*The Chibok Girls,* Nigeria, Islamist terrorism (Boko Haram), politically-motivated kidnapping

Module 4: **Module 4 Novelist as Journalist 1: The Chibok Girls and #BringBackOurGirls (2 weeks)**

* Discussion 3 Analyzing #BringBackOurGirls alongside more artistic activism:

The abduction of the Nigerian Girls by the terrorist organization, Boko Haram, occurred nearly four years ago. The prominence of the Chibok’s girl’s kidnappings in Nigeria was brought by online activism that sought to seek freedom for the young school girls. The social media campaign, #BringBackOurGirls, transfixed people globally as it sought plight for the 276 girls kidnapped by the terrorist group (Matfess, 2017). In particular, different forms of activism were used including visual art, poems, and tweets by activists holding a sign reading #BringBackOurGirls to voice on the campaign of the missing girls. Besides, public statements were made by prominent people including the United States president, Barack Obama, to criticize the kidnappings (Holpuch, 2018). Despite the use of the different forms of activism, the most effective campaign was the use of the plight card with the sign #BringBackOurGirls as this not only transformed the girls into global symbols buts also shade light on the great tragedy.

The abduction of schoolchildren by Boko Haram was nothing new in northern Nigeria, but the sheer size of the 2014 kidnappings brought attention to this heinous act that was largely practiced. Immediately after the abductions, a social media campaign #BringBackOurGirls was started which attracted support from international activists and luminaries including the pope, Michelle Obama and Malala Yousafazi (Matfess, 2017). Notably, the attention on the kidnappings was not only brought by the sheer number of young girls abducted but the support from the international community who held high their plight cards with the sign #BringBackOurGirls (Holpuch, 2018). This campaign helped to focus attention on the heinous tragedy to a part of the world that had been largely ignored. Thus, while there were different initiatives that called for the release of the girls, the most effective approach was the use of the plight card with the sign #BringBackOurGirls as this brought attention to the tragedy.

Notably, most of the abducted girls spent nearly 1,000 days in captivity, but this does not mean that the social media campaign was ineffective (Matfess, 2017). Considerably, the tweets by the international luminaries may have highlighted that the terrorist group had leverage over the international community due to their plight (Matfess, 2017). However, the significance of this campaign is not highlighted by its ability to bring back the girls but rather attract the world’s attention to the tragedy (Holpuch, 2018). The release of the girls from captivity with the help of the international community required new policy formulations which would be treacherous. Despite this, the social media campaign held high the girl's plight rallying the world to unite and come for their support. Thus, the social media campaign is deemed more effective compared to other approaches.

* I received no comments from the discussion essay
* Your comments: There are 3 paragraphs, but really only 2 main distinct points. Please include direct quotes rather than paraphrases. That's how humanists handle evidence--by quoting it directly and explaining the significance of the word choices. Good overall analysis.
* CR4 Answers:

1. Can you discuss more about checkpoints, the regulations on them and controlling of narrative about the kidnapping of the Chibok girls? Did it really happen or was it propaganda by the political opponents of President Buhari? (15.50-16.35)
2. Habila says that there have been people who have thought about the group like that and even attacked the group. However, the group is more than 276 girls. According to Habila, the group is a symbol of standing against the Boko Haram and the children, mothers, girls, and boys that the Boko Haram has taken into slavery. Despite the attack, the girls still meet and where a red dressing code as a symbol of girls against Boko Haram which is an impressive work (41.10-43.33).
3. In the early days of Boko Haram, they went from village to village attacking militaries and robbing banks. They have an affiliation with Al-Qaida who provided finance and weaponry. In 2015, they swore allegiances with ISIS who provide training, money, and training. Also, they kidnap people and ask for ransom money from their families. Finally, their location between Niger and Cameroon makes it possible to control the economic activities between the borders like cattle trading (46.42-49.04).
4. The fact that the Boko Haram was willing to negotiate with government and release 21 girls and two others found wondering in the forest shows a sign of weakness by the group. It means that there is a possibility of defeating them and the government pushing the Boko Haram is working (55.58-57.09).
5. “Motorbikes have been outlawed since the kidnapping since they were the Boko Haram’s vehicle of choice, and anyone seen riding one could be suspected for a Boko Haram member and arrested if he was lucky, or short if he wasn’t” (p30).
6. The secular plays from the street theaters after the break of the fast of Ramadhan in the evening where young men and women from Muslim would perform from house to house. According to Habila, the theme of the play was either love stories or slapstick comedies that were demonstrated through singing and crowd participation (P.58).
7. According to Habila, the middle belt meant the Northern part of Nigeria was either divided into “… “always Muslim or Christian first, ethnic affiliation second, and Nigerian third.” He continues to demonstrate the word by quoting Abubakar Shekau about the parents of girls that were kidnapped in North were from pagan middle belt parents. (P67-71). It is the conflict between the Muslims and Christians in the Northern border where people were believed to co-exist in peace.
8. Habila says that they suffered from social stigma. He continues to say that “…their families, the perception being that they and the children they were forced to bear through rape [are] still brainwashed, and likely to become terrorists in the future.” (p85).
9. According to Habila, the US Congress has ensured strong partnership with Nigeria government in fighting Boko Haram Militia, recognize the Chibok girls kidnapping anniversary and supporting other initiatives like women rights through provision of funds to support different affected groups (P101-102).
10. The most moving passage in the last chapter is the explanation of shocking banality, specifically where Habila says “…. Ordinary boys in dirty shirts and slippers, shooting at whatever they were told to shoot at by their handlers.” But the girls who got away, as he learns, were ordinary, too, saved by “chance, opportunity, and desperation.” (p.110). The passage reveals the horrible status of the children living in the Northern parts of Nigeria in which nobody would wish their children to live under the conditions. It shows that the problem will continue because children will be recruited to the Boko Haram militia because their parents were also recruited, making the process continuous.