



AFRICA/NIGERIA - Cardinal Onaiyekan: "We want concrete action to free kidnapped girls"; maybe some of them are in Central Africa

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - Cardinal John Onaiyekan of Abuja has called for "concrete action" to save the hundreds of girls kidnapped by Boko Haram. "We want concrete action to free the kidnapped girls", said Cardinal John Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, in a statement to the Catholic News Agency. "It is still more baffling that our president seems to be impotent. We have to see concrete action. Up until now, we are hearing practically nothing concrete on the issue. I think almost every Nigerian is taken aback. We cannot explain what is happening" said the Cardinal.

Nearly 300 girls, were kidnapped on April 14 from their boarding school in Borno, Nigeria's northeastern-most state, by members of the radical Islamist group Boko Haram and this has sparked outrage across the world. Their fate is uncertain. According to some witnesses about fifty girls have been seen passing near Tiringoulou and Birao, two towns in the north-eastern Central African Republic. In the night between the 4th and 5th of May, it seems the girls were brought from Birao to Tiringoulou where they were taken on board an aircraft coming from Sudan.

In the last hours Boko Haram has released a video in which it announces the conversion to Islam of the female students abducted most of whom are of Christian faith. The leader of Boko Haram has demanded the release of members of the movement who are in Nigerian prisons in exchange for the release of the girls. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 12/05/2014)