

#EMPOWER OUR GIRLS



TOOLKIT

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



*How to
become a*

CHAMPION

*of girls' rights
in north-east
Nigeria*

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*Cover illustration: Boko Haram survivors empowered to
rebuild their lives through education.
All watercolor paintings by © Abayi_art/Amnesty International*

Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and individual donations. We believe that acting in solidarity and compassion with people everywhere can change our societies for the better.

I want to forget that I once lived with Boko Haram. I want to ...start all over again.

EE, survivor from Borno State

Here you will find everything you need to become a champion of girls' rights in north-east Nigeria.

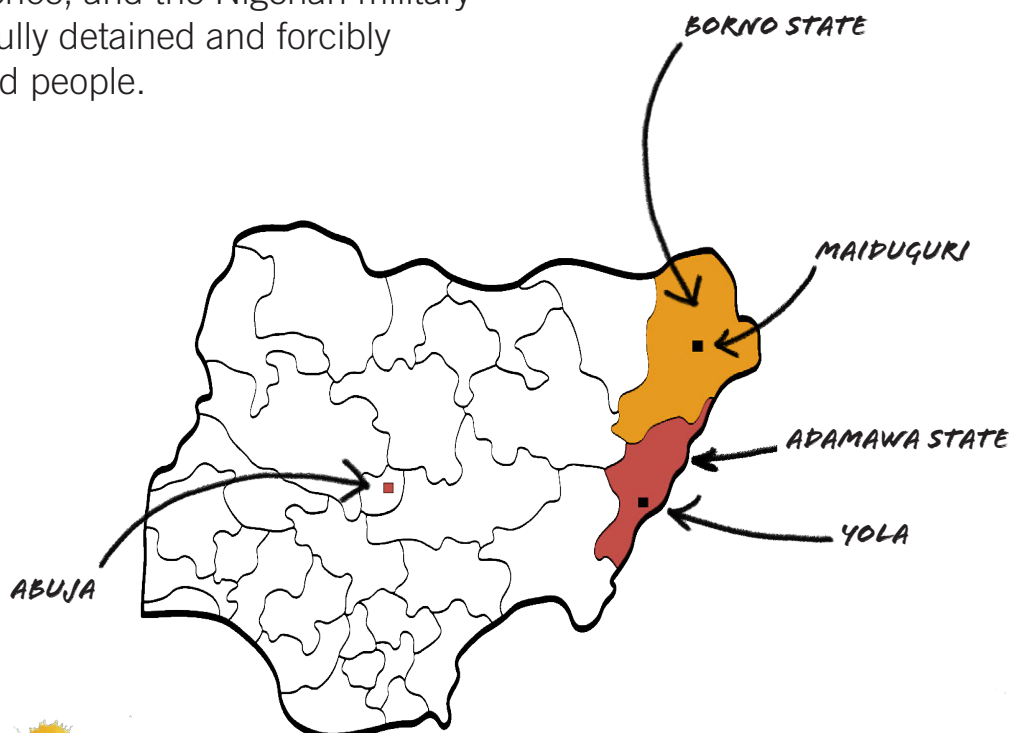
First, *what has been happening in north-east Nigeria?*

The armed conflict between Boko Haram factions and Nigerian forces has affected millions of lives. Families have been torn apart, villages and schools burnt, thousands of civilians killed, and more than two million civilians have been internally displaced.

Amnesty International has repeatedly documented how Boko Haram has engaged in widespread abductions and sexual violence, and the Nigerian military has unlawfully detained and forcibly disappeared people.

A humanitarian catastrophe has unfolded, with crimes committed by all sides of the conflict.

Many girls and young women who escaped Boko Haram returned to government-controlled areas with unique needs. The crimes that they suffered have long-lasting consequences specific to their age and gender, including health complications.



What is the #EmpowerOurGirls campaign?

The international campaign called **#EmpowerOurGirls** focuses on the aspirations of these girls and young women who escaped Boko Haram captivity. They survived years of crimes and abuses, including forced marriage, sexual and domestic violence, and forced pregnancy.

Once they managed to leave, many were unlawfully detained by Nigerian authorities across Borno and Adamawa States.

Amnesty International spoke with more than 80 survivors. They shared how they expected and requested government support, but instead felt invisible and neglected, with no access even to basic services, such as food, water and medical care.

*THESE SURVIVORS HAVE NOW FOUND THE COURAGE TO
SPEAK OUT AND THEY ARE REQUESTING
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR:*



HEALTHCARE



*LIVELIHOOD
OPPORTUNITIES*



EDUCATION

The **#EmpowerOurGirls** campaign wants to break the cycle of invisibility and disempowerment and help the girls and young women claim back their future. We want to uplift and empower these survivors, focusing on the progress that can be made and the change that is within reach.

I want to start my life afresh. [There are] so many things I need, I don't know where to start.

SB, survivor who spent around ten years in Boko Haram captivity

Join the campaign now and become a champion of girls' rights in north-east Nigeria!

Investigation

The report titled **"Help Us Build Our Lives": Girl Survivors of Boko Haram and Military Abuses in North-East Nigeria** focuses on the experience of girls associated, or perceived to be associated, with Boko Haram since May 2013.

This investigation finds that girls and young women survived trafficking as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity by Boko Haram including abduction, forced marriage, enslavement, and sexual violence. After leaving Boko Haram, many experienced prolonged, unlawful detention by the Nigerian military and other violations, including torture and other ill-treatment.

The report makes practical recommendations to the Nigerian authorities and international donors, among others, on the gender-sensitive and child-friendly reintegration support that is needed—starting with the demands from the survivors themselves.



"HELP US BUILD OUR LIVES"

GIRL SURVIVORS OF BOKO HARAM AND MILITARY ABUSES IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

Story of NM

NM was only a girl when she was abducted by Boko Haram. During her captivity, she was forcibly married and subjected to years of sexual violence.

"The "husband" would come at night to sleep with me. I would refuse and leave the house. [I did that] five times... They caught me. They locked me. And they beat me up."

She managed to escape but was rejected by her relatives and now struggles to survive. "I just want to be someone who is able to depend on myself," she said. "I want to get somewhere where I would stay and take care of myself."

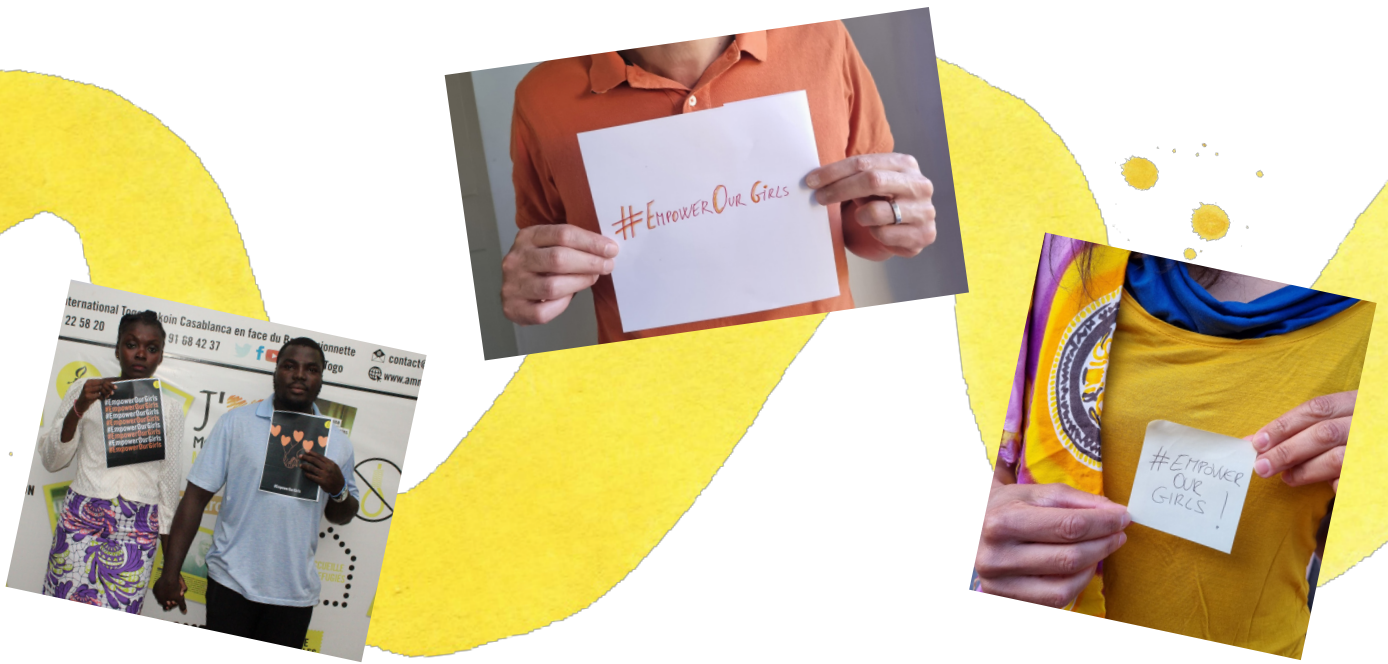
What has been done so far?

Thanks to you and many activists like you, we showed these survivors that they were not alone and that their voices truly mattered. Hundreds of people from around the world joined a solidarity action, sending heartfelt messages and photos as a show of support.



A new phase of the campaign began in October 2024 when we launched an **international petition** directed at Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, urging him to listen to these girls and empower them by ensuring their access to medical care, education, and livelihood support.





Story of GN

"I was with my family when Boko Haram arrived, demanding mothers to hand over their daughters. When they reached our house, my mother tried to protect me, and they replied, 'If she won't come, we'll kill you.' I was taken along with my older sister and her friends. Within days, the fighters arranged my wedding.

In the Boko Haram-controlled area, the conditions were very harsh. If we ran out of food, we had to beg, risking flogging if caught. I saw them punish others who tried to escape.

Years passed until one day, soldiers attacked. In the chaos, I hid in the bushes until a soldier found me. They took me to Bama prison and then an IDP camp. Later, I was transferred to Giwa Barracks, where I spent a year [unlawfully detained] and gave birth.

After release, I went to a state-run centre promising skills training, but no further help came."

Why this toolkit?

Amnesty International co-designed this toolkit together with activists based in Nigeria. In December 2024, we organized two in-person workshops with **international members (IMs)** in Maiduguri and Abuja, where we brainstormed ways to further develop this campaign. Together, we identified key activities, explored strategic opportunities, and discussed how to maintain momentum to ensure lasting impact.



International Members

A movement of millions of supporters and members united to achieve positive human rights change wherever they are.

HOW TO BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL MEMBER:

International membership is **free**.

Sign up on **our website [here](#)** and be part of a movement of millions of people!



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I want to be independent. I want to do something on my own. I don't want to go to people's farm before getting something to eat. That's my wish.

GW, a teenager living with her parents in Bama

We adopted a so-called ‘**movement mindset**’ approach to strengthen and expand the power of grassroots activists, enabling them to drive transformative change. This approach emphasized collaboration, decentralized leadership, and the amplification of local voices so that the activists can become the driving force of the campaign and bring about change.

Movement Mindset

Movement mindset is a set of beliefs, attitudes, and actions adopted by NGOs and their staff that seeks to support and expand the power of civil society, grassroots movements, informal activist groups, and people-powered organizations to create transformative change.



People Power

People Power for Amnesty International is the intrinsic power of a critical mass of people acting at community, national and/or global level to create human rights change by exerting influence over government, corporations and broader society. It is built and deployed by people with the necessary skills and attitudes who inspire, support, organise and mobilise others strategically.

The main goal of this toolkit is to inspire people so that they take action and keep putting pressure on the Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu and the Nigerian government to **#EmpowerOurGirls**.

That's the reason why with many activists in Nigeria we realized this toolkit. It's a way to engage more people, expand this campaign and be stronger together!



Story of GV

"Before the crisis, I was living with my auntie [in Gwoza, Borno state] because my mother died when I was little, and my father was killed by Boko Haram.

One day, [when I was 12 years old in 2014], I came from school. Boko Haram had already attacked our village. They just pushed the door and came into our house... They said they wanted to get married to me... I refused to go with them... They said if I would not get married to them, I would be punished, or they would kill me. So I agreed to get married to them... They took me with them... My auntie was crying."

Who is this toolkit for?

The toolkit is designed for both activists and non-activists, whether they are based in Nigeria or anywhere else in the world. It's for people like you—those who may have only a limited amount of time to take an online action, as well as those with more availability who are eager to organize in-person events.



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Most people in [the] government don't care about us. We need support.

AV returned from Boko Haram in 2021 when she was around 15 years old and now lives with her grandmother in Adamawa State.

We invite everyone to join this campaign, take action, and become a champion for girls' rights in north-east Nigeria!

ACTIVITIES:

Ways you can participate!



- › Sign this **online petition** and share it with families and friends. The more visibility and outreach, the greater the impact!
- › **Like, share, comment, repost!** Help garner support for the campaign by engaging with content shared by other accounts such as Amnesty West & Central Africa Office and Amnesty Nigeria.
- › **Partner** with and support other NGOs and women's organizations working on sexual violence.



- › Record a **solidarity video** for girl survivors. Share it on social media with the hashtag **#EmpowerOurGirls**.
- › Send a **tweet** to the Nigerian President, see some suggestions below.



- › **Write a poem** on empowerment and share it on social media with the hashtag **#EmpowerOurGirls** on 21 March, the World Poetry Day.
- › **Draw and paint** what empowerment means to you. Share your work on social media with the hashtag **#EmpowerOurGirls**.

Please remember to include the key hashtag

#EmpowerOurGirls

*and add the **link to the petition** every time you post content related to this campaign!*



- › Organize **workshops** within your community to raise awareness about the reintegration of Boko Haram survivors.
- › Message and tag **influencers** to seek their support in amplifying the voices of Boko Haram survivors.
- › Organize **peaceful marches**, candlelight vigils, or sit-ins to demand support for girl survivors of Boko Haram.
- › **Street theatre** – Create and perform a play on empowering girl survivors focusing on access to healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities.

- › Organize **concerts and events** with artists to amplify survivors' needs and aspirations and to demand action.
- › **Pressure** senators and House of Representatives members to ensure healthcare, education and livelihood opportunities for girl survivors.



- › Engage **traditional and religious leaders** – Partner with influential figures to promote acceptance and reintegration of girl survivors within local communities.
- › If you are outside Nigeria, lobby the **Nigerian ambassador** in your country by sharing the report and campaigning materials and demanding support for girl survivors of Boko Haram.

KEY DATES:

8 March: International Women's Day

21 March: World Poetry Day

25th of every month: is Orange day,
a day to take action to end violence
against women and girls

27 May: Nigeria's Children's Day

4 June: International Day of Innocent
Children Victims of Aggression

12 June: Nigeria's Democracy Day

16 June: International Day of the
African Child

19 June: International Day for the
Elimination of Sexual Violence in
Conflict

30 July: World Day against
Trafficking in Persons

31 July: Pan African Women's Day

12 August: International Youth Day



9 September: International Day to
Protect Education from Attack

9 September: African Union Day

1 October: Nigeria's Independence Day

11 October: International Day of the
Girl Child

21 October: Africa Human Rights Day

1 November: Africa Youth Day

18 November: World Day for the
Prevention of and Healing from
Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and
Violence

20 November: World Children's Day

25 November: International Day for
the Elimination of Violence against
Women

25 November - 10 December: 16
days of activism against gender-
based violence

10 December 2025: Human Rights
Day




AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S TOOLS & RESOURCES

- › Amnesty International's report 'Help us build our lives': Girl survivors of Boko Haram and military abuses in north-east Nigeria
- › #EmpowerOurGirls petition
- › Campaigning video
- › Solidarity video
- › Report video
- › Social media graphics assets
- › Relevant courses:
 - » Confronting and Countering Gender-based Violence - Amnesty Human Rights Academy
 - » An Introduction to Child Rights - Amnesty Human Rights Academy
 - » Human Rights – a tool for change - Amnesty Human Rights Academy

Tag the President of Nigeria:

 for Facebook: **@officialasiwajubat**

 for Twitter/X: **@officialABAT**

 for Instagram: **@officialasiwajubat**

Sample messages for social media

Girl survivors of Boko Haram and military abuses in Nigeria shared with @amnesty their aspirations for the future. They want to rebuild their lives. **#EmpowerOurGirls** and urge President Tinubu **[ADD social media handle]** to ensure their access to medical care, education and livelihood support

"I want to forget that I once lived with Boko Haram. I want to start all over again," said a survivor from Borno. Empower her and all girl survivors by urging President Tinubu **[ADD social media handle]** to ensure their access to medical care, education, and livelihood support. **#EmpowerOurGirls**

Nigerian President **[ADD social media handle]** must empower girls who survived Boko Haram's captivity and military abuses in north-east Nigeria. Stand with these survivors and sign the petition now. **#EmpowerOurGirls**

CONTENT YOU CAN SHARE

Social media graphics



You can find more [here!](#)



**SHARE YOUR IDEAS, ACTIVITIES
OR QUESTIONS WITH US:**

Please email us at

EmpowerOurGirls@amnesty.org

with your actions, suggestions,
questions and feedback.

Hearing from you is invaluable to us!



*AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL
IS A GLOBAL
MOVEMENT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS.*

*WHEN
INJUSTICE
HAPPENS TO
ONE PERSON,
IT MATTERS
TO US ALL.*

Stand with the girl survivors of north-east Nigeria in their fight for their future!

They suffered horrific abuses in Boko Haram captivity. Once they managed to leave, many were unlawfully detained and subsequently neglected by Nigerian authorities.

Now, these girls and young women are sending a clear message: they want to rebuild their lives.

Join the ***#EmpowerOurGirls*** campaign now and become a champion of girls' rights in north-east Nigeria!