



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

Declaration adopted at the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament

Geneva, 5th September

We, women Speakers of Parliament, attending the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament, convened by the IPU on 4-5 September 2014, in Geneva, are deeply concerned that more than four months after the abduction of 273 Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram, most of the girls are still missing.

We are equally concerned and appalled by the vicious crimes being perpetrated against women and girls in countries facing conflict situations, including Syria, Iraq as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. Here too, women and girls are being raped, kidnapped and sold into forced-marriage or to become slaves to their captors for sexual abuse and exploitation.

We call on the Nigerian Government and Parliament to not forget the abducted girls or to abandon them to their fate. We urge the Nigerian authorities to also not forget the families. They have lost much-loved daughters or sisters and desperately want them to return home to a future where their childhood promise can be fulfilled. All efforts to find and rescue the kidnapped schoolgirls must be pursued with full vigour and determination. The momentum for action must not be lost.

We reiterate that children in all countries need to have their security and protection guaranteed. They need to know they can go to school without fear of violence and focus on getting an education that will promote their development and that of their society. For girls, this has never been so important. Education remains the most powerful tool to end violence, poverty and to bring positive change.

We, women Speakers of Parliament, appeal to Governments and Parliaments the world over to make ending violence against women and girls in conflict situations a fixed and urgent priority. Inaction on such terrible crimes is unacceptable. A peaceful, democratic world cannot be built on the abuse of the basic human rights of women and girls.