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OP-ED

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Remember Boko Haram's victims, too



Nigerians marched in their nation's capital, Abuja, during a silent protest to raise awareness about girls and boys abducted by Boko Haram. **Sunday Alamba AP**
BY FREDERICA WILSON
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On Nov. 13, people from every corner of the world reeled over the horrific attacks in Paris that killed 130 people and injured 350 more. Millions filtered their Facebook profile pictures with the blue, white and red

of the French flag; #prayforparis became a worldwide trend; and cable news stations covered the tragedy and the Islamic State's role in it nearly 24/7.

My heart, like countless others, was filled with sadness over the tragedy that engulfed the City of Light, but I couldn't help but wonder: Where is the outrage for the rampage taking place in Nigeria and several bordering nations? Who is praying for the 219 Chibok schoolgirls still missing after their abduction last year? Saturday marked 600 days that the girls have been held captive.

Wilson



A few days later, news outlets published details of a report that found that while ISIS has captured the world's attention, the Nigerian insurgency group, Boko Haram, holds the title of the "world's deadliest terrorist group." Last year, Boko Haram killed 6,664 people, compared to the 6,073 lives taken by the Islamic State. According to the Global Terrorism Index, the deaths attributed to Boko Haram during that period increased by 300 percent.

The bloodbath in Paris was the worst the nation has experienced since World War II, but terrorist acts by Boko Haram frequently are daily occurrences. The extent of its maliciousness came as a surprise to many except the few who track the group's activities closely.

On Jan. 3, Boko Haram killed 2,000 people in Nigeria. On Nov. 17, an attack in the Nigerian city of Yola killed 32 people in a marketplace and wounded 80 others. Less than 24 hours later, two girls acting as suicide bombers killed 12 people and injured dozens

of others in Cameroon.

On Nov. 29, the group kidnapped an unspecified number of girls from Nigeria's Borno state. The Associated Press reported the next day that the insurgents had burned down a Nigerian military base and sent 107 military soldiers fleeing.

In addition, the brutal tradition of "breast ironing" is reportedly resurfacing in that nation to "protect" girls from Boko Haram militants by making them less appealing. Where is the outrage?

The level of response to the enduring and daily traumas experienced by millions of Nigerians literally pales in comparison to reactions to terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut and other cities. It brings to mind the debate currently taking place on the presidential campaign trail about whether all lives matter.

Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari won election by pledging to defeat and destroy Boko Haram by the end of this year. The West African nation's military, working with the Multinational Joint Task Force of soldiers from the border nations Chad, Niger and Cameroon, has made some important strides in decreasing Boko Haram's territory. It is clear, however, that even with the special operations and support provided by the United States and other nations, Nigeria does not have the resources to eradicate the Islamic militants.

A few weeks ago, I introduced H.R. 3833, legislation that directs the departments of State and Defense to jointly develop a five-year plan to assist the MNJTF in defeating Boko Haram, help rebuild the region's social and economic infrastructure and eradicate the conditions that have allowed the terrorist group's rise.

The plan must address humanitarian support for civilians and security for schools. In September, the Senate passed companion legislation introduced by Sen. Susan Collins to combat Boko Haram, and I urge my colleagues in the House to support the resolution.

Terrorism has no borders and, like ISIS, Boko Haram militants are driven by the desire to purge the world of free thought and expression. The girls kidnapped by Boko Haram last year were targeted for pursuing an education. The people who died and were injured in the Paris attacks were targeted because of their participation in cultural and other activities as simple as dinner with friends at a café. Najat Rochdi, a top U.N. official in Cameroon, noted on Nov. 30 that Boko Haram “is expanding and there is only a small window of opportunity to stop it.” It is time for the world’s leaders to find their global outrage and work collectively to end Boko Haram’s six-year insurgency.

U.S. Rep. Frederica S. Wilson, who represents the 24th Congressional District in Miami, is the U.S. point person for the #BringBackOurGirls movement.

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Chris Killingsworth

As a conservative Republican, I agree with Ms Wilson. We should do more.

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