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AFJN's Fr. Okure on Kidnapped Nigerian Girls

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Distinctly Catholic

My colleague at the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies, Fr. Aniedi Okure, O.P., is the director of the Africa Faith and Justice Network. A native of Nigeria, Fr. Okure has issued the following statement about girls abducted by Boko Haram:

We gather here to demand the safe and unconditional return of the kidnapped girls to their families so they can continue their education. Education is a human rights issue; it should never be denied to anyone. We unequivocally call on Boko Haram to release them now.

We believe that Boko Haram has succeeded in its evil acts mainly due to the larger political culture that plagues and destabilizes Nigeria. Politicians live above the law and feel unaccountable to no one. Therefore, we urge the Nigerian government to address the root causes of Nigeria's social, economic, and political problems, especially:

The lack of the rule of law and a culture of impunity that is deeply entrenched in Nigeria's political system.

- 2. Massive embezzlement of public funds by politicians who live above the law.*
- 3. The lingering feudal system in most of the northern parts of Nigeria.*
- 4. Large unemployed youth population (vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups).*

Therefore, we call on the Nigerian government to include these matters as an integral part of the school girls' rescue plan. Without reform, Boko Haram will continue to kill and kidnap more Nigerians.

Once again we denounce with our last energy Boko Haram and all its terrorist activities. Today let us also recall and pray for all of Boko Haram's victims and their families.

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