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In Response to Amb. Cathy Russell

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In response to Amb. Cathy Russell's op-ed, "Our Outrage Must Be a Call to Action"

Ambassador Russell's call for rescuing the nearly 300 Nigerian girls abducted by Boko Haram and then sending them to school ignores reality. The U.S. attaches an **abortion ban** on all U.S. foreign aid to Nigeria, and this ban in all likelihood will be the reason some of these girls will never attend school again. The U.S. abortion ban dictates the policies of the health facilities and humanitarian aid organizations helping war victims in Nigeria.

Nigeria is in a civil war. Rape, sexual slavery, abductions and forced pregnancy of girls and women are perpetrated by both government and Boko Haram forces. The schoolgirls are entitled to the universal medical care protections of the Geneva Conventions, including life and health saving abortions, which take precedence over Nigeria's anti-abortion law. But the U.S. ignores the rights of these girls under the Geneva Conventions and forces girls impregnated by war rape globally to bear the child of their rapists, risk death by unsafe illegal abortions, or commit suicide. "In Nigeria, complications from abortion account for **72 percent** of all deaths of girls under 19."

The call to action must be a call for President Obama to stop turning a blind eye to this outrage and sign an executive order that removes the abortion ban from health care given the abducted schoolgirls in Nigeria, affirms U.S. support for the Geneva Conventions, and truly supports a future for girls and women survivors of rape in war.

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