



Join worldwide effort to save kidnapped Nigerian girls

By Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson

Today, we mark a sad milestone: 500 days have passed since Boko Haram abducted nearly 300 Nigerian schoolgirls from their dormitory rooms in the dark of night; 219 girls are still missing.

I ask America to join me in creating a Twitter storm to commemorate the 500 days of mystery surrounding the missing Chibok schoolgirls. Tweet messages of hope and peace. Tweet prayers and blessings for the families and words of consolation for everyone involved.

Tweet all day long. Tweet whenever you think about it. Tweet, tweet, tweet. The more we tweet the more pressure there will be to return the girls to safety.

During my first visit to Nigeria last June, I was inspired by the "Bring Back Our Girls" movement and the courage displayed by the activists and the girls' families, who have spent 500 days making sure their girls are not forgotten. Their constancy and faith have been galvanizing. That is why I promised to lead the effort to #BringBackOurGirls in the United States.

The Chibok girls' abduction has helped Nigeria learn important lessons about the power of democracy and diplomacy. Frustrated by the indifference and inaction of former President Goodluck Johnathan, Nigerian voters elected a

new leader — Muhammadu Buhari, who has made the defeat of Boko Haram his new administration's top priority.

During my second visit to Nigeria earlier this month, I urged voters to hold Buhari and other officials to their word to find the girls, defeat Boko Haram, and rebuild the communities the group has decimated. They must also create economic and educational opportunities for the young Nigerians who are tempted by the terrorist group's lure because they feel they have no other options.

President Buhari, with whom I met during my time there, really gets it. We had discussions about replicating the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project in Nigeria to target young boys at risk.

In a bold move, he has given Nigeria's military a three-month deadline to wipe out Boko Haram. He's also met with the heads of Cameroon, Benin, Niger and Chad, and encouraged them to put their political differences aside to form a Multinational Joint Task Force. Working together, the nations can literally box Boko Haram in and prevent the insurgents from crossing their borders to avoid escape and more important, expand their reach. Buhari recently announced plans to hire at least 10,000 new police officers to boost domestic security.

This week U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited Nigeria and pledged the international organization's support to counter extremism and terrorism. The whole world has been moved by the Chibok girls' fate, he noted, but there are still so many people who are unaware of their abduction and, sadly, many more who simply do not care.

In addition to the big steps Buhari and others are taking to shut these terrorists down, social media can be a powerful tool. So, each day, remember to tweet, tweet, tweet. #JoinRepWilson so we can #BringBackOurGirls.