

Prioritising the Voices of Women



in Security Organisations

**Using Second Generation
National Action Plan**

Background

The role of women in peace and security in Nigeria, as in other parts of Africa, has received very little attention and appreciation. Since the return to democracy in 1999, Nigeria has faced myriads of conflicts - from Boko Haram insurgency in the North East to militancy in the South-South; massacres of persons by herders in the middle belt to kidnapping in the South East; to mention a few. According to WANEP Nigeria (2014) there were well over 5,000 theatres of violent conflicts in Nigeria¹. Such violent conflicts range from the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East to militancy in the South-South, massacres of persons by herders in the Middle Belt to kidnapping in the South-East.

Statistics have shown that women and children make up about 80% of those displaced.² In these armed conflict situations, women have been raped, turned into sex slaves and face all forms of sexual violence. They have been victims of forced marriages, forced pregnancies and forced abortions, abductions and kidnappings, trafficking, torture, mutilation, and death as manifested. The accompanying breakdown of the infrastructure for public service provision leads to lack of essential services to the population. In this situation, women are at the front-line of suffering, bearing the brunt

of the socio-economic dimensions of the conflict.

Nigeria is not alone in the atrocities incurred by women during war or armed conflicts. These violations around the world galvanised women all over the globe to lobby and demand from national governments, sub-regional and regional organisations and the United Nations Security Council that women's rights should be protected not only in war but also during peace times. Their efforts led to the issuance by the then Secretary General of the UN, Mr Kofi Anan in June 2000 a very comprehensive report on conflict prevention that underscored the importance of gender equality, the cost of violent conflict and the roles of NGOs in conflict prevention and their relationship to the UN. The report stressed the need to protect women's human rights and called on the Security Council to include gender perspective in its work and integrate the protection of Women's Human Rights in conflict prevention and peace-building. In response, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on conflict prevention in October 2000 underscoring the role of women in conflict prevention and calling on the Secretary-General "to give greater attention to gender perspectives in the implementation of peacekeeping

and peace-building mandates as well as in conflict prevention efforts". Resolution 1325 builds on Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on mainstreaming a gender perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations, among others. In adopting this resolution, UN Security Council recognised the disproportionate impact of armed conflicts on women as well as the pivotal role of women in peacebuilding and acknowledged the importance of their participation and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peace-building and governance. It also recognised women's role as peacebuilders and agent of change and calls on the UN and its member states, civil society organisations (CSOs) and international community to ensure equal and full participation of women in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and management, conflict prevention, peace negotiations and all peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction decisions and programme.

Legislations on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Since the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 1325, eight other Security Council Resolutions (SCRs) have followed. These include 1820 (adopted in 2008) and focuses on the specific issue of sexual violence in conflicts. It recognises sexual violence as a tactic of war and notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime against humanity. SCR 1888 adopted in 2009 and calls for the appointment of the Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict. SCR 1889 (2009) – establishes Women Protection Advisers within peacekeeping missions. Importantly, it focuses on women’s participation in all stages of peace processes and included a request to the Secretary-General (SG) to develop a set of global indicators to track and act as the common basis for reporting on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. SCR 1960 (2010) – was passed in recognition that sexual violence during armed conflict remains systematic, rampant and widespread.

This resolution creates institutional tools and teeth to combat impunity and outlines specific steps needed for both prevention of and protection from sexual violence in

conflict. It has a naming and shaming listing mechanism mandated in the resolution, which is a step forward in bringing justice for victims and a recognition that sexual violence is a serious violation of human rights and international law. SCR 2106 (2013) – focuses on the importance of securing prosecution for sexual violence in order to tackle widespread impunity for the offence. SCR 2122 (2013) – puts in place measures to ensure women’s participation and leadership in conflict prevention, peace processes and throughout post-conflict recovery measures. SCR 2242 (2015) - Calls for “the greater **integration** by Member States and the United Nations of their **agendas on women, peace and security, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism** which can be conducive to terrorism”. It urges Member States and the United Nations system to “ensure the **participation and leadership of women** and women’s organisations in developing **strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism** which can be conducive to terrorism”; 2272 (2016) provides measures to address sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations.

These form the WPS framework. Together they set out an ambitious agenda to increase women’s participation in peace and conflict processes to prevent conflict and protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, creates obligations for UN actors and member states to both empower and protect women in conflict-affected context.

The WPS framework provides an internationally recognised legal framework for promoting gender equality in peace and security, ensuring the participation of women in all peace-making processes and protecting women against violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. The core mandates of these resolutions are condensed into Four (4) P’s which are:

- i. Participation of women in the peace processes including Countering Violent Extremism (CVE);
- ii. Protection of women in war and peace;
- iii. Prevention of conflicts; and
- iv. Prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence.

Nigeria's National Action Plans (NNAPs)

Five years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) recognised that the national implementation of SCR 1325 and related resolutions is an important mechanism for furthering the women, peace and security agenda. Thus, the United Nations Security Council Presidential statements of 2004/40 and 2005/52, called to member states to implement the resolution 1325, including the development of NAPs or other national level strategies such as peace policies, gender policies or medium/long term development plans. The Security Council has consistently recommended that member states accelerate the development of

both national and regional action plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. NAPs are considered the best strategies to mainstream 1325 and related resolutions into country policies and plans as it not only provides the roadmap to help determine the actors and resources needed for advancing the WPS agenda but also reflects the government's commitment and accountability to the security of women and girls during armed conflicts as well as enhancing their active and direct participation in conflict prevention and peace-building and post-conflict efforts. NAP is also a practical and operational tool for those affected by armed conflicts – women, children and communities – to be informed

about the governments' response to their plight as well as the assistance programmes available to them. For frontline enforcement agencies and other peacekeeping forces, NAP affirms their significant role in protecting the physical safety and security of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and in identifying their specific needs in times of crises as it enjoins peacekeeping forces to strictly observe the highest standards of conduct and behaviour of the armed forces vis-à-vis women, girls and other vulnerable groups in the communities during such emergencies. As of March 2018, 73 countries have developed their NAPs, including Nigeria.

Prioritising the Voices of Women

Unfortunately, more than 17 years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and 73 countries having developed their NAPs, women's voices have been largely absent from official ceasefire and peace negotiations, mediation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and in post-conflict reconstruction. It was against the foregoing that

PWAN convened a roundtable on Prioritising the Voices of Women in Security Organisations using the Second-Generation National Action Plan (2017 – 2020) on the 23rd February 2018. The objective of the roundtable was to promote the inclusion of women in peace and security through the second-generation National Action Plan.

Three papers were presented to help inform discussions – Security Sector Interventions in NAP 1325 on Women, Peace and Security³; Women as Survivor⁴; Good Practices of Women's Participation in Peace and Security Architecture in West Africa: Lessons for Nigeria⁵.

Key Findings from the Roundtable

Nigeria is one of the 73 countries that have developed a NAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. The first NAP which was developed under the overall leadership and guidance of Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development was launched on August 27, 2013 with five pillars - *Prevention, Participation, Protection, Promotion and Prosecution*. The expectation from the NAP development and implementation include the following:

- a) Gender mainstreamed into conflict resolution, security and peace-building at all levels;
- b) Increased women's participation in conflict management processes;
- c) Increased provision for women's needs/concerns during peace negotiations and post-conflict management;
- d) at least 35% Affirmative Action (AA) for women in peace-building and conflict management in the security sector;
- e) reduced prevalence of GBV/VAWG in and post-conflict situations;
- f) bridge the gaps in knowledge, policies, institutional capacity and deficits in the security and the development architecture in Nigeria.

Eight (8) states have also devel-

oped their State Action Plans aligned with the NAP.

Nigeria has developed her second NAP which was launched in May 2017. This NAP ensured that the gaps observed in the NAP 1 were taken into cognisance especially the emerging issues such as insurgency, violent extremism and terrorism, farmer-herders conflicts, insecurity and transnational border crimes, gender, responsive inclusion in peace architecture, violence against women, girls, children and communal crises necessitated the revision of the NAP to capture these issues. A unique innovation of NAP 2 was the development of Zonal Action Plans based on the peculiarities and priorities of each zone as identified in the zonal consultations.

NAP 2 has five pillars. **Pillar 1:** Prevention and Disaster Preparedness; **Pillar 2:** Participation and Representation; **Pillar 3:** Protection and Prosecution; **Pillar 4:** Crisis Management, Early Recovery and Post-Conflict Reconstruction; **Pillar 5:** Partnership, Coordination and Management.

Despite all the frameworks, agenda setting, NAP, advocacy and training, the progress made in improving women's participation in security structures and processes has remained abysmally low in the country. Women still remain invisible in the implementation of NAP and their voices inaudible in discourse around peace-building, negotiation

and mediations.

Women are under-represented in the security sector and even the ones that are in the security sector are not duly empowered. In 2017/18, statistics showed that there are only 3 female Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) – one heading a Zonal Command, the other is at the Police Staff College Jos and the third is on secondment. There were 5 female Commissioners of Police with only one heading a State Command out of thirty-six states plus the Federal Capital Territory. Also, 5 female officers serve as Public Relations Officers in State and Zonal Commands. In the armed forces, women account for around 3-10% of the total personnel; those holding senior ranks constitute about 1%, while at entry point they constitute about 5%.⁶

In the paramilitary, there are only 4 female commandants heading states. This is not different from the non-formal security sector such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the North East where, in a workforce of 22,000 – 23,000 persons there are about 100 women, while the Borno Youths Empowerment Scheme (BOYES) has 31 female officers in a workforce of 1,850 persons.

In 2016, 16 years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, women made up only 3,724 out of 91,651 military experts and troops in all peacekeeping missions; women

constituted 1,222 out of 12,628 police and police units. The low number of female peacekeepers is largely a result of the small number of women serving in the army and police of troop-contributing countries and the low levels of recruitment of women at the entry point.⁷

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has developed and adopted a gender policy. The overall goal of this policy is to eliminate all gender-based discriminatory regulations and practices within the Nigeria Police Force, and ensure that the Police Force, as a major security organ of government is able to effectively deal with gender-based violence within the larger Nigerian society. This has been followed by the establishment of gender desk in designated police stations in the six geopolitical zones

The military though yet to adopt a sector-specific gender policy has in place gender-responsive policies, including the admission of female cadets into the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA). This, unfortunately, is under threat with the recent decision of the government to stop the admission of females into NDA. Other services such as the Department of State Services (DSS) and National Intelligence Agency (NIA) are yet to develop an institutional

gender policy, and the structure of the agencies is shrouded in secrecy as such even to ascertain the number of women in the organisation is a challenge.

Women are still excluded from peace processes or formal peace talks as official negotiators and observers or part of committees set up as exemplified by the Presidential Committee on North East which initially did not have any female member but later had two women added.

Women play diverse roles in armed conflicts – they are victims, survivors, active combatants and recruiters for armed opposition groups (AOG) or members of the vigilante groups. Women bear enormous hardship during and after humanitarian emergencies and are particularly vulnerable to GBV in situations of displacement, as they are forced to adopt new strategies to provide for themselves and their families; forced to trade sex for food to make their living. Moreover, where the camp securities are predominantly male, this has serious implication for the psychological situation of the survivors, especially as they face stigma within the camps and their communities

The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill (VAPP) was passed into law by the National Assembly in 2015 and is currently being implemented in the FCT, Oyo, Ekiti and Osun states. The federal nature of Nigeria and based on constitutional provisions, the VAPP Act 2015 cannot be implemented nationwide until domesticated in 2/3 of the states (24 states).

The Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill is facing some challenges in the National Assembly. This important bill incorporates certain aspects of CEDAW, the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa as well as the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the National Gender Policy. It seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex and gender in private and public spaces, affirms women's rights to equal opportunities to realise their full potential and human dignity. Despite the challenges, however, five states have adopted the GEO Bill - Imo, Ekiti, Kogi, Anambra and Plateau.

Women are not visible in the implementation of NAP nor are their voices audible in discourses around peacebuilding, negotiation and mediations.

Challenges of NAP Implementation

Poor coordination and working relationships between the Ministry for Women Affairs and Social Development and other ministries, agencies and

bodies responsible for security, peace and justice and also among various actors working on women, peace and security issues; this often leads to duplication of activi-

ties, ad hoc activities and unhealthy competition.

Inadequate Funding – required for every aspect of implementation

due to the centralisation of the NAP at the national level, thereby marginalising the grassroots communities.

Centralisation and localisation of NAP implementation at the national vis-à-vis the grassroots.

Lack of public awareness on and lack of understanding of 1325 and NAP. Many governments, civil society organisations, and communities are still unaware or misunderstand UNSCR 1325.

Lack of capacity / technical expertise – CSOs and other actors have been provided with a platform from which they can demand government accountability to the norms and responsibilities set out in 1325 even in the absence of a NAP through lobbying and advocacy. Unfortunately, CSOs have not really played this role mainly due to the lack of awareness or understanding of the resolution and lack of the technical skills (negotiation, mediation, advocacy, lobbying skills, etc) required for active and strategic participation.

The non-obligation of state parties to report on implementation; instead, the resolution requested the Secretary-General to issue a report.

Political instability / Conflicts / Violent Extremism – remains a threat to implementing 1325. Though the resolution calls for all sides in armed conflicts to take special care to protect women and girls, they remain vulnerable targets in conflict situations, especially sexual-based violence.

Monitoring compliance – There are no effective mechanisms to monitor compliance and penalties for noncompliance.

The existence of institutional and attitudinal barriers such as the patriarchal system entrenched in our societies. Patriarchy – women are disadvantaged in Africa and their social status and roles are to a large extent shaped by a patriarchal set of norms which subordinates them to their fathers or husbands. The patriarchal political culture is a major barrier to women's political space and visibility. New laws meet with resistance as they contradict customary laws and prevailing social norms/ traditional practices as women's involvement may be seen as a direct threat to culture and tradition.

Women involvement – Many women still are not involved in issues related to peace and security because the structures are skewed to exclude them or they exclude

themselves. Women are also not applying for positions related to peace and security because they do not have the skills for these jobs, or because these jobs historically are viewed as men's jobs.

Social norms -- Women are confined to homes as some social norms restrict them from all forms of political process. Closely linked to this is the lack of the political experience to know how to become involved in official peace processes and education which disadvantages women in terms of the skills and knowledge needed to participate.

Continued view of 1325/NAP as a tool for women only and not a tool that can be used by men. Often women have missed opportunities of strategic advocacies to men who could promote the resolution/NAP.

NAP has not attracted donor funding directly as many donors prefer to fund women's project/ programs rather than to support NAPs and other WPS strategies or advocacy efforts for implementation.

Lack of economic capacity of women and hence lack resources to mobilise women to participate in peace processes or send a representative from their group to take part in formal peace processes.

Key Recommendations

The Nigeria Police Force adopted a sector-specific Gender Policy. However, there is a need to monitor the implementation of the policy and ensure conformity with international good practices. Other security organisations such as the military, paramilitary, non-state vigilante groups such as CJTF, and BOYES should be encouraged to also put in place their gender policies.

>>Recruitment of more women in security organisations to bridge the existing gap which will eventually lead to women's increased leadership in these organisations. Plans for the police gender unit to draft a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and guidelines for mainstreaming gender should be supported. In addition, awareness should be created on the advantages of women in the security sector through female role models visit to secondary and tertiary institutions.

>>Funding is vital for the successful implementation on NAP 2. Government should make provisions for a dedicated annual budgetary allocation for implementation at all levels. The lead agency for the implementation of NAP 2 unfortunately has the lowest annual budgetary allocation and without extra resources coming in annually, the implementation of NAP shall be stalled. Advocacy and lobbying is needed to elicit the political will to initiate and sustain such alloca-

tions. ECOWAS, development partners, INGOs and bilateral partners should be committed to supporting the implementation of NAP 2. Various stakeholders in WPS should be trained on resource mobilisation.

>>Funding should be made available for women's organisations at the grass-roots and national level working on de-radicalisation, promoting alternatives, ensuring women's political, economic and social participation and addressing and preventing VAWGs.

>>Increasing women's number in decision making - Women in decision making positions are very critical to the advancement of women and implementation of the NAPs. Hence laws on quota or AA principle should be incorporated into the constitution and the electoral laws. This may require women's capacity to be built in leadership development and governance and administration as well as on mediation and conflict prevention and training programs specifically for women to increase their sense of empowerment in and knowledge of peacebuilding processes. Women-only trainings should lead into mixed gendered trainings that weave together men and women working for peace.

>>Creation of awareness nationwide on UNSCR 1325 and other related resolutions and on NAP 2 for administrators and policymakers, traditional and religious lead-

ers, politicians, women and women's organisations, the grass-root communities. The partnership of Women organisations with media to develop a communication campaign on UNSCR 1325 and generate support among journalists covering the campaign as well as on issues of gender equality is recommended. These will bring about the desired mindset change that is required to elicit the political will required for the implementation of NAP.

>>Establishment of a national WPS network or Network for Actualisation of WPS Agenda in Nigeria (NAWAiN). Through such networks, women would be better positioned to effectively channel women's voices and concerns to the highest levels of government and international policy making.

>>Building strategic alliances with men: One big challenge is how to overcome resistance from men who do not understand the need for 1325/NAP. Women, therefore, need to learn how to build male allies in addition to building coalitions so that the critical mass needed to build and attain change can be achieved. Need to identify strategic men to serve as spokespersons and supporters of the process.

>>Establishment of women-friendly spaces (WFS) where survivors who are traumatised and stigmatised could go to get their needs met. These centres would be a one-stop

centre in which all services are available to meet all the needs of survivors including free legal advice and access to appropriate psychosocial and health care services, including mental, sexual and repro-

ductive health services, as well as economic empowerment.

>>Establishment of a Council of Nigerian Women Negotiators and Mediators comprising of women

from civil society as well as women who no longer hold government positions- Women who can use their influence in resolving conflicts and ensuring that women are represented at the negotiating table.

Conclusion

Sustainable peace is possible only with women's full participation - their perspectives, their leadership and their daily, equal presence wherever we seek to make and keep the peace⁸. UNSCR 1325 acknowledges that Peace cannot be sustained unless women have an equal and active role in formulating political, economic and social policy and that

without women's full participation in peace processes, there can be no justice or sustainable development in the reconstruction of societies. In recognition of these facts, both the first and second generations NAPs of Nigeria has "Participation" as a pillar. To achieve this pillar, the voices of women should be prioritised. It is time women are given voice in formal peacebuilding

processes, at the negotiating tables, as mediators as well as in the political arena. Some recommendations on how this can happen have been made. Included in these recommendations are the needs for women's skills to be built, the establishment of a national network for the actualisation of the WPS agenda, increased political will and funding.

¹ An assessment of WANEP and other CSO Networks' interventions in peace work in Nigeria. WANEP Nigeria Publication 2015

²Thomas, S. (2004). Displacement and health. *British Medical Bulletin*, 69(1), pp.115-127. <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/69/1/115/523349>

³ Nwadinobi, E. (2018). Security Sector Interventions in NAP 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Paper presented at a roundtable on Prioritising the voices of Women in Security Organisations using the Second Generation National Action Plan (2017 – 2020) on 23rd February 2018. PWAN

⁴ Donli, P.O. (2018). Women as Survivors. Paper presented at a roundtable on Prioritising the voices of Women in Security Organizations using the Second Generation National Action Plan (2017 – 2020) on 23rd February 2018. PWAN

⁵ Saad, A.S.H. (2018). Good Practices of Women's Participation in Peace and Security Architecture in West Africa: Lessons for Nigeria. Paper presented at a roundtable on Prioritising the voices of Women in Security Organisations using the Second Generation National Action Plan (2017 – 2020) on 23rd February 2018. PWAN

⁶ Interview with Brigadier Amosu (National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies), 2010. A second source has given higher estimations: slightly less than 10 %. Interview with Colonel Mampak (Prison Staff School Kaduna), 27 May 2010

⁷ Women, Peacebuilding and Security interventions. "Women, Peace-Building, And Security Interventions." *Guardian.ng*. N. p., 2018. Web. 20 June 2018. <https://guardian.ng/features/gender-politics/women-peace-building-and-security-interventions/>

⁸ "Women Hold UN Events To Chart Progress On Female Participation In Peacebuilding." *UN News*. N. p., 2010. Web. 20 June 2018.