



FACT SHEET TWO

Women in Formal and Non-Formal Security Sector in Nigeria

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Introduction <<

IN A QUEST FOR DIFFERENT SECURITY EXPERIENCES AND priorities, the United Nations Security Council in year 2000 adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 to create a gender equal, gender-sensitive and gender-responsive security sector. The efforts at gender mainstreaming in peace and security have been accompanied by state-level attempts to increase the participation of women in security sector. However, despite all the frameworks, agenda setting, national action plan advocacy and training, progress made in improving women's participation in security structures, and processes has been chequered.

In 2016, over fifteen years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, experts observed that women made up only 3,724 out of the 91,651 military experts and troops in all peacekeeping missions. In addition to this, women constituted only 1,222 of the 12,628 individual police and formed police units¹.

In Nigeria, women face challenges in the security sector, such as the need to rebalance security and liberty which consequently is the area where a little visible translation of the drive for women's participation in the security sector is recorded. Hence, over the years, women are under-represented and the ones that are in the security (sector) institutions are not duly empowered.

Women's Experiences <<



DARK FIGURES LOOM WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS BECAUSE DATA on gender representation in both formal and non-formal security sector institutions are largely inaccessible. Where such data exist, they are inaccurate. As at June 2017, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in its senior ranking officers has one female Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), who is a commandant at the Staff College, Jos. For the Commissioners of Police, there are five female officers who are at different formations, with only one female Commissioner of Police (CP) heading a State Command out of the 36 States, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). At the mid-cadre level, only 5 female officers serve as Public Relation Officers in States and Zonal Command levels.

In the armed forces, the percentage of women holding senior ranks is reportedly 1% while they make up 5% of the entry level.

The paramilitary services such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) have only 4 female Command heads in 36 states. The non-formal actors such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have 100 female personnel within a work force of 22,000-23,000. Closest to them is the Borno State Youth Empowerment Scheme (BOYES) which also has 31 trained female officers in a work force of 1,850.

There are no measuring tools that seek to collate the experiences of women within the sector and identify existing gaps. This hampers assessment of accountability mechanisms that will contribute to reduction in marginalisation and discriminatory practices, particularly those that are attributable to culture, tradition and religious practices that impinge on the rights of women. The existing Police Act and Police Regulations (1990) views and treats women 'as not on equal standing with men.' Sections 121–125 and 127–128 are biased against women and discriminate against women in terms of the conditions of employment. Sections 121–125 confine the roles of women in the police to actions relating to women and children, as well as clerical duties. Also, they expressly forbid women carrying arms, and require women to seek permission in writing before they marry. Sections 127 and 128 are more severe as they prescribe dismissal for an unmarried police woman who gets pregnant, in addition to specifying details of how a woman dresses while in police uniform, a courtesy that is not extended to male police officers in the NPF.

Some of the security institutions such as the NPF, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC) have developed and adopted gender policies. Other agencies such as the Military, the State Security Service (SSS), and the Nigeria Intelligence (NIA) are yet to have an institutional gender policy accountability at all levels that is known to the public. This is the same with non-formal actors as they have no institutionalised gender policies.

Way Forward <<

THERE IS NEED TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE gender polices adopted across the agencies in ensuring conformity to international good practices. Similarly, there should be consideration for adoption and implementation in agencies where gender polices are non-existent. As such the collaborative efforts of Police, Defence and Judiciary in reviewing and ensuring full implementation is encouraged.

The recently launched National Action Plan of UNSCR 1325 and the related resolution on women, peace and security in Nigeria (2017-2020), particularly Pillar 2, which deals with Participation and Representation needs to be coordinated to ensure effective implementation. The national plan is built on 5 P's relating to women in armed conflict: Prevention, Participation, Protection, Prosecution and Promotion.

It is noteworthy that a bill to repeal some sections of the Police Act (2004) that discriminate against women recently passed second reading. Sponsored by the Lagos State Senator, Oluremi Tinubu, the bill frowns at the disparity in age requirement for recruitment into the NPF. For men, the minimum recruitment age is 17 years but women must wait until they are 19 years. This bill should receive plaudits. Nonetheless, other areas of the Police Act such as the precondition that a woman must be unmarried before joining the Force and must, thereafter, seek written approval to get married, need review. The Act even prescribes that a female officer intending to marry must have served a minimum of 3 years in the Force.

Addressing the gender disparities within the nation's security agencies should be addressed from a holistic view of women as important agents of peace, safety and security. Equal representation based on ability would therefore strengthen the capacity of the security agencies to fulfil their mandates.