

The Abducted Chibok Girls – What Role for the Counselling Association of Nigeria

I want to use this medium to apprise our members with some of the efforts that the Counselling Association of Nigeria CASSON has undertaken on the case of the Girls abducted from Government Secondary School in Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria on the 14th of April 2014.

We have sent a proposal to the Borno State Government on the need to start preparing to receive the Chibok Girls when they eventually return. I personally led the team that delivered our letter to the Borno State Liason Office in Abuja. Our letter was received on behalf of the Governor by Alhaji Alkali Bulama Permanent Secretary, Borno State Liason Office Abuja.

We stated clearly to the Governor the role the Counselling Association of Nigeria can play in assisting in the rehabilitation of these Girls when they eventually return. We also mentioned to the Governor that the abducted Girls no doubt must have been traumatized beyond measure, and as a result many of them upon their return are likely to be diagnosed for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and as such will require the help of Professional Counsellors. We also talked about the need to provide counselling for the parents of the girls before and after the girls must have been returned. We also highlighted the need to provide counselling for the staff and other students of Government Secondary School Chibok.

As a result of our proposal to the Governor we are now in touch and working with with a Special Committee recently set up by the Governor of Borno State to Prepare for the return of the Girls. This committee is headed by Dr. Salma Anas Kolo, the Honorable Commissioner for Health, Borno State. Professor Bulama Kagu of the University of Maiduguri who is also the CASSON State Chairperson is actively working with the committee and giving us regular feed back at the national level.

I also led a team to present a similar proposal to the Director General Of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Alhaji Mohammed Sani Sidi in Abuja. We

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also had a lengthy meeting with Mr. E.U. Ezeh who is also the Director Relief & Rehabilitation, NEMA. This meeting resulted in our being invited to a Stakeholders' Meeting for Inputs and Validation of Draft Multi-Sector Humanitarian Response Plan for the Chibok Girls on Wednesday 28th of May 2014. I attended the meeting and participated fully in the company of the CASSON State Chair Person for the Federal Capital Territory FCT and our Liaison Officer in Abuja. At the meeting were also in attendance the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Dauda Toure. I also met him personally and discussed the importance of the involvement of CASSON in the UN's response to the abducted Chibok Girls.

At the end of the Stakeholder's meeting clear cut roles were carved out for the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) in the Draft Multi-Sector Humanitarian Response Plan for the Chibok Girls. This meeting was widely publicized by the Nigerian Media.

Finally, we also submitted a similar proposal to the Director General Nigerian Orientation Agency (NOA) Mr. Mike Omeri who is also the Coordinator of the Special Committee set up by the Federal Government on Information Dissemination on the abducted Chibok Girls.

The Counselling Association of Nigeria is doing its best to stay relevant and contribute to the resolution of the unfortunate crisis of the abducted Chibok Girls. We call on all our members to support all our effort so far and to come up with very useful suggestions that can assist the Association.

Let us continue to pray for the safe return of our abducted Girls.

Thank You.

Professor Alfred A. Adegoke

National President, Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON).