

Walk for kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls

Claudia Calleja

A voluntary organisation, that works to improve the lives of women around the world, will today be holding a walk in support of the 200 Nigerian schoolgirls being held captive by militant Islamist group Boko Haram.

The organisation, called Soroptimist International of Malta, will also be presenting an appeal to Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, urging the Maltese government to put pressure on the Nigerian government to resolve the situation and free the girls.

“We hope to be able to help these girls”

“We hope to be able to help these girls by creating awareness. This is being done all over the world. Maybe, hopefully, we can make a difference,” said Mary Rose Bonello, from the voluntary organisation.

Soroptimist International has over 80,000 club members in 129 countries. They work at a local, national and international level to educate, empower and enable opportunities for women and girls.

The Maltese network is joining forces with the international effort that has become known as the Bring Back Our Girls campaign. It also joined its international counterparts to put pressure on governments to



Rachel Daniel, 35, holds up a picture of her abducted daughter Rose Daniel, 17, as her son Bukar, 7, sits beside her at her home in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Rose was abducted along with more than 200 of her classmates on April 14 by Boko Haram militants from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno state. Photo: Joe Penney/Reuters

intervene to help the 200 girls snatched from a school on April 14, an incident which sparked worldwide condemnation.

Boko Haram has threatened to sell the girls and has informed the Nigerian government it is prepared to exchange some of the girls for imprisoned Islamist militants. Since the kidnapping took

place, Nigeria's government has been under international pressure to do more to tackle the group and bring about the girls' release.

Today's walk will start at 3.45pm from St George's Square in Valletta. Participants will then take part in a symbolic walk to Castille while carrying

banners containing messages relevant to the cause.

At the end of the walk, an appeal will be presented to Dr Muscat urging the government to put further pressure on the Nigerian government. “We will also be encouraging the Prime Minister and all Parliamentarians to work together with other

world leaders towards honouring the basic human right to education for all girls and women,” Ms Bonello said.

Those who want to participate in the walk are asked to wear red to mark the international cause.

For more information call 9949 8117 or send an e-mail to bonello@ymail.com.