigerian Army convened a Special Board of Inquiry to investigate allegations that its forces had committed human rights violations in the northeast, including in its detention centers. The Special Board’s report was not made public, but it presented some of its findings in a press briefing. Among other things, the Special Board documented poor detention conditions at military detention facilities and found that “these detention conditions, and delays in trials of alleged Boko Haram members, sometimes resulted in deaths in custody.”²²⁸ It also expressed concern about suspects’ lack of access to legal counsel. According to the United States Department of State, the Special Board “reportedly did not find



any individual member of the [Nigerian Army] at fault for any human rights violation in military detention facilities, nor did it recommend prosecutions or other accountability measures for any member of the Armed Forces of Nigeria or other government entity.”²²⁹

On August 4, 2017, acting President Yemi Osinbajo announced that he was setting up a civilian-led commission of inquiry “to review compliance of the Nigerian Armed Forces with human rights obligations and rules of engagement, especially in insurgency situations.”²³⁰ The Presidential Investigation Panel to Review Compliance of the Armed Forces with Human Rights Obligations and Rules of Engagement (PIP) is authorized to investigate violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The PIP held a number of hearings, the last of which reportedly took place on November 8, 2017.²³¹ Although the commission was expected to submit its report within 90 days, as of this writing, no report had been made public.

Other Important Government Initiatives

As noted above, Nigeria was among the first group of 37 states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration on May 29, 2015, and further expressed its commitment to the goals of the Declaration by signing a Letter of Endorsement on March 8, 2018. The government, through the Federal Ministry of Education and the Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative, has also supported the review of Nigeria’s legal framework for the protection of education institutions from attack in Nigeria, conducted by the EiEWGN.

In another important initiative, the Nigerian government launched The National Strategic Plan to End Child Marriage in Nigeria, 2016-2021, in November 2016, which seeks to end child marriage in Nigeria by 2030. The plan is based on a coordination platform that is led by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and co-chaired by Save the Children.²³²



Adolescent girl with her baby in an Accelerated Learning Program for basic literacy and life skills run by Plan International. The young mother dropped out of school due to the insurgency but the program has enabled her to continue her education.

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Programmatic Responses from International Agencies and International and National NGOs

The gradual improvement in the security environment in northeast Nigeria over the last two years has allowed an expansion of the humanitarian response and an increase in critical INGO programs to address the needs of the conflict-affected population.



In September 2017, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that the humanitarian response had been significantly scaled up in the northeast, with over 90 humanitarian organizations working in the region, and that “as of mid-2017, more than 500 international and 2,000 national staff are dedicated to the humanitarian response, mainly in Borno State.”²³³ A significant number of humanitarian actors, often working in close collaboration with various government ministries, are carrying out programs of specific relevance to the concerns addressed in this report, and especially to the mitigation of some of the harms caused to girls and women in the context of attacks on schools. Although it is beyond the scope of this report to conduct a comprehensive review of these initiatives, GCPEA would like to highlight a few of the important efforts—both large and small in scale—that are underway in the region to respond to the education and protection needs of survivors of attacks on education.²³⁴ It should be noted, however, that ongoing insecurity and a lack of sufficient funding for the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) continue to hamper efforts to reach and respond to those in need.

Programs to Improve Access to Education

Many organizations are working to address the enormous challenges in access to education that have occurred as a result of and/or been exacerbated by the conflict. For example, international agencies, NGOs and national partners, working in collaboration with government agencies, have provided non-formal education opportunities for IDP children who are out of school, constructed temporary learning centers, and where possible helped mainstream children into the formal education system. A number of organizations have programs specifically designed to address the educational needs of female students.

UNICEF, which co-leads the education sector²³⁵ response together with the Nigerian government, is the largest international organization active in this field. UNICEF, together with its implementing partners carries out a range of important education programs that reach large numbers of children in the northeast. Between the start of the new school year in September 2017 and January 2018, UNICEF and its partners enrolled a total of 481,850 children in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. The organization reported that 225,467 of those enrolled were girls and 256,383 were boys.²³⁶ UNICEF has a number of important programs to provide material support necessary to facilitate the enrollment of children. For example, UNICEF reported that 9,504 sets of uniforms with sandals and stockings were distributed to girls to encourage girl-child enrollment.²³⁷ It also supplied teaching and learning materials to 468,803 school-aged children during 2017.²³⁸ The organization is also conducting a media campaign to highlight the importance of education and encourage parents to enroll their children. UNICEF supports the establishment of temporary learning spaces and the rehabilitation of pre-existing classrooms/schools. The organization reported that UNICEF and implementing partners reached 904,578 “school-aged children including adolescents through schools and temporary facilities in safe learning environments” during 2017.²³⁹



The Education Crisis Response was a three-year program funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Creative Associates International and local partners. Although designed to provide non-formal education to out-of-school boys and girls, it was sensitive to the special needs of out-of-school girls and developed interventions – including community outreach efforts – to support girls to stay in school and complete their education. (See Box A) In other initiatives, such as the Technology Enhanced Learning for All (TELA) program of the American University Nigeria, alternative delivery of education was especially effective in improving educational outcomes for girl students. (See Box B)

BOX A:

Non-formal Education Programs/Outreach to Parents of Female Students

As noted earlier, the conflict has had a devastating impact on education in the northeast, causing a significant increase in the already high number of out-of-school children. Many of the international NGOs working in the region, as well as many of their Nigerian partners, have attempted to respond to the crisis by developing non-formal and accelerated education programs. The Education Crisis Response, which was one of the largest such programs, is highlighted here because of its efforts to engage parents and communities to support girls' education. Its experiences highlight the positive potential of such programs and also underscore some of the challenges that impede programmatic impact.

The Education Crisis Response Program was set up in 2014 to support non-formal and alternative education for IDP children in the northeast who had no other access to schools. The initiative established 1,456 (935 distinct) learning centers across the northeast

that provided classes for 68,407 (29,829 male: 38,578 female) students during the three years of the project. Approximately, 45,000 of these students were based in Borno state. Educational facilitators who were trained by the program provided class instruction at least three days a week for at least three hours a day, following a government-approved curriculum. Children were provided with school materials, but also in-class meals, and psychosocial support.²⁴⁰

Ayo Oladini, the former director of Education Crisis Response, noted that efforts to engage parents in their daughters' education was important to the success of the program. He stressed:

Most parents in the north [of Nigeria] will not send their daughters to school if they are not sure about safety. The experiences of this conflict have underscored the risks for their daughters, but there are other risks as well. Many parents



are also worried about the potential for sexual abuse from teachers in the schools.... So, we worked to involve the parents in the academic program and in helping select who the teachers of their wards would be in the school. Parents of girls need to be more engaged in decisions about their daughters' education and they need to know who is teaching their daughters, if they are to feel comfortable sending their girls to school.²⁴¹

Hallmark Leadership Initiative (HALI) is an Education Crisis Response partner based in Maiduguri, that provides non-formal education programs for IDP children, many of whom currently have no access to formal education. As a participant in the Education Crisis Response project, HALI distributed learning materials and had learning facilitators (education mentors) who provided accelerated learning support for 1,400 IDP children in 28 learning centers in Borno state.²⁴² The participants were taught numeracy, literacy, and social and emotional learning skills. Participants in youth and adolescent learning centers were also given skill acquisition training to help them support themselves after the project. Abubakar Askira, the Program Director of HALI, noted that non-formal programs are particularly useful for helping girls continue with their education because they often have flexible schedules. He noted:

Given the dire economic situation for many of these girls' families, they are forced to help the household by hawking

or doing other small business during the day. So, it is particularly important that a program such as HALI's has a flexible schedule for the students, preferably allowing them to attend school in the afternoon....²⁴³

At the time of GCPEA's visit to one of Hallmark's learning centers based in Maiduguri, all participants in the program had been evaluated to determine their academic level and to prepare them to be mainstreamed into the formal school system. The children were visibly excited about their studies and the possibility of enrolling in formal schools. One of Hallmark's education mentors stated, "The children have developed a passion for education that they did not have before. You can see their excitement. For many, this is the first time that they have been in a school environment. For others, they have been out for a long time because of the conflict. It would be a real disappointment to learn that, after all this, they cannot go to school."²⁴⁴

Unfortunately, in late 2017, the Borno State Ministry of Education informed Education Crisis Response that it only had the capacity to mainstream 18,000 of the 45,000 students for the 2017-2018 school year, and reportedly even fewer were ultimately enrolled.²⁴⁵ while the remaining participants in the program were not enrolled by the state government. Askira observed:

The state government did not enroll them, so they had no option but to

◀ **BOX A continued**



Young girl participating in Hallmark Leadership Initiative's non-formal education program in Maiduguri.
© Timothy Yohanna Ali, October 2017

go back to their normal hawking and roaming about.... Despite the agreement between the project and the state partners, some schools did not allow the students to enroll saying their schools are over stretched and filled to capacity. Other head masters insisted that the learners had to pay some registration fees before they would be admitted into the schools. HALI tried its best to make sure that the learners were enrolled.²⁴⁶

BOX B:

Alternative Delivery of Educational Instruction

The American University of Nigeria (AUN) in Yola designed a Transactional Radio Instruction (TRI) program – the **Technology Enhanced Learning for All (TELA) program** – to enhance the educational outcomes for 22,000 vulnerable²⁴⁷ children in Adamawa State. A core component of the program was using radio and mobile technologies to provide literacy and numeracy lessons to those who had no access to education due to the conflict.²⁴⁸ Audu Liman, who oversees grants for AUN told GCPEA that

We had initially projected reaching 18,000 children under TELA, but at its peak, the program was the most popular show on radio Gotel and had a listenership of over 100,000. Phone in calls from as far away as Gombe and Taraba state indicated interest in the

program with many parents with children in public schools tuning in with their children and learning basic literacy and numeracy concepts.²⁴⁹

The radio broadcasts were a combination of educational lessons (30 minutes) and fun learning activities (15 minutes) “designed as a radio-drama series, accompanied by easy-to-memorize songs in the local Hausa language....”²⁵⁰ These lessons were supplemented by “synchronized workbook activities to get children engaged in learning while the radio stories and songs excite their imagination.” Educational facilitators were retained to provide support to participants at designated community learning centers during the time when the lessons were being broadcast.²⁵¹



Although the radio broadcasts only ran twice a week for 30 weeks, program implementors reported significant improvement in literacy and numeracy scores over baseline measurements, with an average improvement of 99.1% in literacy and a 97.2% increase in numeracy scores. What is more, "[i]n both literacy and numeracy tests, girls improved significantly more than boys – the difference being 20% and 25% respectively."²⁵² The Evaluation Report concludes that "[i]n addition to creating a shared space for learning within a fun atmosphere, TRI is particularly beneficial for girls. This will be especially useful in societies where there are cultural walls that stop girls from going to school."²⁵³ Dr. Jacob U. Jacob, the Interim Dean of the School of Arts & Science and Chair of the Communications & Multimedia Design Program at AUN and the lead facilitator of the TELA program, noted that:

The program was driven by the community and was very popular. So much so that songs from the program were being sung on the streets of Yola.... We need to do more research on the reasons girls responded so positively to the program, but I believe that one reason is that many of the girls felt safer and more comfortable in the smaller group sessions that were held at the learning centers.... I also think that the program tapped into young girls' strong sense of imagination and creativity. The program was fun and did not have the sense of restrictions and rules that can exist in formal school settings.²⁵⁴

The program ended in December 2017, but AUN is in the process of seeking additional funding to adapt the program for Borno state.



Young women and girls participating in the Technology Enhanced Learning for All (TELA) program, run by the American University of Nigeria.

© Gideon Musa, 2016

Psychosocial Support Programs

As discussed earlier, many in the northeast, including survivors of attacks on education, have experienced extreme levels of violence and suffer from symptoms consistent with severe traumatic stress. Many of these survivors are in need of mental health care and psychosocial support. According to OCHA, for example, as of November 2017 “at least 1.75 million conflict-affected children and 490,000 caregivers are estimated to be in need of psycho-social care due to the protracted conflict, displacement, hardship and accumulated distress.”²⁵⁵ Yet, there is a severe shortage of trained mental health professionals in the region. According to one report, there are only eight psychiatrists in all of Borno state, half of them working for the state and half working for The Neem Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Maiduguri that seeks to provide mental health care for individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress.²⁵⁶

In an effort to bridge the gap between the need for psychosocial support and the availability of trained personnel, several organizations are providing psychosocial training for teachers and others who may come into contact with affected persons. For example, the Neem Foundation has a program to train non-professional counsellors on how to treat trauma, as well as a “Counselling on Wheels” program, whereby lay counsellors and trained psychologists conduct house calls to assess mental health needs. The Neem Foundation has also “opened a dedicated child trauma center in Maiduguri [in 2017], the first of its kind in Nigeria.”²⁵⁷ Similarly, the UN reported that “UNICEF and its partners provided 402,375 children with psychosocial support between December 2014 and December 2016 through a network of trained community volunteers.”²⁵⁸

Some organizations have integrated psychosocial support as an integral component of their education programs. Several education professionals interviewed by GCPEA underscored the value that they place on psychosocial support for teachers and children, as well as specialized psychosocial training for teachers. A representative of the Nigerian Union of Teachers noted:

The training our teachers have received from the Education Crisis Response is very good and most appreciated. They have provided teachers with necessary skills to work in the classroom with traumatized children. But the teachers are also very traumatized, and this training is also valuable to them as a support intervention. So far over 3,000 teachers have received psychosocial training. The most important training has been in-school training and follow-up mentoring. That is what we need on an ongoing basis.²⁵⁹

UNICEF is working to increase the number of children whose teacher has been trained in psychosocial support. The organization’s 2018 target is to reach over 1 million children.



Support for Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

OCHA has reported that “the conflict has also increased the risk of sexual violence for girls and labour exploitation for boys. Data shows that, among the GBV survivors seeking assistance, 44 per cent are children, of whom 98 per cent are girls, and 46 per cent reported having suffered from sexual violence.”²⁶⁰ Survivors are in need of a range of services, but often do not report the violence or seek assistance. Some are still in areas that are hard to reach and may not have any health care services, not to mention available psychosocial care. Plan International has developed mobile units that travel to areas still too insecure to allow staff to be based there on a more long-term basis. These units provide, among other things, health care and psychosocial support to victims of SGBV who would otherwise have no access to these critical services. (See Box C)

BOX C:

Mobile Teams Providing Health Care and Psychosocial Support to Victims of SGBV

A number of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) working in northeastern Nigeria have developed mobile outreach teams to get services to communities that would otherwise have no access to desperately needed services, such as healthcare, trauma counseling, and education support. One of the largest initiatives is being led by Plan International, which has been working in the region since 2016 and currently has a range of programs to respond to the impact of the conflict in the region, with a particular emphasis on girls and women.

In an effort to reach those living in remote and often insecure areas where the health and education infrastructure has been devastated by the conflict, Plan International has developed mobile teams to deliver critical assistance in areas that are too insecure for team members to be based. Instead, the teams travel to remote areas in the morning to

provide services but leave before dusk. According to Rashid Bangurah, a Child Protection in Emergencies officer with Plan International, the organization has integrated Child Protection mobile teams, which provide “holistic mobile programming aimed at reaching survivors and other child protection beneficiaries and communities with multiple services.”²⁶¹ The teams, which include a case worker, psychosocial worker/counsellor, a nurse, and nutritionist, as well as a gender-based violence specialist and a community engagement officer, provide health and nutrition screenings, psychosocial support, and other services to families and communities that are in areas where these services are no longer available due to the conflict. Plan currently has three mobile teams operating in seven communities in Adamawa and Borno states.

◀ **BOX C continued**

Plan staff take great care to engage in community dialogue and sensitization as part of their efforts to ensure that the community understands and accepts them. This outreach is important for the team's security, and also for the effectiveness of their programs. Elizabeth Maiyaki, a Gender Based Violence specialist for one of the mobile teams, described the community outreach efforts:

We have a participatory method, which makes sure that every group within the community can participate in the dialogue. We conduct dialogues separately with groups of women, adolescent girls, men, and children, so that everybody's voice can be heard... There are some issues that women would not be willing to discuss openly if men were present. We talk about GBV issues and key protection issues, and how to prevent and respond to them.²⁶²

Some of the most challenging work is identifying and providing services to traumatized young women, who have been abducted and spent time in Boko Haram captivity. Many are survivors of rape and other violence, and in desperate need of support. However, because of the shame and stigma associated with SGBV, it is often quite difficult to reach these girls and women and provide them with support.

The gender-based violence specialists work closely with families, local leaders, schools, health services, child protection

agencies, and others, to discreetly identify survivors of SGBV. These specialists take care to ensure that survivors of SGBV are not publicly identified or singled out for services. Instead, psychosocial support is a component of the general women's health services, which are offered to all women. In that way, girls and women who have suffered sexual violence can obtain services without fear of being identified.

According to Elizabeth Maiyaki, survivors of abduction and SGBV have a range of needs:

For those who have been abducted, psychosocial support is the first thing they need. Some of them were forced to drop out of school as a result of what they have experienced, and they may not have the means to provide for themselves, so we also help them get access to school, if they want to go back to school, and we provide them with income-generating activities so that they have a means of livelihood.²⁶³

When she encounters a more complex case, Maiyaki makes a referral to representatives of other international NGOs, who may be able to provide professional trauma counseling. For cases involving health concerns, Plan may also make referrals to the government hospital. The team then follows up to make sure that the woman or girl has received the services she needs.



The work of the mobile teams is not only potentially dangerous, but it is time-intensive work. Maiyaki described:

We do not go only once and expect that the community will be open to dialogue on sensitive issues. We go over and over again to make sure that they understand what we are doing and saying. Our teams go three times a week to do sensitization, screenings, and case identification. Each team has two days a week for follow-up on referrals and other cases. Sensitization is something that has to be done regularly to gain trust and for effective results. We usually have to meet with the community several times before they begin to open up.



But Maiyaki believes that the program has made an impact:

I can say that the program has made a great impact. Among other things, malnourished children are now well

nourished, women and girls now know how to access services they need, the children, women and girls' resilience has been built back.... We no longer find some of the issues we found at the beginning of our intervention ... For example, in the beginning of our visits, women were not allowed to sit with the men to discuss very sensitive issues affecting the community, but now we see that women are participating in discussions about issues that affect them and their well-being.... Even on very difficult issues, we have seen some progress. Girls who had returned from captivity were stigmatized and not free to go out in the community. But after some time of sensitization work, we see that now the community understands that what happened to these girls was not their fault, and that they have a right to have their voices heard and the right to services.



UNICEF and its implementing partners are supporting children and women who have been associated with armed groups and/or have been victims of SGBV, including victims of forced marriage, sexual violence, and children born out of sexual violence. UNICEF reported that it and its implementing partners had reached 6,082 such victims during 2017.²⁶⁴ UNICEF and its partners work with “communities and families to fight stigma against survivors of sexual violence and to build a protective environment for former abductees,” including by “working with religious leaders and community elders to help survivors to return to a normal life, feel accepted by their communities and become confident in their own futures.”²⁶⁵ UNICEF’s implementing partner International Alert has conducted “community-level sensitization workshops and family support sessions aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination against girls and women who survived conflict-related sexual violence. Of the total beneficiaries reached, 282 (girls 131, women 151) were survivors of conflict related sexual violence.”²⁶⁶

Programs to Enhance School Security

UNICEF has developed an important program to train teachers to assess risks at their school and to manage a crisis. Dr. Yusuf Ismail, UNICEF Education Specialist in the Maiduguri office, described the Education in Emergencies program:

We also train the teachers in these schools in psychosocial support and risk reduction. That's really important because in a conflict setting like northeast Nigeria, teachers learn how to conduct different exercises in the classroom – such as how to do a risk analysis of their school... Our teachers learn how to manage an emergency responsibly and how to evacuate calmly and efficiently to protect children.²⁶⁷

Dr. Ismail noted that they had already seen the benefit of such a training program for teachers:

During the training there was an attack on one of the towns where our teachers were based. It was upsetting to see how many people panicked and, in some cases, even abandoned their children, but our educators were able to assist and managed to use some of their training to coordinate people and keep the children calm. It's clear how this training is so useful.²⁶⁸

UNICEF has also introduced programs to strengthen School-based Management Committees and to encourage teachers and other education personnel to work in collaboration with the SBMCs to assess and develop responses to risks at their school.

The Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria (EiEWGN) has played an active and important role in coordinating education programs in the northeast and carrying out advocacy to improve education responses. The EiEWGN carried out an important Joint Educational Needs Assessment in fall 2017, which provided much needed information on the educational needs and challenges in the region, and which will help inform more effective education responses.²⁶⁹ As noted above, the EiEWGN has also been proactive in raising awareness about the Safe Schools Declaration. In 2018 it commissioned a review to identify legal gaps in the protection of schools and universities in Nigeria²⁷⁰ and developed an advocacy plan to push forward full implementation of the SSD. The EiEWGN stated:

The Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) Advocacy Plan contemplates an improvement in national efforts to prevent schools, universities, students, teachers, academics and other education staff from being attacked; it encourages the investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators of attacks; sharing knowledge about effective responses; and helping those who have been attacked to recover and rebuild their lives.²⁷¹

GCPEA welcomes the recent efforts of the EiEWGN with the support and engagement of the Federal Ministry of Education and the Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative to implement the Safe Schools Declaration and protect education from attack.



Children in Michika I in Adamawa state learn in a shed after the school in their community was destroyed by Boko Haram. Plan International is supporting the government by constructing Temporary Learning Spaces, providing teaching and learning materials, and recruiting volunteers to teach due to a shortage of teachers.

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Expanded Recommendations

Nigerian girls and women have the right to education without fear of threats, harassment, abduction, or SGBV. Although the security situation in Nigeria has improved significantly since the Chibok abductions in 2014, Boko Haram's abduction of 111 girls from Dapchi in February 2018 is a grave reminder that girls and women remain vulnerable to attack in Nigerian schools. What is more, many of those who have been abducted remain in captivity, while those who are out of captivity continue to suffer a range of harm.

Even in the context of an active conflict, there are effective strategies that can reduce harm to students, including girls and women. In the wake of abuses, measures to assist survivors are of key importance.

The Government of Nigeria has a responsibility to protect schools and ensure that they are safe for students and teachers. Others, including local leaders, communities, parents, school administrators, and teachers, can also play an important role in making schools safe. The following draws on GCPEA's previous recommendations regarding the protection of education, while adding recommendations specific to the current context in Nigeria. GCPEA also makes recommendations to Boko Haram leaders regarding the gross and serious violations perpetrated by its combatants.²⁷²

To the Nigerian Authorities

- 1. The federal government, and relevant federal and state ministries, and military leaders, should urgently address issues of protection for female and male students and staff of educational institutions. They should:**
 - **Implement the Safe Schools Declaration.** The Government of Nigeria has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD). It should continue to build on its efforts to implement the Declaration, including by considering enacting a national legislative bill on the Safe Schools Declaration, and reviewing and updating the military code of conduct to ensure it complies with the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*, as recommended by the Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria;
 - **Raise awareness of the risks associated with the military use of educational infrastructure.** The Government of Nigeria should take steps to raise awareness among security and military actors of the risks associated with the military use of educational infrastructure, including the particular risks for women and girls. The government should also raise awareness among state authorities, and community leaders and members, of the risks associated with the military use of educational infrastructure, including linked violations such as child recruitment and sexual exploitation and abuse, with the aim of reducing the practice of offering the use of such buildings to the military;
 - **Protect female students and teachers.** The government should take all appropriate measures consistent with Nigeria's responsibility under international humanitarian and human rights law to protect female students and teachers from abduction and violence and to obtain the immediate release of all who are still held captive by Boko Haram;
 - **Adopt gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive education policies.** The Federal government, as well as state governments and relevant federal and state ministries, should develop gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive educational policies and practices, in accordance with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, IASC's Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, and UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence



in Emergencies, among other international standards on gender-based violence in emergencies, and take all necessary steps to ensure that all students and educators, including specifically female students and teachers, can learn and teach in a safe and secure environment;

- **Provide financial support for enhanced protection measures.** The Federal government, with the support of international donors, should increase funding to enhance security measures for at-risk schools, including physical barriers, emergency communications systems, systematic early warning systems, the development of comprehensive school-based safety and security plans, and programs to provide security training for educators, among other measures recommended in this report; and
- **Strengthen data collection on measures taken to enhance school security.** The Nigerian government should strengthen and systematize data collection related to its efforts to enhance school security, including data on specific steps it has taken to improve the safety of female students and teachers. This data should include, among others, the measures taken to date to improve security, how many schools have benefitted from such measures, and the types of improvements that have been undertaken. A data bank should be established that provides a comprehensive overview of these government school security efforts, and this data should be made easily accessible not only to those working in the education sector, but to the public and media.

2. The federal government, as well as state governments and relevant federal and state ministries, and military leaders should urgently implement risk analyses and responses. They should:

- **Conduct a thorough risk analysis for each school that is currently open to students.** Include all types of education at all affected locations, prioritizing schools located in remote areas with female students. The risk analysis should identify possible threats to the school, students, teachers, and community members, and assess the probability of attack. Risk analyses should also assess vulnerabilities in school infrastructure, assess and map evacuation routes, and identify the adequacy of means to mitigate risks and vulnerabilities. (See recommendation below regarding relevant criteria to be considered);
- **Close schools and universities for safety reasons.** If the government determines that a school is vulnerable to attack and that adequate mitigation is not possible, the school should be closed. Where possible and drawing on the lessons learned from its previous relocation efforts, the government should provide relocation programs for students to go elsewhere in order to continue their education in a safe location with as little disruption as possible (see recommendation below on minimizing disruption of education). However, regardless of whether relocation is immediately possible, the school should only be reopened after a new risk analysis determines that the school is safe and secure;
- **Install physical protection and barriers around schools, particularly in remote areas.** As a matter of urgency, the government should ensure that all schools, particularly those operating in remote areas, have physical protection, including but not limited to boundary walls and/or fences, razor wire on top of school walls, and reinforced gates and doors; and

- **Ensure that all schools have emergency communications.** This should include direct lines to the nearest security forces and police, with a specific, pre-designated contact point within these units.
3. **The federal government, as well as state governments and relevant federal and state ministries, and military leaders should improve early warning systems and protective response. They should:**
- **Prioritize the protection of civilians in conflict, including in military and policy documents.** Take steps to prevent abductions and sexual violence against female students and ensure that this priority is translated into effective policies, including by giving a standing order to security forces to respond immediately to calls for help and protection when an attack is imminent or underway at a school. Police and military units should identify and assign an emergency response contact person within each unit (possibly within a Rapid Reaction Unit, see below) and ensure that schools and local education officials know how to contact this person in an emergency;
 - **Create a Rapid Reaction Unit within police and military units.** The Rapid Reaction Units should be specifically assigned responsibility for being first responders to attacks on schools and the prevention of abductions of students and educators. These units should have specific training in protection of female students and teachers from abduction and sexual violence, among other things;
 - **Create systematic early warning systems.** In particular, the government should provide school administrators, students, and teachers, Ministry of Education personnel, and local communities with accurate, up-to-date security information. The Ministry of Defense should provide Ministry of Education personnel, school administrators, and local police forces with sufficient notice before security forces withdraw from an area or make other significant changes that could affect school safety;
 - **Ensure stakeholder and community role in decision-making.** The government should use dialogue and participatory consensus processes to consult students, teachers, school administrators, and local communities in determining protection measures, particularly to prevent attacks on schools and abduction of students, especially female students. These processes should be conducted in collaboration with the School-based Management Committee, which can oversee implementation of identified measures. The Federal and relevant state Ministries of Education should ensure that there is sufficient adult oversight and support at schools at all times, and especially at night for boarding schools;
 - **Avoid military use of education premises.** The Ministry of Defense should issue orders to all Nigerian security forces, including pro-government militias such as the Civilian Joint Task Force, to avoid using schools or universities for military purposes. Under extenuating circumstances, when no viable alternative is available, the military use should be ended as soon as possible, and any traces or indication of militarization or fortification should be completely removed from the schools that were used. Security reviews should



be conducted on a regular basis to assess whether continued military use is necessary so that it can be brought to an end as quickly as possible. The Ministry should also establish protocols for external, civilian avenues through which to hold accountable units that violate orders to avoid using schools or universities for military purposes; and

- **Update and strictly enforce codes of conduct for military and pro-government armed groups.** Such codes should set out security forces' responsibility to protect students and teachers and avoid taking actions that might endanger them in accordance with international standards. To this end, the military should collaborate with child protection and gender protection actors to hold regular trainings on child protection and gender, as well as on best practices for protecting girls and women from attacks, particularly in school settings.

4. The government, including relevant federal and state education ministries, and schools should develop and implement comprehensive school-based safety and security measures. They should:

- **Ensure that each school has a comprehensive school-based safety and security plan.** Such a plan should include the measures recommended here, including the establishment of school safety committees, locally developed coordination mechanisms (e.g. Parent Teacher Associations), comprehensive planning processes, risk assessments, response plans, training for education personnel, community members, parents, and students in the implementation of the safety plan, and early warning systems;²⁷³
- **Establish school security committees.** The government should expedite the establishment of a body within each school with the explicit responsibility for developing and implementing comprehensive school-based safety and security plans. This responsibility may be assigned, for example, to the School-based Management Committee or to a School-based Safety Committee designated to oversee security matters for the school. The committee should include not only the school administration, the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB), and local and state Ministry of Education representatives, but also teacher, parent and student representatives, as well as designated security experts. The committee should pay special attention to the specific concerns and protection needs of girls and women, while ensuring that the committee has gender parity and meaningfully includes women in decision-making;
- **Create information sharing protocol.** The authorities should create a protocol for handling all threats of attack, information about possible attack, or other security concerns. This should include information about the abductions of female students and teachers, and ensure that local school personnel are obligated to inform not only the designated School-based Security Committee, but also locally and regionally based security and police forces, as well as their superiors within the Ministry of Education (both Federal- and state-level) of all such threats, in order to facilitate early warning and effective early response;

- **Provide emergency preparedness training.** The authorities should provide teachers and other educational personnel with appropriate emergency preparedness training, including by conducting regular school drills and review of security protocols, to ensure that students and staff know what steps to take if their school is attacked and enhance their ability to implement relevant security protocols. This training should be updated on a regular basis, taking into account recent developments in the conflict and the context of attacks on education;
 - **Strengthen bottom up capacity and engagement in security.** The government should recognize and leverage pre-existing local structures to protect children and teachers, including by consulting parents, learners, teachers, and other education personnel on where and how to reduce risk to children in and around learning environments. Parents and community leaders should work to ensure that the learning environment is safe and secure, including by becoming and remaining involved in risk assessments, developing security protocols and response mechanisms, and selecting teachers who are trained or willing to be trained on protection measures;
 - **Establish teacher code of conduct.** The Ministry of Education should require all teachers and other educational personnel to sign a code of conduct that sets out, among other things, a commitment to respect and protect, within their ability, the rights of all students, including the rights of female students to be free from SGBV. Where codes of conduct already exist, they should be prominently displayed in the schools and rigorously enforced²⁷⁴;
 - **Increase presence of female teachers/assistants.** While recognizing that the security situation and prior attacks on teachers have reduced the number of available female teachers in the northeast, GCPEA calls on the Ministries of Education to continue to develop measures to encourage more women to become teachers and more female teachers to return to teaching, especially in areas of the northeast. Where female teachers are not available, schools should recruit women from the community as teaching assistants to promote a more protective environment for children; and
 - **Increase and improve the provision of psychosocial support services.** The government should expand efforts to provide students and teachers in conflict-affected areas of the northeast with mental health and trauma counseling services. The government should expand current efforts to train teachers, so they can provide psychosocial care to affected students where no mental health professional available.
5. **The government and relevant ministries, as well as police and military forces, where appropriate, should strengthen school infrastructure and physical protection capacity. The government should:**
- **Ensure the presence of trained and vetted school security guards appropriate to the level of risk.** Whenever feasible, GCPEA recommends prioritizing unarmed protection for schools over armed school guards because armed guards can endanger students and teachers, increasing the risk that they will be targeted by insurgents, and exposing girls and women to higher risks of SGBV and other violations.²⁷⁵ As a result, parents may be



less willing to send their children, especially their daughters, to school. However, in the current situation in Nigeria, armed guards may be the only viable means of protecting schools from attack by Boko Haram. Under such circumstances, measures should be put in place to ensure that these guards protect, instead of endanger, the students and school staff. If they are to be assigned to guard remotely located schools, the armed guards should be sufficient in number and capacity and assigned only as a temporary measure until adequate security infrastructure and physical protections can be installed;

- **Provide adequate numbers of female guards.** The authorities should provide sufficient numbers of female guards to ensure, where possible, that female guards are responsible for direct interactions with female students. Where possible, efforts should be made to ensure that male guards do not conduct body or bag searches of female students;
- **Properly train guards.** The authorities should ensure that guards are properly trained before their deployment to protect students and teachers and not take actions that might endanger them, including in best practices for protecting children as well as for protecting girls and women from attack;
- **Establish and strictly enforce codes of conduct for guards.** Such codes should set out, for example, the guards' responsibility to protect students and their duties when a school is under attack, including the duty to remain present in the school until all students have been safely evacuated or the attack has ended, and the insurgents are no longer present;
- **Facilitate the safe and confidential reporting of abuse.** Federal and state Ministries of Education should establish safe and confidential systems and protocols in schools to report abuse, including gender-based violence by security personnel, and should ensure students' access to referral mechanisms; and
- **End impunity for abuse.** The government and relevant ministries should inform students, parents, teachers, and security guards that impunity will not be tolerated for abuse. To ensure this, security forces will cooperate with external, civilian investigations and accountability processes, including criminal prosecution.

6. The government, as well as its relevant ministries, should take steps to ensure access to uninterrupted education. It should:

- **Develop criteria for closure and re-opening of schools.** The government should establish clear and transparent criteria for determining when to close and reopen schools due to insecurity. The criteria should prioritize the protection and safety of students and staff while also striving to continue education in a secure environment.²⁷⁶ The determining criteria should include whether or not:
 - » The school has reinforced perimeter walls and other physical protective measures that are adequate to prevent insurgents from gaining access to the campus;
 - » Guards or other security personnel are adequate in number, training, and capacity (see more below) to ward off an attack;



- » The school has adequate security and emergency preparedness plans and the level of training of teachers and other education personnel in their use;
 - » The distance and response time of locally-based police and security forces; and
 - » The school has means of emergency communication with locally-based forces.
- **Minimize interruption of learning.** When a school must be closed due to insecurity, the authorities should consider whether students can be safely relocated to a more secure area, in order to avoid disruption of their education. School administrators and relevant government agencies should take all appropriate measures to engage parents in this process so that they feel confident allowing their daughters to relocate with their classmates, and should encourage female students to continue to pursue their education even when relocation is required. School administrators and teachers should proactively develop programs and policies to respond effectively to the specific protection concerns of relocated children, such as bullying or social ostracism of children relocated from Boko Haram areas;
 - **Support temporary substitute educational arrangements.** The government should support and expand, with international donor support, non-formal and certified accelerated education opportunities to allow those who have missed out on education to catch up in the absence of formal ones. There should be safe spaces for girls that provide non-formal and accelerated education. The government should expedite efforts to ensure that students in these non-formal programs are mainstreamed into formal schools as soon as possible, sit for final examinations as in the formal system, or have access to relevant, good quality vocational training opportunities. For those female students who want to go to school but cannot be mainstreamed yet (due to lack of available school slots, for example), consider programs to engage parents and raise awareness about the benefits of the non-formal education program and to assure them that there is a clear pathway for their daughters to reintegrate into the formal school system. Recognizing that some individual girls may not choose to be mainstreamed, ensure that they have access to sufficient and good quality vocational and life skills training options;
 - **Explore and expand possibilities for alternative delivery of education.** The federal and state Ministries of Education should form a planning committee to explore and expand provision of alternative delivery of education. Such programs may include distance-learning, online learning, and radio and television learning. These can be temporary methods of learning support until formal schooling resumes, but longer-term possibilities for distance-learning may be explored especially for girls; and
 - **Inform public about steps taken, and progress made to secure schools.** The Ministry of Education should provide detailed information about the steps it has taken to secure schools. It should also conduct targeted outreach with parents of school-age children to reassure them and their children and encourage the families to keep their children in, or return them, to school.



7. The government, and relevant federal and state ministries, should take steps to mitigate harm after attacks on schools. They should:

- **Provide medical and psychosocial support for victims.** The government should take necessary steps to expand availability of free and confidential medical and psychosocial services for victims of abduction and other conflict-related violence, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and ensure that victims are aware of such services and how to access them. It should also ensure that staff at medical facilities are trained to deliver confidential and comprehensive medical treatment and psychosocial support, including post-rape care in accordance with World Health Organization (WHO) standards;
- **Ensure equal access of victims to health care, psychosocial support services, and education programs.** Such programs should not discriminate against girls and women on the basis of their gender or experience of violations, such as abduction, forced marriage, SGBV, and other violations documented in this report;
- **Provide rehabilitation for abducted women and girls.** The authorities should expand and enhance measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of all abducted women and girls, including providing financial assistance for those who may not be financially supported by their families;
- **Conduct community outreach to raise awareness about violence suffered by abducted girls and women.** The government, in collaboration with international and non-governmental organizations, should develop programs to sensitize communities and local government officials to the vulnerabilities and risks faced by these girls and women and their children, especially as they begin to return to their pre-conflict homes. They should work with communities, local government officials, and other actors to develop effective protection and support mechanisms for these women and their children;²⁷⁷
- **Support children born as a result of rape during captivity.** The authorities, in collaboration with Nigerian NGOs, should provide specialized psychosocial support and other services for the children born as a result of rape by Boko Haram, including long-term child protection monitoring and support;
- **Educate and empower girls after early marriage.** The authorities, in collaboration and consultation with Nigerian civil society, should expand measures to mitigate the harms caused by early marriage, including special programs to encourage continuation of education after marriage or, where that is not possible, economic empowerment programs and skills acquisition initiatives;
- **Respect legal age of marriage.** Federal and state authorities should ensure the adoption and enforcement of the Child Rights Act of 2003, a Federal law that sets 18 years as the legal age of marriage for both men and women, in all states in Nigeria, particularly in the northeast;
- **Develop maternal health and family planning programs that are designed to address the particular needs of adolescent girls.** Outreach efforts should be undertaken to ensure that adolescent girls are made aware of the availability of such services and provided with information on how to access them; and

- **Develop a clear policy to support and protect the education rights of pregnant girls.** Protect the rights of girls to continue with their education while pregnant and to re-enter school after giving birth.
- 8. The government, with the support of international donors, should review the security gaps that led to past attacks on schools. It should:**
- **Strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education.** Ensure that monitoring systems collect and report sex-disaggregated data and indicate when abductions are accompanied by rape and other forms of sexual violence;
 - **Investigate past incidents.** The government should identify patterns of abuse and any protection gaps from past attacks, including by conducting transparent and independent investigations into large-scale abductions such as in Damasak and Dapchi. It should publicize the findings of these investigations, as well as those of the investigative committee on the 2014 Chibok abductions, and incorporate lessons learned into future protection measures and strategies to prevent such abductions; and
 - **Ensure strong female role in policy development and implementation.** The authorities should take measures to ensure the involvement of female students and teachers, as well as gender specialists, in the development of security protocols and strategies to prevent abductions of female students and SGBV and to mitigate harm caused by such abuses.
- 9. The government, through the PCNI and/or relevant state ministries, such as the Borno State Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement, should prioritize protection of students in all future construction/renovation of schools. It should:**
- **Ensure the safest, most secure and accessible siting of schools.** It should work with local communities to ensure that the safest, most secure, and most accessible location is selected for all newly constructed schools and that, where possible, the new school is near a town;
 - **Ensure community engagement in siting decisions.** It should engage the meaningful participation of local communities and parents' groups in determining the location of new schools; and
 - **Ensure safe and gender-sensitive design of schools.**²⁷⁸ The government should expedite efforts, with international donor support, to ensure that newly constructed schools have adequate boundary walls or fences, emergency means of communication, and separate toilets that lock from the inside for female and male students and work promptly to install these in existing schools where they do not already exist.
- 10. The government should investigate and prosecute perpetrators of attacks on education under national and international law. They should:**
- **Ensure accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.** The government should impartially investigate and prosecute Boko Haram leaders and others responsible for abducting girls and women and for other abuses documented in this report;



- **Support international accountability measures.** The government, with the support of international agencies, should promote accountability measures through international channels, such as the International Criminal Court, the Human Rights Council, UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies, among others; and
- **Conduct gender-specific outreach.** The government, together with international actors and Nigerian civil society, should conduct gender-specific outreach to ensure that access to justice is available to affected and at-risk populations, particularly women and girl survivors of abduction and sexual violence.

To Boko Haram

Boko Haram's leadership should take all necessary measures to ensure that combatants comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including by taking the following steps to:

- Immediately cease all attacks on education, including attacks on schools and attacks on students and teachers, including the abduction of female students and teachers;
- Cease all threats to students regarding school attendance;
- Cease all forced marriages and forced conversions of women and girls;
- Take steps to prevent SGBV by Boko Haram combatants, and hold combatants accountable, in accordance with international standards;
- Allow humanitarian access, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, for women and girls;
- Take all measures necessary to ensure that its combatants strictly comply with international humanitarian law and the principles of international human rights law;
- Integrate the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* into its operational framework and take immediate steps to account for the specific needs and experiences of women and girls in the process of implementation; and
- Sign and implement Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, including in relation to educational spaces, and the Deed of Commitment prohibiting sexual violence and gender discrimination, including in relation to attacks on education.

To the International Community

The United Nations, the World Bank, and numerous governments, as well as international humanitarian actors, are already actively engaged in providing support and programming to respond to many of the issues raised in this report. However, the needs of victims of the conflict in northeastern Nigeria, and especially the multiple needs of women and girl survivors of attacks on education far exceed current resources. GCPEA therefore calls on the international community to privately and publicly urge the Nigerian government and its relevant ministries to adopt the recommendations included in this report and to take the following steps:

- **Advocate for comprehensive and sustained measures to protect education from attack.** International actors should intensify advocacy with the Nigerian government to prioritize security of schools, including the urgent assessment of security risks for each school that is currently open to students, prioritizing schools located in remote areas with female students, and other measures recommended in this report;
- **Encourage and fund protection measures.** International donors should fund protection measures, including physical barriers, emergency communications systems, systematic early warning systems, the development of comprehensive school-based safety and security plans, and programs to provide security training for educators, among other measures recommended above;
- **Advocate for independent investigation of past attacks.** The international community should strongly advocate with the government to conduct transparent and independent investigations into large-scale abductions such as in Damasak and Dapchi. International actors should urge the government to publicize the findings of these investigations, as well as those of the investigative committee on the 2014 Chibok abductions, and incorporate lessons learned into future protection measures and strategies to prevent such abductions;
- **Support efforts to minimize disruption of learning.** International donors should support efforts to minimize conflict-related disruptions to education, including by supporting the relocation of students as quickly as possible to safe areas following the closure of their school due to insecurity, and should continue to encourage development and provision of alternative means of accessing education, including by supporting non-formal and accelerated learning opportunities and alternative delivery of education, in the absence of formal ones, as well as the establishment of more safe spaces for girls that provide such non-formal and accelerated learning. International actors should continue to encourage and support efforts to mainstream students in these non-formal programs into formal schools as soon as possible;
- **Support specialized outreach to female victims of attacks on education.** International donors should support the expansion of specialized outreach to female victims of attacks on education, including those who have suffered from abduction, sexual violence, and other abuses documented in this report, in order to address their specific needs, and should continue to support and where possible expand the provision of medical and psychosocial assistance to victims of attacks on education, taking into account the specific needs and experiences of women and girls;



- **Support efforts to strengthen monitoring and reporting.** International organizations and influential governments should conduct advocacy with the Nigerian government and support its efforts to expand and strengthen monitoring and reporting on attacks on education and military use of schools and universities, including by collecting and reporting data that is disaggregated by sex;
- **Support the establishment of a data collection system and central data bank on school security initiatives.** Donors should support the establishment of a central data collection system that provides a comprehensive overview of the government's measures to improve school security and of a data bank that is easily accessible to those interested in learning what measures have been taken to enhance school security;
- **Provide targeted funding for maternal health and family planning programs.** Donors should specifically aim to reach and address the needs of pregnant girls and young mothers of school-going age;
- **Support accountability measures.** International actors in Nigeria should promote and support international accountability measures with the government, including through international channels, such as the International Criminal Court, the Human Rights Council, UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies, among others; and
- **Support implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration.** The international community should encourage and support the Nigerian government to implement fully the commitments contained in the Safe School Declaration at all levels of education, and should take immediate steps to account for the specific needs and experiences of women and girls in the process of implementation, including by supporting steps to raise awareness among security and military actors of the risks associated with the military use of educational infrastructure, including the particular risks for women and girls, and raising awareness among state authorities, and community leaders and members, of the risks associated with the military use of educational infrastructure, including linked violations such as child recruitment and sexual exploitation and abuse, with the aim of reducing the practice of offering the use of such buildings to the military.

ANNEX

Nigeria's Obligations Under International Law

Nigeria has ratified the core international human rights treaties that set out relevant standards for the protection of persons in its territory, including specific provisions related to the rights of women and girls. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).²⁷⁹ Nigeria has also ratified relevant regional instruments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol).²⁸⁰ Pursuant to these treaties, the Nigerian government has an obligation to adopt effective measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish serious human rights abuses. This obligation extends to protecting women and girls from abduction, sexual and gender-based violence, torture and other ill-treatment documented in this report.

Prohibitions Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

International human rights law guarantees the right to life, security of person and bodily integrity, and specifically prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Violence, including sexual violence, against women is recognized as a violation of these fundamental rights. Sexual violence may include rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage and pregnancy.²⁸¹ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the monitoring body of CEDAW, has stated that violence against women is a violation of the right not to be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.²⁸² In January 2016, the Special Rapporteur on Torture stated that "rape and other forms of sexual violence constitute violations of international humanitarian law and unequivocally amount to torture under international criminal law jurisprudence [footnotes omitted]."²⁸³

States also have an obligation to protect children (persons under 18 years old) against sexual violence. Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) affirms that:

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse...including sexual abuse.²⁸⁴



Furthermore, article 37 of the CRC specifies that children must be protected from torture, cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.²⁸⁵

International humanitarian law prohibits intentionally attacking or harming civilians or others who are not taking part in hostilities. It applies to non-state armed groups such as Boko Haram, as well as to Nigerian security forces, and is applicable during internal armed conflicts, such as the conflict in northeast Nigeria.²⁸⁶ International humanitarian law requires that all civilians and persons *hors de combat* be protected from torture and cruel, inhuman, humiliating or degrading treatment.²⁸⁷ It also specifically requires that all civilians and persons *hors de combat* be protected from rape or other forms of sexual violence.²⁸⁸

Pursuant to international humanitarian law, rape and other forms of sexual violence may be considered a war crime and, if carried out as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population, a crime against humanity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (the Rome Statute), includes rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and other forms of sexual violence within its mandate.²⁸⁹

Prohibitions Against Abduction

Abductions of female students from their schools is a violation of the fundamental right to security of person and bodily integrity. States have a duty to prosecute violations of this right, whether committed by an agent of the state or a non-state armed group, such as Boko Haram.²⁹⁰

Article 35 of the CRC prohibits “abduction of...children for any purpose or in any form.”²⁹¹ Abduction for use in armed groups would also violate the prohibition against recruitment or use of children by any armed force or armed group.²⁹² The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child specifically prohibits the “recruitment and direct participation in hostilities of any person under the age of 18 years.”²⁹³

Abduction for use as a suicide bomber violates not only the prohibitions against recruitment and use, but also the rights to life, security of person, freedom from torture or other ill-treatment, and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Prohibition Against Forced and Child Marriage

Forced Marriage

International human rights law protects girls and women from forced marriage. The UN Secretary-General, in the In-depth Study on Violence Against Women states:

A forced marriage is one that lacks the free and valid consent of at least one of the parties. In its most extreme form, forced marriage can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence, rape, and, in some cases, murder.²⁹⁴



Article 16 (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) states:

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure... b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent.²⁹⁵

Similarly, the ICCPR states that “No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses.”²⁹⁶

Child Marriage

Child marriage, a marriage in which at least one party is under the age of 18, violates a number of human rights principles. CEDAW states explicitly that the “betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect.”²⁹⁷ The CRC has called for the minimum age of marriage to be 18, without regard to the parents’ consent.²⁹⁸ Similarly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child prohibits “child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys” and requires that States Parties take effective action to “specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18.”²⁹⁹

International human rights bodies have made clear that child marriage is “a form of gender-based violence which disproportionately affects women and girls.”³⁰⁰ As such, it violates a number of human rights instruments that guarantee non-discrimination.³⁰¹ “The Committees on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and on the Rights of the Child have both described forced and child marriage as a manifestation of discrimination against women and girls, a violation of their rights and an obstacle to the girl child’s full enjoyment of her rights.”³⁰²

Both forced and early marriage may be considered slave-like practices. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has stated:

Women and girls in situations of child and forced marriage may experience conditions inside a marriage which meet “international legal definitions of slavery and slavery-like practices” including servile marriage, sexual slavery, child servitude, child trafficking and forced labour, and “a potentially high proportion of child marriage cases appear to constitute the worst forms of child labour under the 1999 ILO Convention No. 182.”³⁰³

Early and forced marriage may also violate women and girls’ right to the highest attainable standard of health (see discussion below).

Right to Health

The CEDAW Committee has explicitly stated that “violence against women puts their health and lives at risk.” As such, violence against women and girls violates their right to the highest attainable standard of health, as guaranteed in international human rights instruments.³⁰⁴ Several human rights bodies have also noted that sexual violence violates women and girls right to health. The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR), which oversees



implementation of the ICESCR, has recognized that “women and girls living in conflict situations are disproportionately exposed to a high risk of violation of their rights, including through systematic rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization.”³⁰⁵

Similarly, the CEDAW Committee has stressed that the lack of access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, that often occurs during conflict can exacerbate the impact of sexual violence for women and girls. The committee stated:

Women and girls are at a greater risk of unplanned pregnancy, severe sexual and reproductive injuries and contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS, as a result of conflict-related sexual violence. The breakdown or destruction of health services, combined with restrictions on women’s mobility and freedom of movement, further undermines women’s equal access to health care.³⁰⁶

As noted above, early marriage can have serious health consequences for girls. These include early and frequent pregnancies, high maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates, a heightened risk of sexually transmitted infections, and a higher rate of pregnancy-related complications, including obstetric fistula. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concern “that early marriage and pregnancy are significant factors in health problems related to sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS,” and has recommended that “adolescent girls should have access to information on the harm that early marriage and early pregnancy can cause.”³⁰⁷ In its 2008 review of Nigeria, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern about “the very high maternal mortality rate, the second highest in the world,” and specifically identified early and child marriage as one of the contributing factors.³⁰⁸

Both the CRC and the CEDAW Committees have stressed the importance of delaying marriage to protect young girls from the negative health implications of early marriage such as early pregnancy and childbirth and to ensure that girls complete their education.³⁰⁹ The CEDAW Committee has stated that it:

Considers that the minimum age for marriage should be 18 years for both man and woman... According to the World Health Organization, when minors, particularly girls, marry and have children, their health can be adversely affected, and their education is impeded. As a result, their economic autonomy is restricted.³¹⁰

Right to Education

Education is a basic right enshrined in various international treaties ratified by Nigeria, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR). This right is guaranteed without discrimination, including on the basis of sex. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child calls on States Parties to the Charter to take the measure necessary to ensure the achievement of the right to education, including by providing special measures to ensure equal access to education for girls.³¹¹

Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict

The Safe Schools Declaration

Nigeria was among the first group of 37 states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration on May 29, 2015.³¹² The government further expressed its commitment to the goals of the Declaration by signing a Letter of Endorsement on March 8, 2018.

The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment that provides countries the opportunity to express support for protecting education from attack during times of armed conflict; the importance of the continuation of education during war; and the implementation of concrete measures to deter the military use of schools. When they endorse the Declaration, states endorse and commit to use the *Guidelines on Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict*.³¹³

Although the *Guidelines* are not legally binding, they complement and draw on existing obligations in existing international humanitarian and human rights law. A core aim of the *Guidelines* is to protect against the risk of armed forces and groups converting schools and universities into military objectives by way of military use and exposing them to the potentially devastating consequences of attack. While it is acknowledged that certain uses would not be contrary to the law of armed conflict, all parties should endeavor to avoid impinging on students' safety and education, using the *Guidelines* as a guide to responsible practice.³¹⁴

Legal Framework Relating to Military Use of Schools During Armed Conflict³¹⁵

The legal framework applicable to the targeting of schools and universities, and the use of schools and universities in support of the military effort, during armed conflicts is found primarily in international humanitarian law, which is the body of law that regulates conduct in international and non-international armed conflicts.

The law of armed conflict restricts the targeting of schools and universities, and the use of schools and universities in support of the military effort, but it does not prohibit such use in all circumstances and allows for the targeting of schools and universities when they become military objectives.

Schools and universities are normally civilian objects and, as such, shall not be the object of attack unless they become military objectives.³¹⁶ Indeed, to intentionally direct attacks against them when they are not military objectives would constitute a war crime. Military objectives, in



so far as objects are concerned, are defined as objects which by their nature, location, purpose, or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture, or neutralization, in the circumstances at the time, offers a definite military objective.³¹⁷ In case of doubt whether a school or university is being used to make an effective contribution to military action, it shall be presumed not to be so used and thus to be a civilian object.³¹⁸

The law of armed conflict requires the parties to a conflict to take precautions against the effects of attack. To the extent that schools and universities are civilian objects, parties to an armed conflict shall, to the maximum extent feasible, a) avoid locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas where schools and universities are likely to be located; b) endeavor to remove the civilian population, individual civilians and civilian objects under their control from the vicinity of military objectives; and c) take the other necessary precautions to protect those schools and universities under their control against the dangers resulting from military operations.³¹⁹ These rules have important implications for schools and universities.

Turning a school or university into a military objective (for example, by using it as a military barracks) subjects it to possible attacks from the enemy that might be lawful under the law of armed conflict. Locating military objectives (a weapons store, for example) near a school or university also increases the risk that it will suffer incidental damage from an attack against those nearby military objectives that might be lawful under the law of armed conflict.

The above-mentioned rules must not be read in a void. Account must be taken of other relevant rules and principles of the law of armed conflict.³²⁰ Among these rules are those affording a special protection to children in armed conflict situations.³²¹ If education institutions are fully or partially used for military purposes, the life and physical integrity of children might be at risk³²² and access to education is restricted or even impeded either because children may not go to school for fear of being killed or injured in an attack by the opposing forces, or because they have been deprived of their usual educational building.

Under Additional Protocol II, applicable during non-international armed conflicts, it is a "fundamental guarantee" that children shall receive an education, in keeping with the wishes of their parents.³²³

As a consequence, before using a school or university in support of the military effort, consideration should be given to all relevant rules and principles of the law of armed conflict, in particular the obligation to take precautions against the effects of attack, the special protection afforded to educational institutions that also constitute cultural property, the importance of ensuring access to education in armed conflicts, the prohibition of human shields, and the special protection afforded to children in armed conflicts.

International humanitarian law imposes a legal obligation on all parties to an armed conflict, both government armed forces and non-state armed groups, to minimize the harm to civilians. A fundamental principle of international humanitarian law is the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives.³²⁴ Nigeria is a State Party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, which contain these obligations.

Endnotes

- ¹ [Grassroots Researchers Association](#) is a Maiduguri-based non-profit organization conducting empirical research and conflict analysis in northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region.
- ² UNHCR, Nigeria Emergency, March 31, 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/nigeria-emergency.html> (accessed April 19, 2018). An estimated 1.7 million are internally displaced in Nigeria.
- ³ Mark Wilson, “Nigeria’s Boko Haram attacks in numbers - as lethal as ever,” January 25, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42735414> (accessed April 19, 2018).
- ⁴ UNICEF, “Making Schools Safer and Students more Confident,” September 22, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/media_11644.html (accessed October 15, 2017).
- ⁵ When interviewees speak of marriage that was neither consensual nor legal, this report puts the term in quotes to underscore that these are arrangements imposed against their will.
- ⁶ UNOG, Regular Press Briefing, “Attack against primary school in Nigeria,” December 1, 2017, [https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/F38A0371E488C9F3C12581E9005D3069?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/F38A0371E488C9F3C12581E9005D3069?OpenDocument) (accessed April 9, 2018).
- ⁷ See, for example, Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, “Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram’s Suicide Bombers,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, August 2017, p. 34, <https://ctc.usma.edu/report-exploding-stereotypes-the-unexpected-operational-and-demographic-characteristics-of-boko-harams-suicide-bombers/> (accessed November 1, 2017).
- ⁸ Information provided by a UN respondent via email, May 2017, as cited in Global Coalition for the Protection of Education from Attack, *Education under Attack 2018*, (New York: GCPEA, 2018), p. 181, <http://eua2018.protectingeducation.org/>.
- ⁹ World Bank Group, “Basic Profile of Child Marriage in Nigeria,” March 2016, p.3, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/24547/BasicprofileoofmarriageooinoNigeria.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed March 9, 2018). See also UNFPA, Child Marriage, <https://www.unfpa.org/data/adolescent-youth/NG> (accessed April 2, 2018).
- ¹⁰ GCPEA defines attacks on education as any intentional threat or use of force—carried out for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, religious, or criminal reasons—against students, educators, and education institutions. Attacks on education may be perpetrated by State security forces, including armed forces, law enforcement, paramilitary, and militia forces acting on behalf of the state, as well as by non-state armed groups. Attacks on education include attacks on students of all ages, educators, including school teachers, academics, other education personnel, members of teacher unions, and education aid workers. Attacks on education also include attacks on education institutions: any site used for the purposes of education, including all levels of education and non-formal education facilities, and buildings dedicated to the work of ministries of education and other education administration. For more detail, see Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, <http://www.protectingeducation.org/what-attack-education>.
- ¹¹ GCPEA interview with Zainab H. [not real name], Mubi, October 9, 2017.
- ¹² See Common Article III to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, adopted August 12, 1949, entered into force October 21, 1950.
- ¹³ Nigeria ratified the Rome Statute on September 27, 2001.
- ¹⁴ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, “Technical Guide: What Teachers and School Administrators Can Do to Protection Education from Attack,” April 2017, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/technical_guide_2017.pdf. See also “What Schools Can Do to Protect Education from Attack,” January 2016, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/what_schools.pdf; and “What Ministries Can Do to Protect Education from Attack,” December 2015, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/what_ministries.pdf.
- ¹⁵ This report focuses on attacks on schools in northeastern Nigeria in the context of the armed conflict. However, it should be noted that schools are attacked and students and teachers kidnapped from schools in other regions of the country as well, often for ransom or other criminal motives.



- ¹⁶ Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. and Fitzgerald, R., *Ethical Research Involving Children* (Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, 2013), <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/eric-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2017).
- ¹⁷ Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad is translated as "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad." JAS was renamed the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) in March 2015 after it pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).
- ¹⁸ Some have noted, however, that this in an inaccurate or incomplete interpretation: "Yet, the name means a great deal more [than just opposition to non-Islamic education]. While haram, an Arabic loanword, refers to that which is forbidden in Islam, boko is a Hausa word which means 'Something (an idea or object) that involves a fraud or any form of deception.' Western education is viewed by many northern Nigerians as "a fraudulent deception being imposed upon the [northern Muslim] population by a conquering European force "which undermines traditional Northern values. The name Boko Haram might be considered shorthand for an ideology opposed to Westernization generally and to Western education in Northern Nigeria, the conduit of Westernization, specifically." Kirk Ross, "Why Boko Haram Wages War Against Western Education," USNI News, May 16, 2014, <https://news.usni.org/2014/05/16/boko-haram-wages-war-western-education> (accessed January 5, 2018).
- ¹⁹ See, for example, Mohammed Aly Sergie and Toni Johnson, "Backgrounder: Boko Haram," Council on Foreign Relations, March 5, 2015, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/boko-haram> (accessed September 2, 2017); International Crisis Group, "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency," Report No. 216/AFRICA, April 3, 2014, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/curbing-violence-nigeria-ii-boko-haram-insurgency> (accessed August 12, 2017); Hilary Matfess, "Boko Haram: History and Context," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History, October 2017, <http://africanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-119?print=pdf> (accessed December 2, 2017).
- ²⁰ Boko Haram has been plagued by factionalism and an internal crisis over the leadership of the group. "[Yusuf's] would-be-successors had disagreement over doctrine, ideology, targets and tactics [which] caused a major split in August 2016, leading to the emergence of at least three factions with control over several cells." Freedom C. Onuoha and Samuel Oyewole, "Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria," Aljazeera Centre for Studies, April 22, 2018, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2018/04/anatomy-boko-haram-rise-decline-violent-group-nigeria-180422110920231.html> (accessed June 14, 2018). For purposes of this report, Boko Haram refers to any faction of the group.
- ²¹ UNHCR, Nigeria Emergency, March 31, 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/nigeria-emergency.html> (accessed April 19, 2018). An estimated 1.7 million are internally displaced in Nigeria.
- ²² CIVIC report, "When We Can't See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy," 2015, p. 2, https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/NigeriaReport_Web.pdf (accessed September 8, 2017).
- ²³ Amnesty International report, "Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill," April 2015, p. 72, p. 13, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/> (accessed November 14, 2017).
- ²⁴ The North East Zone of Nigeria is comprised of six states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe.
- ²⁵ Conor Gaffey, "Bring Back Our Girls: A Brief History of What We Know About the Missing Chibok Women," News Week U.S. Edition, April 14, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/chibok-girls-boko-haram-583584> (accessed September 28, 2017).
- ²⁶ Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria, April 10, 2017, S/2017/304, para. 8.
- ²⁷ See <http://www.bringbackourgirls.ng/>.
- ²⁸ See, for example, Chika Oduah, "Chibok residents cheer Jonathan's exit, having voted for security," March 31, 2015, ALJAZEERA America, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/3/31/chibok-residents-vote-for-security-in-nigerian-election.html> (accessed December 12, 2017); Adam Nossiter, "Boko Haram Abducted Nigerian Girls One Year Ago," New York Times, April 14, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram-chibok-kidnapped-girls.html>.
- ²⁹ Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria, April 10, 2017, para. 10.
- ³⁰ Ibid.

- ³¹ Premium Times, “Boko Haram now ‘completely defeated’ — Nigerian Army,” March 11, 2018, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/257482-boko-haram-now-completely-defeated-nigerian-army.html> (accessed February 1, 2018).
- ³² The Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria was established in 2012 to coordinate the education response in the northeastern states affected by the insurgency. See <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/nigeria/document/nigeria-education-emergencies-working-group-eiewg-terms-reference>.
- ³³ Education in Emergencies Working Group (EiEWG), “Joint Education Needs Assessment for Northeast Nigeria,” November 2017, p. 9, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/04122017_nga_jena_repot_final_draft.pdf (accessed December 10, 2017).
- ³⁴ OCHA, “Nigeria North-East: Humanitarian Situation Update, February 2018,” February 28, 2018, p. 1, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/north-east-nigeria-humanitarian-situation-update-february-2018> (accessed March 5, 2018).
- ³⁵ See World Bank Group, “Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) 2016,” Volume 1, Synthesis Report, p. 64, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25791/110424-v1-WP-NorthEastNigeriaRecoveryandPeaceBuildingAssessmentVolumelweb-PUBLIC-Volume-1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed November 12, 2017); The Global Education First Initiative/Global Planet Foundation, “Accelerating Progress to 2015: Nigeria,” April 2013 Working Paper, p.4, <http://educationenvoy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/NIGERIA-UNSE-FINAL.pdf> (accessed September 17, 2017).
- ³⁶ The Global Education First Initiative/Global Planet Foundation, “Accelerating Progress to 2015: Nigeria,” April 2013 Working Paper, p.5, <http://educationenvoy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/NIGERIA-UNSE-FINAL.pdf> (accessed September 17, 2017).
- ³⁷ Ibid. See also UNICEF, “Information Sheet: Girls’ Education, Nigeria Country Office,” September 2007, https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/WCARO_Nigeria_Factsheets_GirlsEducation.pdf (accessed September 12, 2017).
- ³⁸ See World Bank Group, “Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA), 2016,” Volume 1, Synthesis Report, p. 64.
- ³⁹ The Buhari Plan for Rebuilding the North East is an 800-page framework to guide the government’s response to the crisis in the northeast. The Presidential Committee on the North East Initiative (PCNI) is the institution charged with overseeing the implementation of the Buhari Plan and coordinating humanitarian and other partners providing crisis response, as well as longer-term development support for the region. See <https://pcni.gov.ng/the-buhari-plan/>.
- ⁴⁰ Presidential Committee on the North East Initiative, “The Buhari Plan for Rebuilding the North East,” Volume III, Development Strategies, June 2016, p. 199, <https://pcni.gov.ng/the-buhari-plan/> (accessed November 1, 2017).
- ⁴¹ UNICEF press release, “More than half of all schools remained closed in Borno State, epicenter of the Boko Haram crisis in Northeast Nigeria,” September 29, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/media/media_100953.html (accessed October 15, 2017). An estimated 943 of the 1,627 schools in Borno state remained closed for the fourth year running.
- ⁴² Education in Emergencies Working Group, “Joint Education Needs Assessment for Northeast Nigeria,” p. 16
- ⁴³ Ibid., p. 10.
- ⁴⁴ UNICEF press release, “More than half of all schools remained closed in Borno State,” p.1.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Education in Emergencies Working Group, “Joint Education Needs Assessment for Northeast Nigeria,” p. 27.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 28.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 19.
- ⁴⁹ UNICEF press release, “More than half of all schools remained closed in Borno State,” p.1.



- ⁵⁰ See, for example, Emily Coinco and Robert Morris, Primary School Attendance in the Wake of Conflict in Borno, Nigeria, Edoren, March 2017, p. 23.
- ⁵¹ Education in Emergencies Working Group, "Joint Education Needs Assessment for Northeast Nigeria," p. 17. The Universal Basic Education Act, which was introduced in 1999, provides for nine years of free and compulsory education: six years of primary school (grades 1-6, typically ages 6-12), and three years of junior secondary school (JSS, grades 7-9, typically ages 12-15). The formal education system also provides for three years of senior secondary school (SSS, grades 10-12, typically ages 15-18), and four years of tertiary or higher education. See Better Future Foundation Amodu – Nigeria, "Education System in Nigeria," <http://bfffa-online.org/education.html#Primary%20School%20Education> (accessed March 2, 2018).
- ⁵² Western education is understood primarily as formal or government schooling, although private schools have also been targeted by the group.
- ⁵³ "The concept of 'western education'... reflects a curriculum focused on English, mathematics and science initially introduced through missionary schools during colonialism that is now taught mostly in government and private schools." Emily Coinco and Robert Morris, Primary School Attendance in the Wake of Conflict in Borno, Nigeria, Edoren, March 2017, p.3, fn. 6.
- ⁵⁴ Boko Haram has also supported Islamic education for women and girls. See, International Crisis Group report, Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency, December 5, 2016, p. 1.
- ⁵⁵ See Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp": Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girl in Northeast Nigeria, October 2014, pp. 36–37; Amnesty International, "Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill," April 2015, p. 72, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/> (accessed November 14, 2017).
- ⁵⁶ Some insurgents reportedly distinguished between Islamic schools and so-called "Western" or government schools.
- ⁵⁷ GCPEA interview with Hauwa M., Damaturu, February 7, 2018.
- ⁵⁸ GCPEA interview with Rafiya I., Maiduguri, February 10, 2018.
- ⁵⁹ GCPEA interview with Kaltume M., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.
- ⁶⁰ GCPEA interview with Fadimatu L., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.
- ⁶¹ GCPEA interview with Labraba J., Maiduguri, February 10, 2018.
- ⁶² GCPEA interviews, Maiduguri, February 8 and 10, 2018.
- ⁶³ Human Rights Watch, "They Set the Classrooms on Fire," April 2016, p. 31.
- ⁶⁴ Some observers have suggested that the escalation in abductions was in retaliation for the Nigerian government's alleged detention of the wives and children of Boko Haram commanders. For example, Human Rights Watch refers to two video statements by Abubakar Shekau in which he suggestions this motive. See Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp": Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria, October 2014, pp. 18-19, footnotes 34 and 35. Some have suggested that the media attention to attacks on schools, and in particular to the Chibok abductions, raised Boko Haram's profile and was viewed by the group as a successful tactic to instill fear. The International Crisis Group reported that "[B]oko Haram began to abduct women and girls for both political and pragmatic ends, including to protest the arrest of female members and relatives of some leaders. The seizure of more than 200 schoolgirls near Chibok in 2014 was a much publicised spike in a wider trend. The group took Christian and later Muslim females to hurt communities that opposed it, as a politically symbolic imposition of its will and as assets. By awarding 'wives' to fighters, it attracted male recruits and incentivised combatants." See ICG, Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency, p. i.
- ⁶⁵ Amnesty International, "Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill," p. 59.
- ⁶⁶ UNFPA, Adolescent Girls in Disaster & Conflict: Interventions for Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, August 2016, p. 42, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-Adolescent_Girls_in_Disaster_Conflict-Web.pdf (accessed October 24, 2017).

- ⁶⁷ This estimate is based on the sum of the women and girls abducted from Chibok (276) and Dapchi (111) and includes an estimated 225 female students and teachers from Damasak, in addition to other, smaller-scale or individual abductions from schools. While the exact number of female students and teachers abducted from Damasak is not known, community leaders submitted to government officials over 500 names of those they believe were abducted. Local human rights activists estimate that approximately 45 percent of those names are of female students and teachers. Information provided by local activists to GCPEA via email, April 16, 2018.
- ⁶⁸ The abductions from Damasak were not exclusively of female students, but included boy students, as well as female and some male teachers. See below for more detail.
- ⁶⁹ GCPEA interview with Amina F., Maiduguri, February 9, 2018. Although many of the Chibok girls have been interviewed by various media outlets, GCPEA is withholding their names for purposes of this report.
- ⁷⁰ GCPEA interview with Patience K., Maiduguri, February 9, 2018.
- ⁷¹ One of the goals of the Presidential Fact-finding Committee established to investigate the Chibok abductions was to “establish the circumstances leading to the school remaining open for boarding students when other schools were closed.” The findings of the committee were, however, never made public. Talatu Usman, “Presidential committee on Chibok schoolgirls submits report,” Premium Times, June 20, 2014, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/163201-presidential-committee-chibok-schoolgirls-submits-report.html> (accessed September 1, 2017).
- ⁷² Human Rights Watch, “Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp,” p. 23.
- ⁷³ GCPEA interview with Sadiya S., Maiduguri, February 11, 2018.
- ⁷⁴ According to media reports, residents of Damasak have submitted over 500 names of women and children who are missing. Kevin Sieff, “The growing horror in a city where 500 children were kidnapped by Boko Haram,” Washington Post, April 26, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/the-growing-horror-in-a-city-where-500-children-were-kidnapped-by-boko-haram/2017/04/26/59df0916-29e5-11e7-9081-f5405f56d3e4_story.html?utm_term=.ocb21f426993 (accessed January 27, 2018). GCPEA is aware of several children and adults abducted from Damasak who escaped in late 2017.
- ⁷⁵ United Nations Security Council Press release, “Security Council Press Statement on 19 February Abduction of Schoolgirls in Dapchi, 1 March Attack in Rann, Nigeria,” (SC/13233) March 2, 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13233.doc.htm> (accessed March 5, 2018).
- ⁷⁶ GCPEA interviewed seven female students who were abducted from the school, as well as nine parents of abducted girls, and several residents of the town who were eyewitnesses to the attack.
- ⁷⁷ “Army refutes alleged withdrawal of troops to aid school girls’ abduction, says police in control,” Vanguard, February 28, 2018, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/army-refutes-alleged-withdrawal-troops-aid-school-girls-abduction-says-police-control/> (accessed March 10, 2018).
- ⁷⁸ “Dapchi Girls: Yobe Police Command Faults Military Claim on Withdrawal of Troops,” Saharareporters, February 26, 2018, <http://saharareporters.com/2018/02/26/dapchi-girls-yobe-police-command-faults-military-claim-withdrawal-troops> (accessed April 22, 2018).
- ⁷⁹ “Update: 111 Yobe school girls still missing – Police commissioner,” Vanguard, February 21, 2018, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/update-111-yobe-school-girls-still-missing-police-commissioner/> (accessed February 22, 2018).
Read more at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/update-111-yobe-school-girls-still-missing-police-commissioner/>. Interview with Sumonu Abdulmaliki, Commissioner of Police Yobe State.
- ⁸⁰ There was some confusion about the exact number of girls who were abducted from Dapchi. After initial denials, the government stated on February 21 that 111 girls had been abducted. Others have stated that 110 schoolgirls were abducted. It appears that 111 female students were abducted, as well as two children (one boy and one girl) who were in the staff quarters when the attack occurred, for a total of 113 children abducted.
- ⁸¹ Kanuri is the local language most often associated with Boko Haram fighters.
- ⁸² GCPEA interview with Kaltume M., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.
- ⁸³ GCPEA interview with Fadimatu L., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.
- ⁸⁴ GCPEA interview with Kaltume M., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.
- ⁸⁵ GCPEA interview with Amira M., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.



- ⁸⁶ NPR, Nigerian President Tells 100-Plus Girls Freed By Boko Haram To Follow Their Dreams, March 25, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/03/25/596670493/nigerian-president-tells-100-plus-girls-freed-by-boko-haram-to-follow-their-drea> (April 2, 2018).
- ⁸⁷ GCPEA interview with Yagana A., Maiduguri, February 9, 2018. It should be noted, however, that the school had been closed in March 2014 because of the security situation but was reopened for students to take their WAEC exams.
- ⁸⁸ GCPEA interview with Amira A., Damaturu, February 7, 2018.
- ⁸⁹ GCPEA interview with Maimuna I., Damaturu, February 6, 2018.
- ⁹⁰ GCPEA interview with Hamidah F., Maiduguri, October 12, 2017.
- ⁹¹ GCPEA interview with Alhaji U., Damaturu, February 5, 2018.
- ⁹² GCPEA interview with Nafisa H., Damaturu, February 7, 2018.
- ⁹³ GCPEA interview with Hauwa M., Damaturu, February 7, 2018.
- ⁹⁴ GCPEA interview with Deborah Y., Damaturu, February 6, 2018.
- ⁹⁵ GCPEA interview with Amina F., Maiduguri, February 9, 2018.
- ⁹⁶ GCPEA interviews in Damaturu and Maiduguri, February 2018.
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- ⁹⁸ GCPEA interview with Fatsuma A., Damaturu, February 6, 2017.
- ⁹⁹ Amnesty International, "Nigeria: Security forces failed to act on warnings about Boko Haram attack hours before abduction of schoolgirls," March 20, 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/nigeria-abduction-of-schoolgirls-security-forces-failed-to-act-boko-haram/> (accessed March 22, 2018).
- ¹⁰⁰ Reuters, "Nigerian army and police disagree over security in mass abduction town," February 26, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security/nigerian-army-and-police-disagree-over-security-in-mass-abduction-town-idUSKCN1GA2RJ> (accessed March 2, 2018).
- ¹⁰¹ GCPEA interview with Japari C., Mubi, October 7, 2017.
- ¹⁰² Ndahi Marama, "Terrorized UNIMAID residents: Eight Boko Haram attacks in six months and a professor dead," Vanguard, July 23, 2017, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/terrorized-unimaid-residents-eight-boko-haram-attacks-six-months-professor-dead-unprecedented-siege/> (November 2, 2017).
- ¹⁰³ GCPEA interview with Mustapha T., Maiduguri, February 4, 2018.
- ¹⁰⁴ Email communication from representative of BBOG to GCPEA, April 18, 2018.
- ¹⁰⁵ Amnesty International, "Nigeria: Security forces failed to act on warnings about Boko Haram attack hours before abduction of schoolgirls," March 20, 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/nigeria-abduction-of-schoolgirls-security-forces-failed-to-act-boko-haram/> (accessed April 13, 2018).
- ¹⁰⁶ GCPEA interview with teacher, Abuja, October 5, 2017.
- ¹⁰⁷ For purposes of this report, GCPEA includes only those cases where we believe there is a clear link to the victim's status as a student.
- ¹⁰⁸ GCPEA interview with Sarah Y., Maiduguri, February 10, 2018.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰ GCPEA interview with Blessing E., Yola, February 14, 2018.
- ¹¹¹ See Atta Barkindo, Benjamin Gudaku, and Caroline Wesley, "Our Bodies, Their Battleground: Boko Haram and Gender-Based Violence against Christian Women and Children in North-Eastern Nigeria since 1999," November 2013, working paper for the Nigeria's Political Violence Research Network NPVRN, <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/research/3117403> (accessed October 1, 2017).
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- ¹¹⁵ GCPEA interview with Hamsatu Y., Maiduguri, February 11, 2018.
- ¹¹⁶ GCPEA interview with Fadimatu L., Dapchi, March 28, 2018.



- ¹¹⁷ “It is widely accepted in Muslim thought that the Quran allows men to marry up to a maximum of four wives.” See <http://quransmessage.com/articles/four%20wives%20FM3.htm>.
- ¹¹⁸ GCPEA interview with Falmata I., Maiduguri, October 11, 2017.
- ¹¹⁹ GCPEA interview with Hussaina B., Maiduguri, October 11, 2017.
- ¹²⁰ GCPEA interview with Maryam R., Yola, February 14, 2018.
- ¹²¹ GCPEA telephone interview with Amina T., April 1, 2018.
- ¹²² GCPEA interview with Aisha Y., Maiduguri, October 10, 2017.
- ¹²³ GCPEA interview with Halima U., Maiduguri, October 10, 2017.
- ¹²⁴ GCPEA interview with Sadiya S., Maiduguri, February 11, 2018.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*
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- ¹³⁰ Amnesty International, “Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill,” p. 72.
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- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ¹³⁷ GCPEA interview with Sadiya S., Maiduguri, February 11, 2018.
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- ¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.
- ¹⁴⁰ UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General,” A/70/836-S/2016/360, para. 193, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1611119.pdf> (accessed September 16, 2017).
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- ²³¹ OTP-ICC, “Report on Preliminary Examination Activities 2017,” para. 221.
- ²³² See <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/national-strategy-end-child-marriage-nigeria-2016-2021/>.
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- ²³⁴ The programs highlighted in this section do not necessarily target female survivors of attacks on education; instead they may target all out-of-school students or may be particularly focused on reaching victims of SGBV, are highlighted here to give an indication of some of the programming that can be beneficial for survivors of attacks on education, as well as others.
- ²³⁵ UNICEF also co-leads with the Nigerian government the WASH and nutrition sectors and the child protection subsector responses.
- ²³⁶ See UNICEF, “Nigeria Country Office Situation Report, Sitrep no. 1, 01-31 January 2018,” https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/NG_wwd_sitrep1_31Jan2018.pdf.
- ²³⁷ See UNICEF, “Nigeria Country Office Situation Report, Sitrep no. 22, 01-31 December 2017,” https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/NG_wwd_sitrep22Dec2017.pdf.
- ²³⁸ Ibid.
- ²³⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁴⁰ The program was implemented by Creative Associates International and the International Rescue Committee, as well as local non-governmental organizations. It was initially funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as state governments and NGOs. USAID funding for the program ended in 2017. See <https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/projects/nigeria-education-crisis-response-program/>.
- ²⁴¹ GCPEA telephone interview, October 30, 2017
- ²⁴² The centers were divided into 13 Non-formal Learning Centers (with mixed boys and girls, ages 6-13), six Girls Learning Centers (girls only, ages 6-13), six Youth Learning Centers (mixed boys and girls, ages 14-17), and three Adolescent Girls Learning Center (girls only, ages 14-17).
- ²⁴³ GCPEA interview, Maiduguri, October 12, 2017.
- ²⁴⁴ GCPEA interview, Maiduguri, October 12, 2017.



- ²⁴⁵ Of the 18,000 who were to be enrolled in school in Borno state, Education Crisis Response mainstreamed 7,778 students and the company, Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) supported the enrollment of 1,600.
- ²⁴⁶ Email communication, April 29, 2018.
- ²⁴⁷ The program targeted internally displaced children, those who were orphans or “considered vulnerable, such as living on the streets or at-risk of failing out of school.” Technology Enhanced Learning for All, Who We Are, <http://www.auntela.org/about-us>, (accessed January 28, 2018). See also, Nelly Ating “AUN Launches Novel Radio Literacy Program, Targets 22,000 Vulnerable,” July 27, 2016, <http://www.auntela.org/telaneews/2016/7/27/aun-launches-novel-radio-literacy-program-targets-22000-vulnerables>, (accessed January 28, 2018).
- ²⁴⁸ TELA was funded by a grant from the United States government.
- ²⁴⁹ Email communication, April 30, 2018.
- ²⁵⁰ Dr. Margee Ensign and Dr. Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob, “Where There is No School: Radio and Mobile Technologies for Education in Crises and Post-Conflict Societies,” American University of Nigeria Evaluation Brief, February 2017, p. 2, (copy on file).
- ²⁵¹ Ibid.
- ²⁵² Ensign and Jacob, “Where There is No School: Radio and Mobile Technologies for Education in Crises and Post-Conflict Societies,” p. 4. See also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VyjfrOyOc> about the program’s impact.
- ²⁵³ Ibid.
- ²⁵⁴ GCPEA telephone interview, April 16, 2018.
- ²⁵⁵ OCHA, “Humanitarian Needs Assessment Overview 2018 - Nigeria,” November 2017, p. 21, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/13022018_ocha_humanitarian_needs_overview.pdf (accessed February 22, 2018).
- ²⁵⁶ Linus Unah (IRIN), “Psychiatrists needed to end Boko Haram war,” Nigerian Tribune, August 5, 2017, <http://www.tribuneonline.com/105459/> (accessed May 3, 2018).
- ²⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁵⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria, para. 86. UNICEF also reported that it and its implementing partners had provided 201,420 children with psychosocial support during 2017.
- ²⁵⁹ GCPEA interview with representative of the Nigerian Teachers Union, Maiduguri, February 12, 2018.
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- ²⁶² GCPEA telephone interview, May 16, 2018.
- ²⁶³ GCPEA telephone interview, May 16, 2018.
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- ²⁶⁷ UNICEF Nigeria, “In this crisis sometimes education really is the frontline,” March 28, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education_11418.html (accessed October 2, 2017).
- ²⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁶⁹ Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria, “Joint Education Needs Assessment Northeast Nigeria,” November 2017, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/04122017_nga_jena_repot_final_draft.pdf (accessed August 2018)
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- ²⁸² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation 19, Violence against women (Eleventh session, 1992), U.N. Doc. A/47/38 at 1 (1993), reprinted in Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.6 at 243 (2003), available at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/gencomm/gener19.htm> (accessed June 29, 2018).
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- ²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, art. 37.
- ²⁸⁶ The Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC characterized the situation in northeast Nigeria as a non-international armed conflict in 2013. See, The Office of the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court, Report on Preliminary Examination Activities, November 2013, paras. 220-222, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/OTP%20Reports/otp-report-2013.aspx>. On November 12, 2015, the OTP "identified eight potential cases involving the commission of crimes against humanity and war crimes under articles 7 and 8 of the Statute... including six for conduct by Boko Haram and two for conduct by the Nigerian security forces." The Office of the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court, Report on Preliminary Examination Activities, November 12, 2015, paras. 195-214, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=otp-rep-pe-activities-2015>.
- ²⁸⁷ See Common Article III to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, adopted August 12, 1949, entered into force October 21, 1950.
- ²⁸⁸ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 1125 U.N.T.S. 609, entered into force December 7, 1978, Art. 4 (2)(e).
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- ²⁹⁰ Article 2 of the ICCPR requires governments to provide an effective remedy for abuses and to ensure the rights to life and security of the person of all individuals in their jurisdiction, without distinction of any kind including sex.
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- ²⁹² See, for example, CRC, art. 38; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted May 25, 2000, G.A. Res. 54/263, Annex I, 54 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 7, U.N. Doc. A/54/49, Vol. III (2000), entered into force February 12, 2002, ratified by Nigeria on September 27, 2012.
- ²⁹³ ACRWC, art.2 and 22(2).
- ²⁹⁴ "Report of the UN Secretary General to the UN General Assembly, In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women," July 6, 2006, UN doc. A/61/122/Add.1, para. 122.
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- ²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, art.16 (2).
- ²⁹⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 4, Adolescent Health and Development in the Context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (Thirty-third session, 2003), para. 20. See also CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 21, Equality in Marriage and Family Relations, (Thirteenth Session, 1994), para. 36.
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- ³⁰⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "Preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage," April 2, 2014, A/HRC/26/22, para. 16.
- ³⁰¹ See, for example, ICCPR, art.2, paras. 1 and 3, ICESCR, art. 2, paras. 2 and 3, and CEDAW, art. 16.
- ³⁰² OHCHR, "Preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage," para. 16.
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- ³¹⁰ CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 21, para.36.
- ³¹¹ ACRWC, Art. 11 (1) and (3)(e).
- ³¹² As of this writing, 81 countries had signed the Safe School Declaration.
- ³¹³ GCPEA, “*Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*”, December 2014, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/guidelines_en.pdf. The Declaration was developed through consultations with states in a process led by Norway and Argentina in Geneva in 2015.
- ³¹⁴ See http://www.protectingeducation.org/safeschoolsdeclaration#what_do_the_guidelines_say.
- ³¹⁵ This section is adapted from GCPEA, “Implementing the Guidelines: A Toolkit to Guide Understanding and Implementation of the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict*,” Annex ii, pp. 46-48, <http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/toolkit.pdf>.
- ³¹⁶ See Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (“Additional Protocol I”), art. 52(1). This rule is also part of customary law for international and non-international armed conflicts. See Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck, Customary International Humanitarian Law: Rules, vol. 1, International Committee of the Red Cross (“ICRC Customary IHL Study”), rule 9 and 10.
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- ³¹⁹ See Additional Protocol I, art. 58(a), (b), and (c). These rules are also part of customary law for international and non-international armed conflicts. See ICRC Customary IHL Study, rules 22-24. See also: ICTY, Kupreskiccase, Judgment, Trial Chamber, January 14, 2000, paras. 524-525.
- ³²⁰ This is a traditional rule of interpretation. See Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, art. 31(1): “A treaty shall be interpreted in good faith in accordance with the ordinary meaning to be given to the terms of the treaty in their context and in the light of its object and purpose.”
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Front cover: A soldier from the 7th Division of the Nigerian Army stands amidst the ruins of the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, north-eastern Nigeria on March 25, 2016.

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